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SEWALL: THE MAN AND

DORE BENSON STRANDNESS

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Samuel Sewall

SAMUEL SEWALL: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

By

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A THESIS

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

Research for this study was carried on at the library of Michigan State College, the Widener library of Harvard University, the public libraries of Boston and New York City, the Boston Athenaeum, the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, Essex Institute, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the New York Historical Society, as well as various offices of public record at Boston and Salem. To the staffs at all of these places I am grateful for much kindness and generous assistance. My obligation is particularly great to the Massachusetts Historical Society, in whose library is the greater part of the Sewall manuscripts. I recollect with some amazement the unfailing and interested help given me by the staff of that institution. Finally, I must express my indebtedness to Professor Claude M. Newlin of Michigan State College, at whose suggestion this study was undertaken and whose encouragement and advice have done so much to make possible its completion.

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Samuel Sewall Frontispiece

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Few men, and certainly none in his generation in America, have left so extensive, so detailed and interesting a record of the world they knew and the life they lived as did Samuel Sewall. This record, and pre-eminently, of course, the well known diary, has long been recognized as an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of Puritan New England of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As such, it has been dredged for materials about every conceivable aspect of the New England of his day, religious, political, social, aesthetic, economic, and moral. It has been used, indeed, to provide everything except a detailed picture of the man whose record it is, Samuel Sewall himself. The title of Mr. Chamberlain's book, Samuel Sewall and the World He Lived in (Boston, 1897), suggests that the job has here been done. Actually, however, it has not. Appearing at the end of the last century, it shares the character of most of the writing that has been done on Sewall in its delicacy of sentiment and its inclination to reverence for its subject, with the result that it succeeds mainly in inducing a pious--or more recently, perhaps, an impious--frame of mind. Furthermore, it does not explore the Sewall materials with the thoroughness they deserve. Not appearing in any of the standard bibliographies but considerably more valuable, both for facts and for critical evaluation,

is the series of reviews by C. F. Adams, Jr., J. M. Hubbard, and W. H. Whitmore which appeared in the Nation during the years (1878-87) of the publication of the five volumes of the Sewall Papers. Though this series constitutes what is possibly the best introduction to Sewall now in print, it does not, needless to say, represent the larger study of the man and his work which is the object of the present study.

A writer taking for his subject a man whose narrative accomplishment is as considerable as Sewall's, must feel some hesitation in setting out to do what, in some ways at least, has already been done better by the subject himself. The fact is, however, that the diary is not an easy room to enter. Despite, for example, Parrington's statement that it is "the one among all books of the time that is still quick with life,"¹ or Murdock's that it is "one of those rare and precious works in which appears a man as he lived,"² or James Truslow Adams' that there is no other American diary "in which the journalist's entire world is so vividly reproduced,"³ to give but three among many such judgments, the appraisal of Charles

¹The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800 (New York, 1927), p. 88.

²A review of the Mark Van Doren abridgment of Sewall's Diary (New York, 1927), New England Quarterly, I (April, 1928), 257.

³Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, 611.

Francis Adams, Jr., made when the diary first appeared in print, is also valid. It seemed to him "essentially a work of historical reference," a book that "can never be . . . popular, or even in considerable demand with general readers"; this despite the fact that "it is a mine of necessary information," a work that brings the reader "face to face with the inmost life of the people whose story it . . . narrate[s]."⁴ It is, to change the figure once more, a very tangled skein. The fact that it is tangled is, as with all good diaries, an aspect of its appeal; but it is also the thing which accounts in large degree for its resistance to easy understanding and which makes it one in that category of works which earn from all but the most industrious students of our literature, respect--and neglect. Another reason why it resists understanding is that on almost every page there are entries which need explaining for all but specialists in the period. Then too, extensive as it is, it is not the complete record left by Sewall. The letter-book particularly, together with a considerable amount of unpublished material, supplies much information which needs coordinating with it.

The writer's wish is generally to resist the impulse to generalization about "the nature of Puritanism" on the basis of evidence presented primarily in the record of a single man. As Knappen well remarks, "In strict accuracy there were many Puritan spirits but there was no Puritan spirit."⁵ Like a

⁴ "Sewall's Diary," Nation, XXXV (August 3, 1882), 97.

⁵ M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1939), p. 339.

cloud, "the Puritan spirit" is distinct in outline only at a distance. The closer our view of it, the more we realize that what we took for distinctness is in reality a confused and unending process of change. Similarly, there is no "typical Puritan" any more than there is an "average American" or "typical Jew." There is special point in this for any student of early New England, because if he allows himself to think too easily in terms of the type rather than of the individual, he runs a strong chance of entering the realm of myth, of which there is already enough in studies of this period. No other period better illustrates the truth in the story about the four blind men and the elephant, each eagerly shouting about "the truth" in terms of his limited experience and limited point of view. To say this is not to rob the present study of point. Sewall was quite obviously a child of his times, illustrating its character in innumerable ways; so that without indulging in facile generalization we may yet learn much about the world in which he lived.

The subject of New England Puritanism has in recent years become a storm center, and a writer on it must expect to be read by those with whom a first concern will be a determination of his sympathies. The ablest scholars have shown a surprising willingness to become involved in what has become a kind of Procrustean field day, stretching and cutting to fit the thesis-bed of their particular choosing. Actually, of course, this is in some degree inevitable. Even should the historian admit, as apparently he would not always do, that his job is to record the

facts and bring to their analysis the same detached attitude that the chemist brings to the examination of his test tubes, the fact remains that he is a man writing of other men and cannot avoid seeing them in terms of his own predilections. If, like the present writer, he has noted with approval, to cite but one pertinent example, the reply which Emerson records of the liberal nineteenth-century clergyman to the proponent of the Calvinist God--"Your God is my devil"--it is doubtful that he could read the diary of Cotton Mather with much active sympathy or that any writing he might do on the subject of that tormented man of God could conceal the fact. It might be added that the mention of Emerson in this connection is most appropriate, for it is he who, as much as any other man, symbolizes the gulf across which we must feel ourselves reaching in any attempt to recreate the earlier New England. The sense of identity with subject, so desirable in historical study, can never be, where the Puritans are concerned, as complete as we would wish. Despite these facts, and partially because of them, the writer has tried not to pass judgment in terms of current points of view but rather to record and, so far as possible, understand.

A characteristic of much of the writing on the Puritan period which the student must expect to encounter and which undoubtedly accounts in some degree for its being the controversial subject that it is, is a tendency on the part of its author sons to shroud the past in a haze of filial piety and sentimental romance. The treatment accorded Sewall provides no exception. The sentimental haze is present in Whittier's

well known "Prophecy of Samuel Sewall," in which, for example, he speaks of Sewall's face as

True and tender and brave and just,
That man might honor and woman trust.⁶

It is in Hawthorne's story of "The Pine-Tree Shillings," in which he imagines "honest John Hull dressed . . . in a plum-colored coat, all the buttons of which were made of pine-tree shillings," and in which he fancifully pictures Hull's daughter and Sewall's wife-to-be (whom he chooses to call Betsey!) as "blushing with all her might" and looking like a full-blown peony or a great red apple."⁷ It is, of course, in Hawthorne also that we get the yarn about the daughter's dowry being her weight in pine-tree shillings, which, though without discoverable basis in fact, is probably one of the few things the ordinary person "knows" about Samuel Sewall. The filio-piety of Chamberlain's work has already been noted. It is symptomatic that in his introduction he speaks of "the people who never forget whose sons they are."⁸ It is doubtless in this reverential mood that he speaks of "the cross lights of heaven and history beating . . . down upon their home in the wild,"⁹ to cite but one of the innumerable such warm effusions in his work. Nor does this sort of thing end with the last century. H. L. Duff, whose Sewells [si

⁶Vol. I of Works (New York, 1892).

⁷Works, V, 43 (Nottingham Society edition, New York, n.d.).

⁸Page xi.

⁹Page xii.

in the New World appeared in 1824, confesses to the reader that he is fulfilling a "pious office."¹⁰ Some of the imaginative feats he performed in fulfilling this office will be noted in the course of the study. An amusing illustration of the tender atmosphere in which such writing exists is contained in R. C. Winthrop's A Difference of Opinion Concerning the Reasons why Katherine Winthrop Refused to Marry Chief Justice Sewall.¹¹ George E. Ellis had presented Mr. Winthrop with a copy of his An Address on the Life and Character of Chief-Justice Samuel Sewall,¹² a book which caused Winthrop to rise in a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society and say to its author: ". . . this is the pamphlet which, at the close of our last meeting, you handed to me to give to my father; and the reason why I preferred to await a more advanced state of his convalescence before doing so, is that I accidentally observed that, on the eighteenth page, you style his great-great-grandmother a 'worldly-minded woman.'" The author had arrived at this deadly judgment because of Madam Winthrop's insistence that the judge purchase a coach and wear a wig.

It is refreshing to turn from such examples of sentimental romanticizing and critical tender-mindedness to the study of Sewall's own pages; for immediately the haze is dispelled and we are in the honest realm of fact. The writer wishes, so far as possible, to remain there. Sewall stands in no need of wings,

¹⁰Page ix.

¹¹Boston, 1885.

¹²Boston, 1885.

and it signifies no lack of sympathy that we prefer him with them removed. He can stand an honest examination better than most men, and if there is much about him which amuses and some things which dismay us, there is quite as much that earns our affection and respect. If it is a loss that he no longer remains the man Whittier has given us, it is a gain that he exists as a more credible and certainly more interesting human creature. The loss in reverence for the gain in interest and credibility is a fair and desirable exchange.

In the matter of sources, the writer has examined everything Sewall ever wrote of which he has been able to gain any knowledge and numerous other primary sources relating to him. He has not hesitated, however, to use the findings of others in dealing with some of the many relationships with his age which Sewall represents. It would be strange indeed for a worker in this field not to incur a heavy indebtedness to Morison, Dexter Murdock, and Miller, to name but four obvious examples. In this connection it should be said that because Sewall touches his age at so many points, the temptation for the study to become a superficial survey of the period was one that had constantly to be resisted. I have tried, rather, to keep the study centered on the man, tracing background movements and personalities only so far as seemed necessary to make clear his relationship to them.

It has seemed advisable to quote much and often, frequently supplementing quotation in the text with additional quotation in the footnotes. One reason for this is that since the aim is

understanding and knowledge of a man, it would seem well to let him rather than the writer speak whenever possible. Also, as Palfrey well observes in defense of his quoting more than "mere considerations of rhetorical taste" might seem to allow, "The peculiar language of the men . . . is a substantive part of their peculiar history. It displays the form and pressure of the place and time. The phraseology of the actors is to the reader a constant expositor and reminder of the complexion of the thoughts and sentiments that determined the course of affairs."

In the transcription of material from original sources I have retained the peculiarities of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Since the purpose of the study is historical rather than antiquarian, however, I have seen little point in retaining abbreviations of words that would do little more than bedevil the typist and multiply many times the chances of trivial error. I have expanded them, rather, as the printer would have done in Sewall's own day. ye thus becomes the, ys becomes this, o becomes on, etc. Also, i's, j's, u's, v's, and the long form of the letter g have been changed to follow modern usage. Typographical peculiarities involving numbers have been retained (e.g., 21st for twenty-first, 9^r for November). Italics have not been retained for words that would now appear in regular form. Dates given are according to the Julian calendar, and for the annual period between January 1 and March 25 the contemporary device of double-dating is employed.

¹³John Gorham Palfrey, History of New England (Boston, 1876), I, xvi.

Chapter One

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS

Riding the Bristol Circuit in September of 1698, Samuel Sewall, forty-six years old and a member of the Superior Court of Massachusetts, was held up at Bristol by rain. "So," he writes, "after dinner at Mr. Saffin's, Not knowing better how to bestow my time, Look'd on Mr. Saffin's Books, and lit on Dr. Fullers History of the Worthies of England, and in p. 116. 117. found mention made of the Inundation at Coventry, on Friday April, 17. in the Maioralty of Henry Sewall my Father's Grandfather."¹ Accepting St. Paul's admonition to Titus to avoid matters of genealogy as being among those things which are unprofitable and vain, we need not enter the discussion of how far the Sewall pedigree may legitimately be extended beyond this worthy of the time of James the First.²

¹Diary, I, 484, entry for September, 12, 1698. He adds: "Mention is made p. 134. of William Dugdale's Illustrations of Warwickshire." The reference in Fuller (1811 edition), II, 404, is to a great flash flood of April 17, 1607, "in the Mayoralty of Henry Sewall." In Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire (London, 1656), p. 98, Henry and his brother William are both listed simply as mayors during the reign of James I.

²E. E. Salisbury, in his Family Memorials (New Haven, 1885), p. 151, declares that his representative in England, Col. Joseph L. Chester, found himself unable to go beyond this point, saying that though he "spared no labour nor expense" his efforts were "utterly without success." This conclusion in the matter is accepted by the editors of Sewall's Diary (see Vol. I, xv). Salisbury, however, is inclined to assume family connections that would make legitimate the coat of arms ("sable, a chevron betwixt three gad-bees argent") deriving from John Sewale, Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in the late fourteenth century. This inclination is shared by the Rev. Samuel Sewall (a nineteenth century descendant of the earlier Samuel) in his "Memoir of Hon. Samuel Sewall, Esq.," American Quarterly Register, XIII (February, 1841), 237-252. Like Salisbury and the Rev. Samuel Sewall, H.L. Duff, in The Sewells in the New World (Exeter, 1924), p. 1, feels

The little we know of this Henry Sewall, the first of three successive generations of eldest sons to bear the name, has considerable interest in what it suggests of the character and career of the subject of this study, his great-grandson Samuel. Born in 1544,³ he was apparently a man whose lines fell in pleasant places, for his life was long,⁴ prosperous, and filled with honor. Being, as Samuel later wrote of him, "a prudent man,"⁵ he married "a well-dowered maiden of very respectable degree, to wit Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Alverey Gresbrook . . . of Stoke Hall, Middleton, in his own county of Warwickshire,"⁶ a marriage which was but the first of many such prosperous alliances in the generations of Sewalls that were to follow. Through it and his

justified in going beyond Henry, Mayor of Coventry, to William Sewell (sic), "who was born about the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century in the reign of Henry VII, lived in Warwickshire, and married, in or before 1540, Matilda Horne of the same county." Further he cannot go, profoundly desirous though he is of doing so. One slight suggestion of some further knowledge on Sewall's part occurs in an entry he made in an inter-leaved almanac during a trip to England in 1688/9. Being shown the city hall at Coventry, he notes, ". . . saw my great Grandfathers name without any alias" (Diary, I, 305, entry for April 8, 1689).

³Duff, p. 2. I am dependent on this source for information on the first two Henrys derived from English sources to which I have not had access.

⁴Duff, p. 3. He died in 1628 at the age of eighty-four.

⁵Diary, I, xi. The reference here is to a letter dated September 21, 1720, which Sewall wrote to his eldest son, Sam Junior, of Brookline. Of first importance in the establishment of family background, it will hereafter be referred to simply as "Gen. Letter."

⁶Duff, p. 2.

business, which was that of linen-draper, he "acquired a great estate,"⁷ a fact which is reflected in his will, where there is an impressive listing of "messuages," "closes," "lands," "annuities," "parcels of ground," and "tenements."⁸ That he occupied a position of trust and regard in the estimation of his fellow-townsmen may be inferred from the fact that he served them as mayor of their city in 1589 and again in 1606,⁹ and as their representative in Parliament during the years 1620 to 1622.¹⁰ The Puritan character of both him and his community

⁷ "Gen. Letter," xi.

⁸ Duff, pp. 3-4. Some idea of the wealth of this progenitor of the Sewall line may be gained from the following details: To his wife he left: "one annuity or rente-charge of £11 8s. issuing out of certain lands in Ansley now in tenure of Eliz: Throckmorton" and "all lands, messuages, tenements in Coventry city and county and in Corley and Coundon . . . in Radford, in Wethenfield and Stoke"

To his eldest son Henry he left what Duff describes merely as a "large number of other lands."

To the younger son Richard he left various lands (again Duff is not specific) plus "one messuage in Smithford Street and a tenement with stables called the Sextree in Cov:"

To daughter Anne another "messuage" and "a close or pasture called Filter's Church, and a green merch adjoining called Tanfield Rene, and a close called Birchwalls, and two tenements in Bailie Lane" and various other pieces of land.

To daughter Margaret a "parcel of ground in Quarry Close, and all my close called Baronfield; three other closes and one quarteral [eight acres of arable land] in Stoke" etc.

Finally, there are bequests to miscellaneous charities and small donations to personal friends, servants, etc.

Duff remarks of Henry's brother William that his will shows him to have been "evidently not less prosperous than Henry" (page 6

⁹ Salisbury, p. 154.

¹⁰ Duff, p. 2.

shows itself in a surviving piece of correspondence having to do, typically enough, with a dispute between King James and the people of Coventry over the manner of receiving holy communion.¹¹ Henry Sewall was vigorous in defending the right of the community to remain standing during the sacrament, a practice highly irritating to the pedantic King.

So stands the first Henry Sewall, rich in lands, successful in business, prudently married, long of life, busy for his community and his Puritan God, serving in his calling under the great Taskmaster's eye. The Saxon family name that he bore now stood for far different things than the sea-might with which it was anciently associated.¹² A member of the "country party" whose leadership the Puritan gentry did so much to supply, we imagine him sitting heavy with years (he was seventy-six when he first entered Parliament) among those squires and merchants on the benches at Westminster who heard with anger the continuing news of corruption and dissoluteness at the court of James and regarded with alarm his ever-renewed demands for the exten-

¹¹It is described by Duff, p. 3. He fails to let us hear any of its words.

¹²Old English "sae" plus "geweald." There is an interesting entry for the name in H. Harrison, Surnames of the United Kingdom (London, 1918), II, 149. In Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire (London, 1656), pp. 474-475, there are several paragraphs on the ancient and honorable name of Saswalo, Sawwaldus, Sewallus, and Sewall, going back to the time of William. Elsewhere, as in Fuller's Worthies, there are such other variants as Sewald, Sewalle, Seawall, Seawale, and Sewell.

sion of royal prerogative. In 1628 he died and was buried in the Drapers' Chapel in St. Michael's Church at Coventry.¹³

His wife Margaret died in the next year and left to her eldest son Henry "twelve pence in money," adding that she did forgive "his offences."¹⁴ In the father's will these same "offences" are mentioned and he is instructed "to continue obedient."¹⁵ This is the first indication we have of a trouble-begetting disposition and apparent truculence of character that distinguishes this second Henry. Though thus cut off by his mother with the conventional shilling and unsuccessful in a long suit at law to recover his share of her property from his brother Richard and his sisters, Margaret and Anne,¹⁶ he was not in any financial difficulty. For besides having inherited property from his father, he followed the older Henry's example by a prosperous marriage to Mary Cawarden, "daughter and heiress of Thomas Cawarden, of Manesgyn, Ridware."¹⁷ This first wife dying childless, he married an Anne Hunt,¹⁸ to whom the third Henry was born in 1614, their only son and the father of Samuel the diarist.

¹³Salisbury, p. 152.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁶Ibid., P. 155.

¹⁷Duff, p. 13.

¹⁸Ibid.

In 1634 the tide of Puritan emigration was at its height. Few weeks would go by without news arriving of men, touched in their pockets by the exactions of Charles and in their consciences by the abhorred regulations of Laud, leaving "the pleasant land of England," as Cotton Mather said, "to transport themselves, and families, over the ocean sea, into a desert land in America."¹⁹ One of those who decided to act was the truculent Henry Sewall, who, as his grandson later wrote, "out of dislike to the English Hierarchy sent over his onely Son . . . to New England in the Year 1634, with Net Cattel and Provisions for a new Plantation. Mr. Cotton would have had my father settle at Boston; but in regard to his Cattel he chose to goe to Newbury, whether my Grandfather soon followed him."²⁰

The economic factor in this "Pitch at Newbury"²¹ and the place of the Sewalls, father and son, in the undertaking are of some interest. Guided by the practical observation that "to him who hath it shall be given," these founders of a New England town allowed each of the grantees two hundred acres for each fifty pounds he put in. Under this arrangement Henry Sewall held six hundred and thirty acres. Of the original ninety-one grantees, only one, Mr. Richard Dummer, whose niece the younger Henry later married, held more, namely one thousand and eighty acres. The smallest holder was allowed ten. In the list of names of those in the first company, only Henry Sewall

¹⁹Magnalia Christi Americana (Hartford, 1853), I, 13.

²⁰"Gen. Letter," xii.

²¹So termed in the obituary notice for Samuel Sewall in the Boston News-Letter, issue of January 8, 1730.

has after it the phrase "and servants."²² As possessor of "Net Cattel" Henry Sewall was but one of an organized company whose purpose was stock-raising and for whom the General Court ordered on July 8, 1635 (the actual settlement not being made until June of this year), that land be laid out at Newbury "for the keeping of the sheepe and cattell that came over in the Dutch shippes this yeare, and to belong to owners of said cattle."² A Thomas Coleman had undertaken to care for the cattle, and his failure to do so resulted in the holdings of the company being split up among its members.²⁴ Such facts as these, taken as a whole, leave one feeling that though they were doubtless not like the good people of Marblehead, who reminded John Cotton that whatever his purpose had been in coming to New England theirs was "to catch fish," there were quite possibly those among them who did not join the enterprise "meerly on the account of pure and undefiled Religion," as Cotton Mather, with others writing in the same tradition, would have us believe.²⁵

Though the "offenses" which kept the elder Henry out of his mother's will are not specified, we are scarcely prepared to learn that on October 6, 1635, the General Court ordered that the wife of Henry Seawall (sic) "shalbe att her owne disposeall, for the place of her habitacion, and that her saide husband shall allow her wearing apparell, and twenty pounds annually, to be paide

²²Joshua Coffin, The History of Newbury (Boston, 1845), p. 287.

²³Mass. Records, I, 149.

²⁴John J. Currier, Ould Newberry (Boston, 1896), p. 9.

²⁵Loc. cit.

quarterly, as also a bedd with furniture to it."²⁶ Apparently they did not remain apart, for on April 5, 1638, he was "presented by the grandjury for beating his wife,"²⁷ the Puritans not holding with the common law idea which permitted a man to beat his wife so long as the stick he used was no bigger than his thumb.²⁸ We are less surprised to discover that in 1638 he was having "business and difference with the town of Neweberry" which is referred to the General Court,²⁹ or that two years later, "for his contemptuous speech and carriage to Mr. Saltonstall he was "enjoynd to acknowledge his fault publicly at Ipswich Court, and to be of good behavior."³⁰ A final bit of information of this kind is recorded by Coffin, historian of the town of Newbury.³¹ In 1650, according to evidence presented to the grand jury, the old man (he was now seventy-four) "was walking

²⁶Mass. Records, I, 163. Which of the facts recorded in this paragraph apply to the elder Henry Sewall is a question for which I have not been able to determine the answer. With Savage (see his Genealogical Dictionary, IV, 53) and Coffin (op.cit., p. 61), I am satisfied that some of them do. Duff, however (op. cit., p. 16), gives the undocumented date of 1640 for the elder Henry's arrival in the New World, and the court entry here given refers to the wife as Ellen, rather than Anne as we should expect. Was there another Henry Sewall in the colony at the time? The twenty pounds annual payment could not have been levied on a poor, and perhaps therefore obscure, individual. Did the Henry Sewall in question remarry? It was now more than twenty years since the birth of the younger Henry in 1614, and should his mother have died in the meantime another marriage for the father would not have been unusual. If there exist answers to these questions I have not discovered them.

²⁷Mass. Records, I, 233. ²⁸See M.M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1939), 453-455, on the place of the Puritan wife.

²⁹Mass. Records, I, 222, entry for March 12, 1637/8.

³⁰Ibid., p. 286, entry for March 3, 1639-40.

³¹The History of Newbury, p. 61.

in the meeting-house neare the pulpit and Mr. Rogers being present and ready to step into the place to begin prayer, said, Mr. Showell [sic], cease your walking. Mr. S. answered, you should have come sooner." Pastor: "Remember where you are, this is the house of God." Sewall ("with a lowd voyce"): "I know how to behave in the house of God as well as you." Pastor: "Putt him out." Sewall: "Lett us see who dare." It is doubtless this exchange which led Savage to observe, "That he was insane, is the natural conclusion. . . ." ³² But however deranged were his faculties, his proud and mutinous spirit provides a grateful relief to the sober half-tones of the generations around him. Furthermore, the family memorialists, with whom his antic behavior has been a subject for silence (and this includes his grandson Samuel), might have considered that in him there was apparently the strength and vitality essential to the success of that wilderness venture toward which they turn such reverential eyes. When the Newbury meeting house was moved in 1646, he sold his house and land (again outraged, no doubt) and moved to nearby Rowley, where he died in March of 1657, eighty-one years of age. ³³

On March 25 of the year that the elder Henry moved to Rowley, the son, who had come to New England as a youth of twenty and was

³²James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England (Boston, 1862), IV, 53.

³³Currier, Ould Newberry, p. 247. Salisbury, Family Memorials, p. 157, gives the date of his baptism as April 8, 1576, from which we may assume that this was also the year of his birth.

now thirty-two, married nineteen-year-old Jane Dummer, daughter of Stephen and Alice Dummer, also of Newbury.³⁴ As was usual with Sewall marriages, the alliance was a desirable one, the Dummers being among the original proprietors of the town and a family of long and worthy record in England.³⁵ In the year after the marriage, father and mother Dummer decided that the climate of New England was "not agreeable" and returned to England, taking the younger couple with them.³⁶ There, at Tunworth, Bishop Stoke, and Baddesley in Hampshire, five children were born, to which number three more were added after the family's later return to New England.³⁷ Of these, Samuel, the eldest son, "came abroad," as he later said,³⁸ on March 28, 1652, at Horton in the parish of Bishop Stoke, "so that the light of the Lord's Day was the first light that my Eyes saw, being born a little before day-break. I was baptised by Mr. Rashly, (sometime

³⁴ "Gen. Letter," xii. Sewall, "Memoir," p. 239.

³⁵ Salisbury, p. 257, traces them back to the twelfth century and terms them "respectable yeoman" of Hampshire. Duff, p. 19, characteristically speaks of the family as enjoying "good standing among the English rural aristocracy for many centuries."

³⁶ "Gen. Letter," xii.

³⁷ Ibid. and Vital Records of Newbury (Salem, 1911), p. 471. The eight, with places and dates of birth, are as follows:
Hannah, May 10, 1649, at Tunworth, Hampshire.
Samuel, March 28, 1652, at Bishop Stoke, Hampshire.
John, October 10, 1654, at Baddesley, Hampshire.
Stephen, August 15, 1657, at Baddesley, Hampshire (given as August 19 in the "Gen. Letter").
Jane, October 25, 1659, at Baddesley, Hampshire.
Anne, September 3, 1662, at Newbury, Massachusetts.
Mehitabell, May 8, 1665, at Newbury, Massachusetts.
Dorothy, October 29, 1668, at Newbury, Massachusetts.

³⁸ Letter-Book, I, 383, letter to Joseph Gerrish dated May 2, 1709.

member of the Old Church in Boston) in Stoke Church May 5, 1652. Mr. Rashly first preached a Sermon, and then baptised me. After which an entertainment was made for him and many more.³⁹

At the town of Baddesley, to which the family moved a few months after Samuel's birth,⁴⁰ the father apparently served as a minister; for when, in 1659, he returned to New England, the elder Henry being lately dead and "his rents at Newbury coming to very little when remitted to England,"⁴¹ he carried a letter from Richard Cromwell, Protector, addressed to the Governor and magistrates of Massachusetts Bay which reads as follows:

Loveing Friends,

We being given to understand, that Henry Sewall of Rowley in Messeytusick bay in New-England, dyed about foure [sic] years since, possessed of an estate . . . in the colony aforesaid, and that the said estate did and ought to descend and come to his only sonne Henry Sewall,

³⁹ "Gen. Letter," xii. Whittier mistakenly speaks of his birthplace as Newbury (see Works, II, 41). Since his great grandfather lived, died, and was buried at Coventry, I am at a loss to explain the following statement by Sewall in a letter to Mary Dummer dated August 20, 1712: "Of my Parents Eight Children, it fell to my share only to be born in the parish where my Great Grandfather liv'd, and to be baptised in the Church where he lyes interd." (Letter-Book, II, 6-7).

⁴⁰ "Gen. Letter," xii.

⁴¹ Ibid.

minister of North Baddesly, in our county of Southamp-
ton in England, who now purposeing to make a voyage into
New-England, there personally to make his clayme to the
said estate, hath desired our lycence for his absence,
as also our letters recommendatory unto you, that when
(by the helpe of God) he shall be arrived in New-England,
he may have speedy justice and right done him . . . soe
he may the sooner returne to his ministeriall charge at
North-Baddesly. . . . he being personally knowne to us
to be laborious and industrious in the work of the minis-
try, and very exemplary for his holy life and good conver-
sation . . . soe he may the more expeditiously returne to
his . . . charge

Your very loving friend,

Richard P.

Whitehall, the 23d of March 1658⁴²

Why he did not return to England we do not know, but the abdi-
cation of Richard must have been a determining factor. A friend

⁴²Thomas Hutchinson, History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay (London, 1760), Vol. I, app. 12. He made an earlier visit while the elder Henry still lived (see the "Gen. Letter," xii).

The evidence of his being a minister is very curious, for several reasons. First, we hear nothing about such an occupa-
tion before he first left New England at the age of thirty-three; nor do we hear anything about it after he returned there to live, in a country where ministers were in short supply. Second, we hear nothing about any formal training for such work, and the Puritans were not given to a self-instructed clergy. He was only twenty when he first came to New England. Had he then quali-
fied himself during the twelve years he was in England? Finally, and strangest of all, is the fact that his son Samuel makes no mention of the matter, when obviously it would have been to him a thing of considerable moment.

of the Protector would have little to look forward to in Restoration England. In New England the elect still ruled, and he was at home. There was no doubt where his sympathies lay. He had told his son "many times" of how in 1637, at the time Governor's Winthrop's authority was being challenged by the party of Sir Henry Vane, during the famous Anne Hutchinson controversy, "that he and others went on foot from Newbury to Cambridge [where the election was held 'upon the Plain in the open Aer'], forty miles, on purpose to be made free [i.e., to be made a freeman, which he was on May 17],⁴³ and help to strengthen Governor Winthrop's Party."⁴⁴ The estimation he enjoyed in the eyes of the people of Newbury is shown in their six times choosing him to serve as their deputy to the General Court at Boston.⁴⁵ His estate, like those of his forbears, was large, consisting of numerous "houses," "barnes," "lands," "tenements," etc., both in Newbury and in England.⁴⁶

⁴³Sewall, "Memoir," p. 239.

⁴⁴Letter-Book, I, 294-295, letter to Edmund Calamy in London, dated January 24, 1703/4. Sewall adds: "The New-English Planters were at this time hardly bestead; being infested by the Pequot Indians, and the new Opinions at the same time."

⁴⁵Mass. Records, Vol. IV, part 2, pp. 2, 41, 71, 274, 362, 448.

⁴⁶His will may be seen at the Essex County Courthouse, Salem, Mass., probate docket, file number 25077. Its details are of some interest. Having thoughts of "dissolution and freedom from this transitory world" and thinking to "dispose of what God hath been pleased to entrust me with," he first of all gives his soul to God and his body to the earth. Then:

To his wife Jane ten pounds a year for as long as she lived (to be paid by Samuel) and "rent and revenue of a small farme, now in the . . . occupation of Joseph Goodridge, containing about one hundred and five Acres . . ."; also, "the house new built which now I dwell in" with barn and one and one half acres

Being eighty-six years old, he "grew very decrepit and sickly" during the winter and spring of 1700 and died on May 16 of that year.⁴⁷ Shortly before, when there was talk of going to meeting, "he shewd his inability, and said he hopd he should shortly go to a greater Assembly."⁴⁸ A few months later his wife Jane died, and on a tombstone in the burying ground of the First Church at Newbury one may read these words:⁴⁹

of land adjoining (this to go to Samuel on the mother's death); also, two acres of saltmarsh of the twenty "purchased of Mr. Woodman" and two acres of meadow of the twelve "purchased of George Little."

To Sam, in addition to the house and land in Newbury he is to get after his mother's death, and the mill-lot and lands he is to get from his sister Mehitabel should she die without issue, he confirms a former deed of gift of a "tenement at Lee near Rumsey in England and in the County of Hants [i.e. Hampshire], lately in the occupation of Stephen Newland," and "all the houses and lands belonging to me in Coventry, the County of Coventry and Warwickshire," plus six acres of the meadow purchased of George Little.

Stephen gets "House, Lands, Barnes, orchards, and all . . . thereunto belonging . . . in Horton, in the parish of Bishopstoke, in the County of Hampshire."

To son John and daughters Hannah (Tappan), Jane (Gerrish), and Anne (Longfellow) various pieces of land around Newbury (sixteen acres, twenty acres, two and a half acres, etc.).

To daughter Mehitabel the "mill lot" and one hundred acres adjoining, to go to Samuel should she die without issue.

To daughter Dorothy "all my land in Newbury Neck," about sixty acres.

The will was drawn on August 17, 1678, and designates Samuel and Stephen to be executors. The favored position occupied by Samuel is quite obvious.

⁴⁷Letter-Book, I, 236, letter to John Stork dated June 10, 1700. The son had seen him the day before he died, when he stopped at Newbury on his way to hold court at Kittery.

⁴⁸Ibid. and Diary, II, 15, entry for May 25, 1700.

⁴⁹See Coffin, p. 13.

HENRY SEWALL SENT BY HENRY SEWALL HIS FATHER
IN THE SHIP ELIZABETH AND DORCAS, CAPT. WATT
COMMANDER

ARRIVED AT BOSTON 1634

WINTERED AT IPSWICH, HELPED BEGIN THIS PLANTATION
1635

FURNISHING ENGLISH SERVANTS, CATTLE AND PROVISIONS

MARRIED MISTRESS JANE DUMMER, MARCH 26, 1646

DIED MAY 16. 1700. AETATIS 86.

HIS FRUITFUL VINE BEING THUS DISJOINED

FELL TO THE GROUND JANUARY 13 FOLLOWING, AETATIS 74.

The feeling of Samuel for his parents was one of warmest affection and regard, and the diary records much visiting back and forth during the son's years in Boston. When he stopped to see his father two days before the old man died there was a mutual kissing of hands, and he records with evident pleasure that at the funeral Mr. Tappan, the minister, termed him "a true Nathanael" (i.e. a man without guile).⁵⁰ A characteristic reference to his mother appears in a letter to his aunt Alice Dummer in England. He wonders if his mother's home community there continues "to be fruitfull in such Christians as my dear Mother was. If it doe, it must needs be a happy place."⁵¹ A suggestion of her character is in a short, undated letter

⁵⁰Diary, II, 13, 14, entries for May 14 and 19.

⁵¹Letter-Book, I, 265, letter dated December 8, 1701.

copied by Samuel into his letter-book several years after her death. After asking him about some correspondence for delivery to England, she continues: "I can say but little to you; But earnestly desire you to be diligent in Prayer unto GOD, that He would be pleased to grant us his blessed Spirit. The Lord JESUS hath told us, that He is more ready to give the blessed Spirit, than a father is to give good Gifts to his Children. This should encourage us to be constant in his Service. Thus leaving you to the Lord, who alone is able to teach you . . ." etc.⁵² The following excerpt from a long description of her funeral, which Samuel attended January 15, 1700/1, tells us much of both the mother and the son:

Nathaniel Bricket taking in hand to fill the Grave, I said, Forbear a little, and suffer me to say That amidst our bereaving sorrows We have the Comfort of beholding this Saint put into the rightfull possession of that Happiness of Living desired and dying Lamented. She lived commendably Four and Fifty years with her dear Husband, and my dear Father: And she could not well brook the being divided from him at her death; which is the cause of our taking leave of her in this place. She was a true and constant Lover of Gods Word, Worship, and Saints: And she always, with a patient cheerfullness, submitted to the divine Decree of providing Bread for her self and others in the

⁵²Letter-Book, I, 366-367.

sweat of her Brows. And now her infinitely Gracious and Bountiful Master has promoted her to the Honor of higher Employments, fully and absolutely discharged from all manner of Toil, and Sweat. My honoured and beloved Friends and Neighbours! My dear Mother never thought much of doing the most frequent and homely offices of love for me; and lavished away many Thousands of Words upon me, before I could return one word in Answer: And therefore I ask and hope that none will be offended that I have so ventured to speak one word in her behalf; when shee her self is become speechless. Made a Motion with my hand for the filling of the Grave. Note, I could hardly speak for passion and Tears.⁵³

Samuel's relations with his brothers and sisters need not detain us long. Though there is nothing to suggest that they were anything other than affectionate, it is only his brother Stephen who figures with any prominence in Sewall's diary and letters. "Frater Charissimus" to Samuel⁵⁴ and a figure of prominence in the affairs of his town of Salem (magistrate, major in the militia, register of deeds, clerk of the inferior court--in the last of which capacities we find him at the famous witchcraft trials), it was of him that the visiting English book-seller John Dunton wrote, ". . . his care is to live

⁵³ Diary, II, 30-31.

⁵⁴ Ibid., III, 365, entry for October 17, 1725, and editors' note. In a letter to Joseph Thomson dated January 18, 1703/4, Sewall writes of him as "my dear and only surviving Brother, Major Stephen Sewall . . . at Salem . . ." (Letter-Book, I, 288).

so as to be an example to the people; he is the mirror of hospitality, and neither Abraham nor Lot, were ever more kind to strangers."⁵⁵ His brother John enters the record as little more than the reason for Samuel's observation upon his death that now after thirty years the three brothers and five sisters are at last "broken in upon."⁵⁶ The sisters, all of whom married and lived at Newbury or Rowley, figure primarily as begetters of "many desirable Children."⁵⁷ The figure of the "fruitful vine" might, indeed, be applied to all eight members of this generation; for all married, none had fewer than four children, and among them they replenished the New England earth to the number of no less than seventy-three.⁵⁸ "Many children

⁵⁵Life and Errors(Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 2, II), p. 117. He visited New England in 1686, and his impressions were published in 1705. When he visited Salem, Stephen Sewall insisted that he stay at his home.

⁵⁶Letter-Book, I, 215, letter to Nathaniel Higginson dated November 18, 1699.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 236, letter to John Storke dated June 10, 1700; Diary, I, xviii-xxi.

⁵⁸Diary, loc. cit. Since the subject of this study figured prominently as a Massachusetts judge, it is of some interest to note the company he had among the descendants of Henry Sewall: (1) Samuel himself was a judge of the Superior Court of Massachusetts from the court's establishment in 1692 until his resignation in 1728, serving during the last ten of these years as chief justice. (2) Samuel's great grandson was a judge of the same court from 1800 to 1814 and chief justice in 1814. (3) David, grandson of Samuel's brother John, was judge of the same court from 1777 to 1790 and afterwards long a judge of the United States district court in Maine. (4) Stephen, son of Samuel's brother Stephen was judge of the same court in 1739 and chief justice from 1752 to 1760. (5) Stephen's nephew Jonathan was Attorney General of Massachusetts from 1767 to 1775. (6) Jonathan's sons, Jonathan and Stephen, were respectively chief justice and Attorney General of the lower province of Canada. (For this information generally, see the Rev. Samuel Sewall, "Memoir," p. 237.)

and Grand-children are Sprung of my Father's Eight," wrote Sewall toward the end of his life, "insomuch that I cannot reckon them up."⁵⁹

II

When, in 1661, Samuel's father, having decided to remain in New England, sent to England for his family, the mother "quickly . . . went to Winchester with 5 small Children . . . ; and John Nash and Mary Hobs her Servants there to be in a readiness for the Pool Waggons." Relatives "took leave with Tears," and (the old man writing this doubtless remembering what had impressed the nine-year-old boy) "Capt. Dummer of Swathling treated [the company] with Raisins and Almonds."⁶⁰ They boarded the Prudent Mary at Graves-End, took on sheep at Dover, and stood out to sea.⁶¹ Thus Sewall left what forever remained to him his "dear Native Country," loyal son of Boston and Massachusetts though he later became, and to it he eagerly returned more than a quarter of a century later.⁶²

Little is known of conditions aboard ship during this period, but for many who made the Atlantic crossing there can be

⁵⁹Letter-Book, II, 181, letter to Alice Dummer dated December 14, 1724.

⁶⁰"Gen. Letter," xiii.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Letter-Book, I, 360, letter to Nathaniel Higginson dated March 10, 1707/8; Diary, I, 229, letter to Increase Mather dated October 8, 1688. One vivid memory that remained with him through the years was of "being at Bishop Stoke and Badesly, April 23, 1661, the day of the Coronation of K. Charles the second, the Thunder and Lightning of it" ("Gen. Letter," xii).

little doubt that they were what the historians of the subject have described as "well nigh intolerable."⁶³ The vague thing called "ship fever" was known to every port physician. Ordinary passengers slept in canvas hammocks slung below decks and helped themselves in the galley, though we may assume that the Sewalls shared the somewhat better accommodations of the Captain's Cabin. "We were," says Sewall, "about eight weeks at Sea, where we had nothing to see but Water and the Sky; so that I began to fear I should never get to Shoar again; only I thought [again recalling the childish mind] the Captain and Mariners would not have ventured themselves if they had not hopes of getting to Land again." When finally he did see land again he was "overjoyed" and, going ashore in a boat, was "carried out in arms July 6, 1661" at a place near what was later Scarlet's wharf, "a poor little Schoolboy of Nine years and $\frac{1}{2}$ old."⁶⁴ Thus was he introduced to the town of which he later liked to say he had "grown a little fond," and the day would be the occasion for anniversary notes in his diary after the passing of more than half a century.⁶⁵

The father "hastened to Boston and carried his Family to Newbury by Water," where young Sam was carried ashore in a canoe.⁶⁶ At Newbury he remained for the next six years, until in

⁶³John Robinson and G. F. Dow, The Sailing Ships of New England (Salem, Mass., 1922), I, 35.

⁶⁴"Gen. Letter," xiii, and Diary, III, 48, entry for July 6, 1715.

⁶⁵"Gen. Letter," loc. cit.; Diary, III, 222, entry for July 6, 1719.

⁶⁶"Gen. Letter," loc. cit.

1667 he entered Harvard College at the age of fifteen, and for it he formed one of his many characteristic affections. The town as he first saw it is described by Josselyn, writing in 1663: "On the south side of Merrimack river, . . . houses . . . scattering, well stored with meadow, upland, and arable, and about four hundred head of cattle."⁶⁷ It was less than thirty years old, so that young Samuel doubtless heard many stories of the days of its founding: how the first small company came up from Ipswich by water, through Plum Island Sound, up the Quascacunquen (a river later named Parker), and across country to the place where the town now stood;⁶⁸ how the first religious services were held "in the open air under a tree";⁶⁹ how a rude meeting house was built, to the services at which all able bodied men were ordered to bring firearms for watch against Indians.⁷⁰ He heard of the hard winter two years prior to his arrival, when snow stood four feet deep on the level, and learned the reason, unknown to us, why a law had recently been passed declaring a fine of five shillings for any man who should "discharge a gunn in the meeting house . . . or ride a . . . horse into [it]."⁷¹

⁶⁷Coffin, p. 68, cited.

⁶⁸Coffin, p. 15.

⁶⁹Currier, p. 16, citing testimony given at Ipswich court in 1669.

⁷⁰Currier, p. 17. The law ordered that every able-bodied man was "to stand sentinel at the doores all the time of the public meeting, every one after another, either by himself, in person, or by a sufficient substitute."

⁷¹Coffin, pp. 63-64. The law was passed May 16, 1661.

Some of the matters in the town which must certainly have occupied his youthful attention were the work on the new meeting house in the year of his arrival, the prison break at Ipswich in the next year, and, in 1663, Lydia Wardwell's being "severely whipt" for coming naked into the meeting house, "being given up to the leading of the Lord."⁷² On January 26 of this year also, just "at the shutting in of evening," occurred an earthquake which the boy long after remembered as shaking him while he sat in his father's house "in a Jam of the Chimney."⁷³ This also is the year in which he saw Elizabeth Webster sitting out before the meeting house on lecture day with a paper on her head bearing in capital letters the words, "FOR TAKING A FALSE OATH IN COURT," an illustration for the future judge of how such matters were handled. On July 6, 1664, it was ordered that Giles Cromwell was "to keep the boys in order in the meeting house, and to give notice to the selectmen of such as are out of order, and to have six shillings for his paynes." Young Sam was now twelve. In 1665 the town voted to pay forty shillings for "every wolf . . . killed within the Towne," and seven were turned in for bounties that year. In 1666 the wheat crop failed for the third season running.⁷⁴ Prison breaks, religious fanatics,

⁷²Coffin, pp. 64-66. The date of the whipping was May 5.

⁷³Ibid., and Letter-Book, II, 229-230, letter to Benjamin Wadsworth dated November 14, 1727. The reminiscence occurred to him because of the quake of this latter year, which rocked his bedroom "like a cradle" and was accompanied by a "crashing Noise" which he found "very amazing."

⁷⁴Coffin, pp. 67-70.

the shooting of guns in meeting, rough justice, harsh winters, war on predatory creatures, unruly youths, crop failures-- all this adds up to a picture that was to become standard in the later American development, the raw, isolated frontier community. It is, of course, a distorted picture, for it is generally the violent and unruly aspect of things rather than the sober and conforming parts that finds its way into such records as are here drawn upon; but it is nevertheless a picture at considerable variance with what tends to be our conception of the Puritan community.

What young Samuel Sewall was like in these years we can only guess. The only contemporary source is the highly dubious one of a funeral sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Prince on the occasion of Sewall's death. In it we find a not unusual, perhaps, but still surprising willingness to distort history in the service of conventional piety. Here is the early Sewall legend in the making:

Let the very Children first come along with me, and look thro' the Glass of his Life, and see his Early Piety. Look O Children, and see, How quiet and modest our Young Samuel sits at the feet of his pious Parents; how full of Reverence and Affection to them, how ready and dutiful in all his Carriage: and how full of the Fear of GOD, how afraid of sinning against Him, how careful to read the Scriptures, and to Pray in Secret in his early Days!

Look into the School, and see, How submissively He behaves Himself; how full of Veneration and Love to his

Master, how mindful of every Instruction, how diligent in Learning his Books and improving in Knowledge: behold how pleas'd his Master is to observe it, and how greatly loves Him. There you may see the hopeful Bloom of his future Usefulness: And do you O Children, Learn to follow Him.⁷⁵

One wonders if the pious speaker ever considered that he was here engaging in the very thing for which he doubtless was inclined to berate writers of fiction. Perhaps, of course, he was speaking the literal truth; we have no evidence to prove the contrary, just as we have none to prove that what he says is so. Perhaps the young Samuel was the youthful paragon he pictures, but the intent to improve the occasion is too transparent, and we may be permitted our doubts.

One thing concerning these years spent in Newbury about which we need not speculate is the lasting affection they inspired for the town and its countryside. This feeling is evident in a passage which for its homely, brocaded elegance deserves quoting at length. It appears in his prophetic work published in 1697 under the title of Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica Ad Aspectum Novi Orbis configurata. Or some few Lines towards a description of the New Heaven As it makes to those who Stand upon the New Earth, which was written, as he

⁷⁵A Sermon at the Publick Lecture in Boston, Jan. viii. 1729, 30. Upon the Death of the Honourable Samuel Sewall, Esq; Late Chief Justice of the Circuits (Boston, 1730), p. 31. Duff is quite willing to pursue this fanciful line, remarking, "We know little about his childhood and youth except that he showed from the first uncommon intelligence and a remarkably gentle and forbearing disposition" (p. 26).

Phænomena quædam
APOCALYPTICA

Ad Aspectum NOVI ORBIS configurata.

Or, some few Lines towards a description of the New

HEAVEN

As It makes to those who stand upon the
NEW EARTH

By *Samuel Sewall* sometime Fellow of *Harvard Colledge* at
Cambridge in New-England.

Psalms, 45. 10, Forget also thy own people, and thy fathers house.

Isai 11. 14. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west.

Act. 1. 6 -- 8 Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

--- -- ye shall be witnesses unto me unto the uttermost parts of the earth;
hasta lo ultimo de la tierra. Spanish Bible.

Luke, 15. 24. For this My Son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. V 32. For this thy Brother &c.

Ille non deerit Promittit; restituet Regnum Israeli; sed suo modo, loco, ac tempore. Buzinger. Ne quis illa a me dicta, aut adducta accipiat, quali contendendi, aut adversandi studio; ac non discendi potius, ac conferendi gratia. Ex Med. Apoc. p. 371. ad Psalmam Sextam.

MASSACHUSET;

BOSTON, Printed by *Bartholomew Green*, and *John Allen*,
And are to be sold by *Richard Wilkins*, 1697.

says, "to make a short Apology for America in answer to those who have laid it out for Hell, and I do not know what all. . . ."⁷⁶ He refutes the charge of the "impossibility of subsisting here" thus:

Mary Brown . . . the First born of Newbury is yet alive; and is become the mother and Grandmother of many children. And so many have been born after her in the Town, that they make two Assemblies, wherein GOD is solemnly worshipped every Sabbath Day.

As long as Plum-Island⁷⁷ shall faithfully keep the commanded Post; Notwithstanding all the hectoring Words, and hard Blows of the proud and boisterous Ocean; As long as any Salmon, or Sturgeon shall swim in the streams of Merrimack; or any Perch, or Pickeril, in Crane Pond; As long as the Sea-Fowl shall know the Time of their Coming, and not neglect seasonably to visit the Places of their Acquaintance; As long as any Cattel shall be fed with the Grass growing in the Medows, which do humbly bow down themselves before Turkie-Hill; As long as any Sheep shall walk upon Old Town Hills, and shall from thence pleasantly look down upon the River Parker, and the fruitfull Marishes lying beneath; As long as any free and harmless Doves shall find a White Oak, or other Tree within the Township, to perch, or feed, or build a careless Nest upon; and shall voluntarily present

⁷⁶Letter-Book, I, 293-294, letter to Sir Henry Ashhurst dated March 5, 1697/8.

⁷⁷Plum Island lies a short distance from Newbury, at the mouth of the Merrimac River.

themselves to perform the office of Gleaners after Barley Harvest; As long as Nature shall not grow Old and dote; but shall constantly remember to give the rows of Indian Corn their education, by Pairs: So long shall Christians be born there; and being first made meet, shall from thence be Translated, to be made partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.⁷⁸

What Sewall says concerning his education during the years in England and at Newbury makes possible a reasonably sure estimate of its character. At Baddesly he was, as he says, "by the merciful goodness of God . . . taught to read English."⁷⁹ After this he attended a grammar school at the neighboring market town of Rumsey, of which a Mr. Figes was master. Supposing that the course of his studies followed that described by Charles Hoole in A New Discovery (London, 1669), our best contemporary source on the subject,⁸⁰ he would enter Baddesly "petty school"

⁷⁸Page 18. It was for this passage that Whittier, not being familiar with his efforts at verse-making, termed him "a poet who never measured rhyme" (Works, I, 214). Whittier wrote a version in verse that is considerably less successful than the prose original.

⁷⁹"Gen. Letter," xii.

⁸⁰Hoole was an English schoolmaster who, writing from "thrice seven yeares experience in this despicable, but comfortable employment of teaching school" (page iii), describes his method of proceeding and provides a highly interesting and detailed picture of the "petty" and grammar schools at the time of Sewall's attending them. My evaluation of this source is that of George E. Littlefield, Early Schools and School-Books of New England (Boston, 1904), p. 49.

at the age of five or six and possibly much earlier.⁸¹ Arriving "fairly washed, neatly combed, and handsomly clad," he would learn here his letters and "a smattering of some syllables and words in the horn-book,"⁸² possibly by spelling them aloud in unison with the other members of the class, the master starting them off together with a blow of his strap on the desk.⁸³ He would then pass from horn-book to primer and the learning by rote of such things as the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. After this he would enter on the Book of Genesis and such other "remarkable Histories" as would be "most likely to delight him."⁸⁴ Finally, there would be catechizing in such a work as The Foundation of Christian Religion gathered into sixe Principles (London, 1590) by William Perkins.⁸⁵ When, at the age of seven or eight, he could read "in any place of a book that is offered him," he would be considered fit to enter grammar school and

⁸¹Hoole, p. 20. His own son, Joseph, was sent to school "to Captain Townsend's Mother, his Cousin Jane [Tappan] accompanying him" on April 27, 1691, at which time he was exactly two years, eight months, and twelve days old (see the Diary, I, 344).

⁸²Hoole, pp. 20, 33.

⁸³See Littlefield, Early Schools, p. 121. Sometimes all studying was done aloud, oriental fashion, to the occasional disturbance of neighbors and a consequent passing of restraining votes at town meetings.

⁸⁴Hoole, pp. 21-23. The line of progress here traced is what John Locke, Thoughts Concerning Education (London, 1710), p. 234, refers to as "the ordinary Road of Horn-Book, Primer, Psalter, Testament, and Bible."

⁸⁵Littlefield, p. 105. This work was standard for children until the appearance in 1656 of John Cotton's Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes.

begin the study of Latin. The school calendar to which he would now be accustomed provided for no free Saturdays and no months of vacation. The school day began "before eight in the morning" with a prayer and, with a two-hour break from eleven to one, ended in the same way "about five a clock in the summer, and four in the winter season," at which time the young scholars would "rise out of their places one by one with their . . . book in their hand, and make their honours to their Master as they passe before his face, one following another at a distance out of Schoole."³⁶

At Runsey grammar school the hours would be somewhat longer, beginning at six or seven in the morning "both in Winter and Summer," and continuing, with a break from eleven to one, till five in the afternoon. Scholars who arrived before school began would be permitted to "play about the Schoole, till the clock strike, on condition they can say their parts." Occasionally they might be excused to attend a writing school, which, unlike the grammar school, was for "them that have a prejudice against Latine" and therefore taught things proper to "ordinary callings," such as arithmetic and writing.⁸⁷ Otherwise there would be scant attention

⁸⁶ Hoole, pp. 238-239.

⁸⁷ Hoole, pp. 25-26, 240. See also Henry F. Jenks, "Historical Sketch," in Catalogue of the Boston Public Latin School (Boston, 1886), p. 6. Jenks and Littlefield deal mainly with New England, but the situation in the two countries was generally the same until after the Revolution (see the comment by Littlefield, p. 93). It might be noted here that Edward Eggleston's chapter on "The Tradition of Education" in his Transit of Civilization (New York, 1901) is a useful and most interesting introduction to the subject.

to such secondary concerns; the business at hand was to prepare for the university, and that meant the mastery of Latin and Greek. Texts would probably be Hoole's Nomenclature, a small Latin-English vocabulary; Hoole's or Brinsley's Sententiae Pueriles, or Sentences for Children; one of the same author's Colloquies of Corderius, with texts in Latin and English whereby "Children, by the help of their Mother-Tongue, may the better learn to speak Latin in ordinary Discourse"; and Brinsley's Accidence. There would be the Grammars of Lily and Camden, and, if a venture were made into Hebrew, those of William Shickard or John Buxtorf.⁸⁸ Rules would be mastered by "patter[ing] them over by heart."⁸⁹ In addition to Corderius, the authors most frequently read would be Aesop, Cicero, Ovid, Homer, and Virgil.⁹⁰ Not to mention, of course,

⁸⁸Littlefield, pp. 241, 243, 245-246, 268, 273. Diary, II, 52, entry for January 31, 1701/2: "Cousin Moody of York comes to see me; upon enquiry about a Hebrew word, I found he had no Lexicon; and I gave him my Buxtorf."

⁸⁹Hoole, p. 43.

⁹⁰Kenneth B. Murdock, "The Teaching of Latin and Greek at the Boston Latin School in 1712," Col. Soc. of Mass. Proc. XXVII (1927-30), 28. On June 10, 1700, when his son Joseph was eleven and attending grammar school in Boston, Sewall wrote to his agent, John Love, in London to "send in School Books": ". . . Esops Eng. and Lat., Corderius Eng. and Lat., Terrence Eng. and Lat., Ovid de Tristibus, Metamorphosis, Virgil, Tullies de Officijs, Grammars constr[u]ing Books" (Letter-Book, I, 238). Cotton Mather wrote that "at the Age of little more than eleven years" he had "conversed with Cato, Corderius, Terence, Tully, Ovid, and Virgil" (see Barrett Wendell's Cotton Mather [New York, 1891], p. 35).

the Bible, of which there would be "a Chapter every morning, and every noon in the New Testament," for, as Hoole says, "variety in the Mastery of his Accidents."⁹¹

The family's removal to Newbury meant, if anything, an improvement in Sewall's educational environment. We know nothing of "Mr. Figes" of Rumsey, but his dimensions would have had to be truly heroic to compare with those of the venerable Reverend Thomas Parker of Newbury, who lived but a short distance from the Sewalls⁹² and to whom, in the absence of a regular grammar school in the town,⁹³ Sewall was put.⁹⁴ Son of a renowned father, he was a graduate of Magdalen College, where he received the master's degree. His scholarly attainments were formidable⁹⁵ and had cost him the sight of

⁹¹Page 43.

⁹²Coffin, p. 398, says that the Sewall home was "in Parker Street (formerly South Street), on the north side, a few rods N. W. from Mr. Noyes's house," which was where Parker dwelt Chamberlain, Samuel Sewall and the World he Lived in, p. 86, mistakenly states that he was educated by Parker at his father's house.

⁹³W. H. Small, "The New England Grammar School," School Review, X (September, 1902), 518. In 1658 the town was required to pay five pounds toward the maintenance of the Latin school in Ipswich "unless they by the next court provided a Latin schoolmaster according to Law." There is no record that they did so until 1687, when Seth Shove, a protégé of Sewall's, became the schoolmaster for the year. See also Samuel E. Morison, Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), I, 333-334.

⁹⁴"Gen. Letter," xiii.

⁹⁵The story is told of him (Coffin, p. 374) that some fellow ministers, being "dissatisfied with some of his opinions, came to reason with him . . .; they addressed him in English, he replied in Latin; they followed him in Latin, he retired to Greek, and to Hebrew; they pursued, but in Arabic he stopped them. He then refused to be examined by them."

his eyes, but he would remark "after a Christian and pleasant manner," as Cotton Mather says, "Well, they'll be restored shortly, at the resurrection."⁹⁶ His nephew, Nicholas Noyes, said of him: "He kept a school, as well as preached. . . . He ordinarily had about 12 or 14 scholars. He took no pay for his pains, unless any present were freely sent him. Though he was blind, yet such was his memory, that he could in his old age teach Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, very artificially. He seldom corrected a scholar, unless for lying and fighting, which were unpardonable crimes. . . ." Since this Nicholas Noyes was but four years Sewall's academic senior and Sewall was six years with Parker, it is possible that the following event, described by Noyes, found Sewall present: "Once hearing some of us laughing very freely, while, I suppose, he was better busied in his chamber above us, he came down, and gravely said to us, 'Cousins, I wonder you can be so merry, unless you be sure of your salvation!'"⁹⁷

Parker was to Sewall "my ever honoured Master,"⁹⁸ and when he died in April, 1677, at the age of eighty-two, the twenty-five year old diarist wrote: "The Lord give me grace

⁹⁶ Magnalia, I, 482. Except as otherwise noted, the Magnalia, I, 480-487, is my source for Parker. Mather describes his blindness as "a miserable defluxion of rheum upon his eyes."

⁹⁷ Noyes was of the class of 1667, Sewall of 1771.

⁹⁸ Letter-Book, II, 113, letter to John Woodbridge, schoolmaster at Newbury, dated March 25, 1720.

to follow my dear Master as he followed Christ, that I may at last get to heaven whether he has already gone."⁹⁹ The fact that he had remained unmarried provided Sewall with matter for the following characteristic lines of verse, titled "A specimen of New England Celibacy":

Though Rome blaspheme the marriage bed
And vows of single life has bred
Chaste Parker, Stoughton, Brinsmade, Noyes,
Show us the odds 'twixt force and choice.
These undefiled contracted here,
Are gone to heaven and married there.¹⁰⁰

He might have written of Parker, as Cotton Mather did of the famous Ezekiel Cheever of Boston:

He taught us Lilly, and he Gospels taught;
And us poor Children to our Savior brought.¹⁰¹

The details that have thus far been given concerning Sewall's educational background, though of considerable interest in themselves, deserve consideration for a better reason than that. Sewall's nature was a conforming one. He

⁹⁹Diary, I, 41, entry for April 28, 1677.

¹⁰⁰Dated December 13, 1717, they were published in the Boston News-Letter for February 13, 1721. The lines are not to be taken as suggesting any disparagement of the institution of marriage. On October 9, 1705, Sewall wrote to Nicholas Noyes: "God has honoured the virginity of New-England in [the men of the poem]. . . . But this was not in any contradiction to Marriage. If any word be dropt against that, and maintaind I will draw my Arrows to the head, and let fly" (Letter-Book, I, 318).

¹⁰¹The poem, "Gratitudinis Ergo," appears in Barnard's "Ezekiel Cheever," American Journal of Education (March, 1856) pp. 29-31.

had no inclination to decry with Locke the practice whereby such a youth as himself was "chain'd to the Oar, Seven, Eight, or Ten of the best Years of his Life, to get a Language or two."¹⁰² To Locke the making of Latin verses was "a foolish custom,"¹⁰³ but it was one in which Parker encouraged his students,¹⁰⁴ and Sewall took a life-long satisfaction in the practice of it. It was true, as Locke said, that grammar school wouldn't give him the "qualifications requisite to Trade and Commerce and the Business of the World,"¹⁰⁵ with the result that as a merchant, keeper of public monies, and possessor of one of the largest estates in the New England of his day, he would suffer some embarrassment in the keeping of his accounts;¹⁰⁶ but there is no evidence that it ever occurred to him to resent the fact. There was compensation in being among those who could employ an appropriate tag

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¹⁰² Thoughts, p. 225. Locke was not, of course, opposed to the acquisition of such languages, "absolutely necessary in a Gentleman" (p. 241); what he lamented was that they got no more than that.

¹⁰³ Thoughts, p. 264.

¹⁰⁴ Magnalia, I, 486.

¹⁰⁵ Thoughts, p. 242.

¹⁰⁶ See chap. 3. Littlefield, p. 47, quotes a Mr. Ayscough, writing in 1797, as follows: ". . . fifty years ago, there were sent from capital schools, to the universities, youths of good abilities, and not by any means wanting in grammar and classical learning, yet so little versed in common figures, as to be obliged to have recourse to a master of a day school in the town for instruction in the four fundamental rules in arithmetic." There is considerable evidence that this was just about Sewall's situation.

of Latin or Greek or spend an evening with a friend reading Latin verse and find it, as Sewall did, "very entertaining."¹⁰⁷

It is interesting to note that Parker took "extraordinary delight in singing of psalms" and that he "bent himself unto the study of the Scripture prophecies,"¹⁰⁸ for in both things Sewall did the same. In both there is the probable influence of his "dear Master" of Newbury. The thing of immediate importance, however, was that at the usual age of fifteen¹⁰⁹ he had so far advanced in the mastery of Latin and Greek, "meet Testimony of his towardliness,"¹¹⁰ that his father took him down to Cambridge to be examined by President Chauncy, and he was admitted to Harvard College.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Diary, III, 163, entry for January 29, 1717/18: "Mr. Bradstreet read to me Chrysostom's going out of Constantinople into banishment; and I read his return; both in Latin, very entertaining."

¹⁰⁸ Magnalia, I, 485, 480. Only a work on Daniel was published. This was in English, but ordinarily he worked in Latin.

¹⁰⁹ Morison, Harvard College, II, 450.

¹¹⁰ The admission requirements under Chauncy read: "When any Scholler is able to read and understand fully Virgil or any such ordinary Classical authors, and can readily make and speake or write true Latin in prose and hath Skill in making verse, and is competently grounded in the Greeke Language; so he be able to Construe and Grammatically to resolve ordinary Greeke, as in the Greek Testament, Isocrates, and the minor poets, or such like, having withall meet Testimony of his towardliness, he shall be capable of his admission into the Colledge. . ." (Harvard College Records, in Col. Soc. of Mass., Publ. [Boston, 1925], XXXI, 329; and see Morison, Harvard College, I, 81, 169, and Magnalia, II, 12).

¹¹¹ "Gen. Letter," xiii. The details of such an examination are given by Sewall on the occasion of the entrance into Harvard of his son Joseph. See the Diary, II, 80-81, entries for June 28 and July 5, 1703.

Chapter Two

HARVARD COLLEGE AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Several years before Sewall arrived at Cambridge the town and college had been described as being in a "scituation . . . very pleasant, at the end of a spacious plain, more like a bowling green, then a Wilderness, near a fair navigable river, environed with many Neighbouring Towns . . . so near, that their houses joyn with her suburbs. . . ."¹ The building which the college occupied when Sewall was in attendance and which in 1643 had been judged "very faire and comely" having "a spacious Hall (where they daily meet at Commons, Lectures, Exercises) . . . a large Library with some Bookes . . . [and] Chambers and studies . . . fitted for, and possessed by the students,"² was of timber and evidently of poor construction, for soon after Sewall's graduation it had "fallen doune, a part of it, and thereby rendered not habitable."³ Work on the so-called New College had begun in 1672. ". . . a fair pile of brick building

¹ Edward Johnson, Wonder Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England (London, 1654), p. 164.

² Harvard Records, I, lxxiii, citing New England's First Fruits (1643), pp. 12-13. Edward Johnson, pp. 164-165, referred to its "fair Hall, comfortable studies and a good Library."

³ Edward Randolph's "Narrative" of 1676, in Thomas Hutchinson, A Collection of Original Papers (Boston, 1767), p. 501; Mass. Archives, LVIII, 32.

covered with tiles," it was not yet completed when Sewall took his second degree in 1674.⁴ A third structure was the small brick Indian College, from which a single Indian student had been successfully graduated and which now contained the colony's only printing press.⁵

During Sewall's residence (1667-74) the college had entered on sorry days. The average graduating class in the decade from 1661 to 1670 was seven,⁶ and though Sewall entered with what his bed-mate Edward Taylor described as "a great and yet civill class" (eleven being graduated in 1671),⁷ the resurgence was only temporary. During the years that he remained for his second degree there were not more than twenty-five other students,⁸ and the condition of the college was described as "a languishing and decaying" one,⁹ the

⁴Hutchinson, Papers, p. 501. Sewall saw it raised a week before he took his leave in August of 1674 (Diary, I, 5, entry for August 7). In the winter of 1672 Sewall, at home in Newbury for a rest at the demand of his father, noted that "the College Interest . . . is remissly promoted here" (Letter-Book, I, 18, letter dated March 16, 1671/2). In this year forty-four towns, of which Newbury was one, contributed better than two thousand pounds for the erection of the new building (ibid., p. 20, editors' note). It was not completed until 1682, and Randolph attributes the delay to "the late Indian warre," by which, of course, he refers to the colony's bloody and exhausting struggle with the forces of King Philip.

⁵According to Isaiah Thomas, History of Printing in America (Worcester, Mass., 1810), pp. 84-85, John Foster was permitted to set up his press in Boston in 1674.

⁶Magnalia, II, 13. ⁷Thomas J. Wertenbaker, The Puritan Oligarchy (New York, 1947), p. 150.

⁸Morison, Harvard College, II, 391.

⁹Mass. Records, V, 20; Morison, Harvard College, II, 406-407.

buildings "ruinous and almost irreparable."¹⁰ In the year after he took his Master's degree there were but three students left in Cambridge. "Harvard College," as Professor Morison concludes, "had reached her nadir. She could sink no lower and yet remain alive."¹¹

The causes of this sad and decaying condition of the college are not clear. Sewall might presumably have given us some insight into the matter, but he fails almost entirely to do so. After going home from college in 1674, when he had completed the prescribed seven years of study, he was asked by the General Court to return to give his views

¹⁰ Morison, Harvard College, II, 391, citing a letter to the Board of Overseers to Governor Bellingham.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 406-407. At the end of the decade, when attendance was back to approximately what it was during Sewall's graduate years, the Dutch visitor, Jaspas Danckaerts, set down in his journal (Journal of Jaspas Danckaerts, ed. Bartlett B. James and J. Franklin Jameson, in Orig. Narr. of Am. Hist., ed. J. Franklin Jameson [New York, 1913], p. 266) a description of his experience at the college which, though quite obviously from a prejudiced pen, is most revealing. After a drive to Cambridge over "a very pleasant road," he and his companion arrived at the college "expecting to see something unusual" in an institution which was the only one of its kind in America. They were disappointed. Finally, after wandering about in the darkness and silence of the summer evening, they heard what Danckaerts' companion guessed was a disputation. "We entered," says Danckaerts, "and went upstairs, when a person met us, and requested us to walk in, which we did. We found there eight or ten young fellows, sitting around, smoking tobacco, with the smoke of which the room was so full, that you could hardly see; and the whole house smelt so strong of it that when I was going upstairs I said, 'It certainly must be also a tavern.'" Finding the students unable to carry on a conversation in Dutch, French, or Latin, the visitors proceeded in the little English they could command and learned that the college was without professors because "there was not enough money to support one." Instead, the teaching was entirely in the hands of such

on the "lowness of the Colledge," and on October 16 he notes having spoken to the effect that the causes were "external as well as internal."¹² More he does not say. A suggestion of what he had in mind is in an observation he made two years earlier that the people of Newbury seemed to him to give no more attention to pleas of the college for support than "the pines on the beach."¹³ Frontier conditions, we surmise, were having their customary effects, with the result that the children of the founders did not feel quite the same pressing concern as their fathers lest the pulpits be occupied by an illiterate ministry when living ministers should "lie in the dust." The "internal causes" to which Sewall refers involved, strangely enough, what appears to have been a student rebellion. Charles Chauncy had died at the end of 1671, and Leonard Hoar, first of Harvard's home-grown presidents, was inaugurated on September 10, 1672. Generally reputed a worthy man, he "fell under the displeasure of some that made a figure in the neighbourhood," as Cotton Mather says, and "the young men in the Colledge took advantage therefrom, to ruine his reputation, as far as they were able. . . . The young plants turned cud-weeds, and, with great violations of

college fellows as Sewall had recently been. The library they found to be "nothing particular," and after looking around a bit more they accepted a glass of wine and left. The visit was made on July 9, 1680, a Tuesday.

¹²Diary, I, 5-6.

¹³Letter-Book, I, 18, letter to Daniel Gookin (?) dated March 16, 1671/2.

the fifth Commandment, set themselves to travestie whatever he did and said, and aggravate every thing in his behaviour disagreeable to them, with a design to make him odious; . . . several very good men did unhappily countenance the ungoverned youths in their ungovernableness.¹⁴ Things finally came to such a pass that students began leaving the college, and the unhappy Doctor resigned in the spring of 1675. Now the years 1672 to 1674 were the years in which Sewall stayed on as a teaching fellow, and we should expect some light on this curious situation when he begins the diary in 1674, but again there is only a suggestion, the kind of oblique reference to a troublesome state of human affairs which the reader of the diary learns to recognize as a Sewall characteristic. On June 5, 1674, Urian Oakes, pastor of the Cambridge church and president of the college after Hoar's retirement, gave Sewall to understand "th't though he respected and loved me as formerly, yet he desired that I would refrain coming to his house, and that he did it se defendendo, least he should be mistrusted to discourage and dissettle me."¹⁵ Other hint of Sewall's participation in the affair there is none.

During Sewall's undergraduate years, however, the redoubtable Chauncy was still President, a fact which allows us

¹⁴Magnalia, II, 15.

¹⁵Diary, I, 3. Urian Oakes is described by Cotton Mather as a good man who "like a full ear of corn . . . stoop'd with a most profound humility" and who as a preacher was "an Orpheus that would have drawn the very stones to discipline" (Magnalia, II, 116).

to estimate the situation prior to 1671 (the year in which he preached his last commencement sermon)¹⁶ in rather more impressive terms. Like Parker of Newbury, he was a man of large learning, particularly in Oriental languages, and especially in Hebrew,¹⁷ a fact which possibly accounts for Sewall's fondness for study of the Old Testament scriptures "in their inspir'd Originals."¹⁸ Like Parker also, he was indomitable in the pursuit of his ministerial calling, pushing through the snows of a Cambridge winter when past eighty and telling the concerned students accompanying him how glad he would be if he might die in the pulpit.¹⁹ The similar positions which these two teachers of Sewall occupied in his regard is suggested in the fact that when he was returning from England in 1689 and conceived that "there wanted not Some Probability of my being beholding to the sea for a burying place," he took particular thought of "the kind obligations of Mr. Thomas Parker, and Mr. Charles Chauncy . . . those Nobly Learned and Godly men," and decided to leave some books in their memory.²⁰ Cotton Mather's lines on Chaun-

¹⁶Magnalia, I, 470.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 465. Mather describes him as "incomparably well skilled in all the learned languages, especially in the Oriental, and eminently in the Hebrew. . . ." Edward Randolph remarked in 1676 that at Harvard "they teach Hebrew before they well understand Latin" (Hutchinson, Papers, 501).

¹⁸Boston News-Letter, issue for January 8, 1730. See Sewall's obituary.

¹⁹Magnalia, I, 470.

²⁰Letter-Book, I, 93, letter to Israel Chauncy dated Decem

cy in the role of college president help us to understand the significance of Sewall's association with him: "How learnedly," says Mather, "he . . . conveyed all the liberal arts unto those who 'sat at his feet'; how wittily he moderated their disputations and other exercises; how constantly he expounded the Scriptures to the College-Hall; how fluently he expressed himself unto them, with Latin of a Terrentian phrase, in all his discourses; and how carefully he inspected their manners . . . will never be forgotten by many of our most worthy men, who were made such men by their education under him. . . ." ²¹ In our estimate of the man it is interesting to note that an heretical belief to which he was greatly devoted was that sprinkling of an infant at baptism was insufficient, that it should, rather, "be washed all over." ²² If in this study the reader is occasionally astonished at Sewall's concern for what must seem to him hopelessly trivial matters of belief, he should remember that it was with just such things that the best minds in the colony were continually

ber 25, 1689: "Now God having brought me safely hether into the affectionate Embraces of my Dear friends and Relations, I could not give my self a Satisfactory reason why I might not become my own executor in expressing that Gratitude which I intended should have been done after my decease. I therefore Intreat your acceptance of Pool[e]s Latin Synop[s]is in five books. They are at second hand yet I hope Legible." See the Diary, I, 282, entry for November 20, 1689, for what amounts to a last will and testament, of which this is but one provision.

²¹Magnalia, I, 468.

²²See Josiah Quincy, History of Harvard University (Boston, 1860), I, 47.

engaged. He should also remember that in the great game of "seems" it often happens that the vital concern of one age is apparent nonsense to the next. To the Puritan, nothing was small in his service of the Great King of Heaven. What now may seem no more than a theological quiddity may have been to him, therefore, a matter of awful and pressing moment involving nothing less than the question of whether a man would be saved or eternally damned.

After a short oral examination in which he satisfied Chauncy of his qualifications for admission, the fifteen-year old Sewall obtained a copy of the college laws, probably by transcribing them himself, which the president and one of the fellows then signed as evidence of his entrance into the college.²³ Under these laws he agreed, among other things, to board at commons, be diligent, speak in public eight times during his freshman year, be present twice a week at the public debates, keep good company, leave town only with permission of the president or a tutor, stay out of taverns, avoid "rich and showy clothing," not go out of the yard "unless in his gown, coat, or cloak," and "abstain from dice, cards and every species of gaming for money."²⁴ His hair was cut in conformity with the college rule against the "wearing of long hair after the manner of Russians and barbarous Indians," a practice regarded as a "thing uncivil and unmanly whereby

²³ See Morison, Harvard College, I, 81.

²⁴ Magnalia, II, 23-25.

men do deforme themselves . . . and corrupt good manners."²⁵
One of the few things that the diary tells us of Sewall's
life at college (it does not begin until December of 1673,
and he left the following August) is that Goodman Barret
trimmed his hair.²⁶ Apparently not all of his fellow stu-
dents were thus willing to conform, for in 1672 the citizens
of Roxbury, led by John Eliot, declared their outrage at the
"lust" for long hair which "brake out at the Colledg."²⁷
This matter of hair dress became, as we shall later see, a
matter of life-long concern.

Assigned a tutor and a place in the Long Chamber where
he would sleep and keep his small chest of personal belongings,²⁸
he began his life as a college freshman, which, since he was
not a fellow-commoner, meant that outside of study hours he
would be compelled to act as "a kind of Servitor . . . to the
whole College . . . to go of Errands &c."²⁹ On a typical day
he would make his appearance in College Hall for morning
prayers at six.³⁰ These would be led by the indefatigable

²⁵Harvard Records, I, 37-38, 197-198.

²⁶Diary, I, 2, 4, entries for March 23, 1673/4 and July 6,
1674.

²⁷Morison, Harvard College, I, 85.

²⁸Ibid. Morison conjectures that the Long Chamber served
as a freshman dormitory. On August 16, 1703, Sewall brought
his son Joseph to Cambridge to enter. The boy had "only his
little Trunk . . . with a few Books and Linen" (Diary, II, 87).

²⁹Daniel Neal, The History of New England (London, 1720),
I, 185.

³⁰Harvard Records, III, 332; Morison, Harvard College, I, 1

Chauncy, who had himself been up since four and had already spent an hour in private devotions.³¹ Here, in addition to a short prayer to begin with and a longer one to close, there was exposition by Chauncy of a chapter from the Old Testament accompanied by sight translations of the text, each scholar in turn, from Hebrew into Greek, unless he were a freshman, in which case the translation would be from English into Greek.³² In accomplishing this it would not be unheard of were he to use a crib, a practice called "hogueing."³³

After prayers came "morning bever," the first of four meals of the day. Unlike dinner and supper, which were consumed as "commons," it and "afternoon bever," were "sized out" at the buttery hatch and consumed in chambers or, in pleasant weather, in the yard. The staple items for such "sizings" were bread and beer bought for a halfpenny, though for another farthing or two cheese and butter were sometimes available.³⁴ Once, in a notable entry, Sewall records having spent three pennies for milk.³⁵

³¹Magnalia, I, 469. In this as in other things, as Mather remarks, he "set the scholars an example of diligence hardly to be followed."

³²Ibid.; Harvard Records, III, 332-333; Morison, Harvard College, I, 189, 195.

³³Morison, Harvard College, I, 195.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 90-91. The rules of Chauncy's administration, the so-called Chaunceian Code, make no provision for afternoon bever, but since dinner was at eleven and supper at seven thirty, Morison assumes that some provision for afternoon refreshment was made.

³⁵Diary, I, 3, entry for April 10, 1674.

Classes met from eight to eleven, followed by dinner in the Hall, when beef (or veal, or lamb, or pork, or mutton) was added to the inevitable bread and beer. The hours from two to four were devoted to public disputations moderated by Chauncy or one of the teaching fellows and, on Friday, declamations. Evening prayers at five were like those of the morning except that the chapter expounded would this time be from the New rather than the Old Testament. Supper was at seven thirty, and at nine the day ended except for seniors and fellows, who might remain up until eleven.³⁶ This pattern of early-to-bed-and-early-to-rise, with scant permissible recreation, was probably, we should remind ourselves, more stringent in theory than in fact. Sewall allowed himself at least the pleasure of a pipe,³⁷ and we are pleased to learn that his friend Gookin missed hearing Sir Thacher commonplace because he was "gone a fishing with his brothers."³⁸ A few days before this, however, he entered in his diary a description of an episode which carries grimmer suggestions. A Thomas Sargeant, "being convicted of speaking blasphemous words concerning the H. G.," it was ordered that he be "publickly whipped before all the Scholars . . . suspended as to taking his degree . . . sit alone by himself in the Hall uncovered at meals, during the pleasure of the President

³⁶ Morison, Harvard College, I, 96, 94, 109; Magnalia, I, 469, and II, 12.

³⁷ Diary, I, 3, entry for April 15, 1674.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 4, entry for July 1, 1674.

and Fellows [Sewall being present as one], and be in all things obedient . . . or else be finally expelled. . . ." The whipping was done in the library before the assembled students. The culprit knelt down "and the instrument Goodman Hely attended the President's word as to the performance of his part in the work. Prayer was had before and after by the President."³

The Harvard curriculum in Sewall's day, except for a tendency to emphasize the study of Oriental languages and to slight somewhat the study of natural philosophy, was, as Morison repeatedly observes, essentially what the student would have experienced in England.⁴⁰ The Chauncelian Code, drawn up in 1655 and in effect until 1686, read in part as follows: "In the first yeare after admission for foure dayes of the weeke all Students shall bee exercised in the Study of the Greeke and Hebrew Tongues, onely beginnin; Logicke in the Morning towardses the latter end of the yeare unless the Tutor shall see Cause by reason of their ripenesse in the Languages to read Logicke sooner. Also they shall spend the second yeare in Logicke with the exercise of the former Languages, and the third year in principles of Ethickes and the fourth in metaphisiks and Mathematicks still carry on their former studyes of the weeke for Rhetoricke, Oratory and Divinity."⁴¹ In addition, as already mentioned, there were

³⁹ Diary, I, 4, entry for June 15, 1674.

⁴⁰ Morison, Harvard College, Vol. I, chap. 5.

⁴¹ Harvard Records, III, 333-334; Morison, Harvard College, I, 144-145; Quincy, History of Harvard, I, 190-191.

the periodic disputations, twice a week for undergraduates, declamations once every two months, and the twice-daily exposition of Holy Scripture.⁴² At the end of four years the student stood for his degree by making himself available in Hall at appointed hours during a period of three weeks for "visitation" by all that had a mind to "examine into his Skill in those Languages and Sciences, that he pretends to be master of," a procedure known as "the Sitting of Solstices."⁴³ If it were evident that he could "logically . . . explain the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament," and was "thoroughly acquainted with the principles of natural and moral philosophy," and was "blameless in life and character," he proceeded to commencement, where he displayed his ability as a respondent in formal disputation by upholding a chosen thesis.⁴⁴

As a student staying on for the M. A. it was recognized that Sewall was preparing for the ministry. Paying no tuition, he received no regular instruction but read divinity under the direction of president Hoar.⁴⁵ Like the typical graduate student of today, he helped himself financially by obtaining appointment as a teaching fellow⁴⁶ and found it necessary to bor-

⁴²Harvard Records, III, 333-334.

⁴³Neal, History, I, 186.

⁴⁴Magnalia, II, 25.

⁴⁵Morison, Harvard College, I, 70.

⁴⁶Harvard Records, I, 57, 227. Chosen on November 5, 1673, he was installed at a meeting of the Overseers three weeks later.

row against pay day.⁴⁷ Unlike the teaching fellow of today, however, he occupied a position providing some perquisites and considerable dignity. He could live, as Sewall did, outside the college,⁴⁸ was distinguished by the title of "Sir," and was accorded respect by the town and colony authorities. Sewall notes, for example, that he and Gookin were consulted by the "Townsmen of Cambridge" with regard to the seating of students at meetings and were treated "very civilly."⁴⁹ Later the two young men "were invited and went to dinner with the Magistrates in the Court Chamber,"⁵⁰ and after graduation, as has already been noted, the General Court consulted with him about the condition of the college.⁵¹ Though the actual govern-

⁴⁷ Diary, I, 3, entry for April 17, 1674. Two days earlier Sewall and his friend Daniel Gookin were ordered paid "a years Salary of their proportion out of Piscataqua-gift. . . . Also fifty shill: apiece due them in February last from Mr. Glover's gift" (Harvard Records, I, 223). He had apparently been granted a scholarship while still an undergraduate, it being ordered on October 4, 1669, that "Sewall be made a scholar of the house; and succeed Sir Eppes . . . in his scholarship" (Ibid., I, 49, 211).

⁴⁸ At the time of the death of the Reverend Samuel Mather of Windsor he wrote: "There was the greater intimacy between us because we boarded together at Fessenden's, where I have seen his Grand Father Mather bring a load of grain to pay for his board" (Letter-Book, II, 263, letter to the Reverend Samuel Mather in England, dated March 6, 1728/9). Again, at the death of Thomas Fessenden: "God's distinguishing Goodness to me was very Affecting, to see poor Cousin Thomas dying and dead in the very Chamber and Lower Room where I lodg'd and Liv'd 2 years (a great Sinner). . ." (Diary, III, 93, entry for July 20, 1716). His brother John married Hannah Fessenden in October, 1674 (Ibid., I, 5, editors' note).

⁴⁹ Diary, I, 2, entry for March 24, 1673/4.

⁵⁰ Ibid., entry for April 7, 1674.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 5-6, entries for October 13 and 16, 1674.

ment of the college was in the hands of the President and Board of Overseers, he shared with the President the day-to-day responsibilities of instruction and discipline.⁵²

As a matter of fact, the tutors were the only regular instructors there were, it being assumed that they were capable, as Cotton Mather remarks, of leading the undergraduates "through all the liberal arts."⁵³ Their instructions read that they were "to advance in all learning, divine and humane, each and every student . . . according to their several abilities; and especially to take care that their conduct and manners be honorable and without blame."⁵⁴ The pedagogical result was not, apparently, what we would consider fortunate. Sewall notes, for example, that in teaching a lesson in Heereboord, the standard physics text, he "went to the end, and then red it over from the beginning,"⁵⁵ in which procedure he was following standard practice.⁵⁶

⁵²Morison, Harvard College, I, 15.

⁵³Magnalia, II, 12.

⁵⁴Morison, Harvard College, I, 19.

⁵⁵Diary, I, 2, entry for December 3, 1673. This is the first entry in the diary and the single reference to his teaching duties. It is interesting to note in this connection that though Heereboord taught the new physics, Sewall as late as 1714 remarked on hearing Cotton Mather speak of the sun being the center of the solar system that he considered it "inconvenient to assert such problems." This, says Professor Miller, New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1939), p. 221, "is the nearest thing to opposition [to the teaching of the new science] to be found in the annals of early New England."

⁵⁶See Morison, Harvard College, I, 166.

In addition to his teaching duties, he was ordered by the Corporation on March 1, 1674, to "be from hence forth the keeper of the Colledg-Library."⁵⁶ Whether he was then in charge of "nothing in particular" (Danckaerts' phrase)⁵⁷ or of something "handsome" (the word of a visiting English scholar, Samuel Lee)⁵⁸ we can only guess. Of one thing we may feel sure, that its facilities were far better suited to the pursuit of divine than of secular studies.⁵⁹ Since it had had no keeper since Solomon Stoddard (grandfather of Jonathan Edwards) seven years earlier,⁶⁰ we are not surprised to learn that in the year Sewall took the job President Hoar made a survey, found books missing, and ordered the new keeper to search them out.⁶¹

Requirements for the M. A. under the Chaunceian Code, which, as we have already noted, remained in effect during Sewall's graduate years under Hoar, read as follows:

⁵⁶Harvard Records, I, 58, 223.

⁵⁷Journal, p. 266.

⁵⁸Morison, Harvard College, I, 296. Lee's visit was in 1690.

⁵⁹See Palfrey, IV, 384, note 1, for a discussion of the catalogue of the college library which appeared in 1723. Not only were the works of the secular writers of Queen Anne's time absent, but Shakespeare and Milton were quite recent acquisitions.

⁶⁰A. C. Potter and Charles K. Bolton, The Librarians of Harvard College, 1667-1877, Harvard University Library, Bibliographical Contributions, No. 52 (Cambridge, 1897), p. 3.

⁶¹See Morison, Harvard College, I, 287-288.

What Bachelours soever shall present unto the President a written Synopsis, or Compendium of Logicke, Natural Philosophy, Arithmeticke, Geometry or Astronomy within a weeke of the Summer Solstace in the third year after taking his first degree (which Synopsis shall be kept in the Colledge Library) and shall bee ready to defend his positions, and be Skilfull in the Originall Tongues as aforesayd, having Staid three yeares after his first degree, and herein thrice problemed, twice declaymed, and once made a Common place or else some answerable exercise in the Studyes that he is most Conversant in and remayning of a blameless Conversation, at any publique Act having the approbation of the Overseers and the President of the Colledge, shall bee Capable of his Second degree, viz to be Master of Arts.⁶²

⁶²Harvard Records, III, 335; Magnalia, II, 25; Morison, Harvard College, I, 148.

There were, in other words, no course requirements. The "staid three years" did not mean residence, except for a fellow of the college like Sewall, but only "wait three years." The thesis requirement was handled in perfunctory fashion, and the somewhat formidable sounding "Synopsis, or Compendium" was little more than a useable outline and notes for some one subject which would provide freshmen with a "North-West Passage" to knowledge of the kind the Puritans liked so well. (See Miller, pp. 102-103. The phrase quoted is Cotton Mather's, applied to a more pretentious compendium of Johann Alsted called Encyclopaedia Scientiarum Omnium, which in its four folio volumes makes a circuit of everything in the heavens above and earth beneath. Another favorite author was Bartholomäus Keckermann, who turned out "systems" for all arts and sciences. To neither of these, however, does Sewall make any reference.) The "thrice problemed" refers to logical expositions of philosophical questions, and to "commonplace" was to deliver a brief sermon in Hall, the term being derived from the Puritan passion for organizing material under convenient headings or common places (see Miller, pp. 96, 102-103). Sewall, for example, kept a

In the days before his graduation in the summer of 1674 Sewall performed his "commonplace" to a disappointing audience of six⁶³ and worked up a thesis on the subject, appropriate to the divinity student, of "Whether original sin be both sin and its punishment?" handled, of course, in Latin and stated as "An Peccatum Originale sit & Peccatum & Poena?"⁶⁴ Commencement was one of the few important social occasions for the colony, and for it persons of high and low degree made the trip to Cambridge,⁶⁵ as Sewall himself often did in later years. The nature of the occasion may be seen in his description of one he attended on July 1, 1685: "Besides Disputes," he writes, there were "four orations, One Latin . . . two Greek, one Hebrew . . . and Mr. President after giving the Degrees made an Oration, in Praise of Academical Studies and Degrees, Hebrew Tongue. . . . Governour there. . . . After Dinner the third part of the 103 Psalm was sung in the Hall." His feelings at his own Commencement were, we may suppose, like those he described when he attended that of his son Joseph

commonplace book between 1677 and 1686 where he arranged his reading under such heads as "De Infantibus," "De Oratione," "De Sabbato," "De Paulo Apostolo," "De Honore," "De Obedientia," "De Tempore," "De Resurrectione mortuorum," "De Consolatione," etc. (Except as otherwise indicated the material in this note is from Morison, Harvard College, I, 148-150, 155, 159-161.)

⁶³ Diary, I, 4, entry for July 10.

⁶⁴ John Landon Sibley, Biog. Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University (Cambridge, 1873), II, 345.

⁶⁵ See Magnalia, II, 13.

(at which, he says, he "could not hear one word while the degrees were giving") many years later. He was "concern'd" lest in his presentation Joseph might fail; "but God helped him and he managed . . . very well," ⁶⁷ in which happy result, we may again suppose, the father saw a repetition of his own experience some thirty years before. There was at least one person in the audience who was impressed with Sewall's performance at that time, namely sixteen-year old Hannah Hull, daughter of John Hull, wealthy Boston merchant and master of the colonial mint. A relative of the Hoars, she had been invited to Cambridge for a visit over commencement. "She saw me when I took my Degree," says Sewall, "and set her affection on me, though I knew nothing of it till after our marriage. . . ." ⁶⁸

II

Thus after spending "seven long years . . . in studious toil" in satisfaction, as Mather remarks, of the Horatian

⁶⁷ Diary, II, 190, entry for July 2, 1707.

⁶⁸ "Gen. Letter," xiii. Vernon Louis Parrington, The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800 (New York, 1927), p. 90, remarks of Sewall's marriage: "With excellent thrift he fixed his attentions upon the only child of a wealthy merchant, the richest heiress in the colony; no penniless 'waiting woman' for Samuel Sewall, such as had contented the unworldly Thomas Hooker. He understood how desirable it is to put money in one's purse; so he made a shrewd alliance. . . ." This is critical deduction with a vengeance, in line with Parrington's somewhat casual disparagement of Sewall as a kindly, small-minded representative of the school of rise and thrive. His essay contains much sharp and valuable insight, but in this instance at least (and it is representative of much of the tone of the piece) what we get is not fact but merely an illustration of the writer's critical inclination.

character of an artist,⁶⁹ Sewall received from the hands of President Hoar the ceremonial book and heard him pronounce the words: "Admitto te ad Secundum Gradum in Artibus, pro more Academicarum in Anglia . . ."--"I admit you to the second degree in Arts, according to the custom of the English Universities; and I deliver to you this book, with the privileges of practising a profession, whenever you shall be called on to do so."⁷⁰ The profession of the twenty-two year old graduate was to be, as he thought, the ministry, and partially for this reason, no doubt, the effect of his Harvard years as we see them reflected in his later intellectual interests was overwhelmingly theological.⁷¹ Indeed,

⁶⁹ Magnalia, II, 15.

⁷⁰ Ibid. and Neal, I, 186.

⁷¹ It is unnecessary here to enter the controversy concerning the degree to which the curriculum was intended to perpetuate a literate ministry and the degree to which it was intended to offer a liberal education. James Truslow Adams, Provincial Society, 1690-1763 (New York, 1927), p. 135, would have it that the school was from the beginning simply "a training school for the ministry," a fact he feels is made sufficiently clear in the number of its approximately five hundred seventeenth century graduates that became ministers, just half (see Quincy, I, 190-191), and that "the course of study had been designed for that end and must have been unsatisfactory to those who aimed at a liberal education rather than a mere preparation for clerical life." Morison, Harvard College, I, 150, would see in the course of study, on the other hand, "not a specialized course for Protestant pastors, but a Christian gentleman's education . . . offered to the youth of New England." True, he says, it educated for the ministry, but the Puritan concept of an adequately trained minister was that he be a liberally educated man. Miller, New England Mind, p. 76, accepts what Morison says as "all very true, and the broad aims of the founders indicate decisively that Puritans did not reject the intellectual heritage of their age. Yet we may question whether Professor Morison has sufficiently emphasized

anywhere but in a community like seventeenth century Boston the avidity and predominance of his theological interests must have seemed singular for one whose main apparent occupations in life were those of merchant, magistrate, and judge. Even in the little New World Israel they were notable. The arcana of scriptural prophecy, which are of about as much concern to the modern mind as the riddle of the Sphinx, were his special delight. They are the foundation of what he considered his most important intellectual effort, the earlier-mentioned Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica, the thesis of which is that "America's Name is to be seen fairly Recorded in the Scriptures . . . that it stands fair for being made the Seat of the Divine Metropolis [and] . . . that the New-English Planters were the Forerunners of the Kings of the East."⁷²

Nothing so stirred his mind as what he called "bickerings" about such matters as "the slaying of the witnesses,"⁷³ "the

the unquestioned premise, that the advancement and perpetuation of learning was one and the same with a succession of literate ministers in the churches. Other and more secular purposes were present in the founding of the College only insofar as in the Puritan mind there was no conflict between them and the purposes of Christianity. Certainly it is not correct to hail the statement [of the founders] as a disinterested dedication to the pursuit of learning in the abstract."

There is no question of what the college training was for Sewall, who planned to be among the fifty per cent of the college's graduates who entered the ministry. It was theological.

⁷² "Dedication."

⁷³ E.g., Diary, I, 441, entry for December 19, 1696; ibid., II, 99-100, entry for April 17, 1704; Letter-Book, I, 374, memorandum of a letter to Samuel Moodey dated September 25, 1708.

Drawing up of the Apocalyptical Euphrates, "75 "guesses . . . about the Subject of the Fourth Vial, "76 and the "dispute about the Fifth Seal. "77

Other matters of lively interest to him, though not prophetic, are similarly remote from present day concerns. A sufficient illustration of their character is the following passage from a letter he wrote to his "learned and worthy Kinsman," the noted, and later notorious, Jeremiah Dummer, 78

75. Letter-Book, loc. cit.

76. Phaenomena, p. 20.

77. Diary, I, 453, entry for May 24, 1697. The dispute on this day was with Nicholas Noyes of Salem, the most constant companion of his prophetic "bickerings."

78. Letter-Book, I, 404, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated November 29, 1710. This relative of Sewall's merits separate study, both for personal and intellectual interest. The rationalistic character of his trial sermon in Boston in 1704 on the nature of the Sabbath shocked men like Sewall and he was not ordained. Several years later he became the colony's agent in England, from whence in 1716 there came reports of what Sewall terms "monstrous Crimes" which he "discountenanced the propagating of" (Letter-Book, II, 57, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated August 8, 1716). Sewall, curious to say, remained friendly despite what he knew of Dummer's ideas and what others at least knew of his character. The correspondence between them lasted into the last years of Sewall's life. On a copy of Dummer's sermon on the Sabbath in the Massachusetts Historical Society's library there is a manuscript note which reads in part as follows: "The author of this Sermon was employed many years as agent for the Massachusetts Province in England. In his latter days he grew a Libertine & kept a Seraglio of Misses round him to whom he was lavish of his favours. Col. S. _____ who was in England in 1738 went to wait upon him at his Seat in Plastow on a Sunday after Church & found him with his Ladies sitting round a Table after dinner drinking Raspberry Punch. As he entered the room he observed a confusion in Mr. Dummer's countenance & the Girls fled out of the Door like Sheep--almost over one another's back" (see the Letter-Book, I, 305, editors' note). Sewall would not, needless to say, have been friends with such a man were he in Boston, and the spectacle of the two in friendly communication through many years is something to contemplate.

then studying for his doctorate at Leyden:

You will pleasure me if you send me word, when the Jews observed their last Jubilee; and whether with them, a Jubilee do not contain Fifty years. And whether the Jews in Holland and elsewhere doe begin their weekly Sabbath in the Evening. What the condition and state of Religion in Bohemia now is: and how the Reformed were treated at the taking of Buda. Whether there be pure churches and Learned Orthodox Ministers in the Dutch Plantations in Asia; and the number of them. And whether the Hebdomadal Revolution was known and observed in the East-Indies before Christianity entered there. What Church there is at Cape-bon-Sperance; and what the Families of French that were lately entertained there, and what else of Christianity there may be yet surviving in other parts of Africa. Whether the Religion of the Famous Synod of Dort is now professed in Holland. Whether the Ministers are silent at Funerals; If any Cross be made in Baptisme; and what they think of its being retained in England.⁷⁹

Such matters, we are apt to conclude, are the trivial occupations of a provincial Puritan mind.⁸⁰ But as we must repeatedly

An appreciative but somewhat vague essay on Dummer is in Moses Coit Tyler, A History of American Literature (New York, 1897), Vol. II, chap. 13, sec. 6. Tyler does not recognize the significance of Dummer's sermon on the nature of the Sabbath.

⁷⁹ Letter-Book, I, 268-269, letter dated March 12, 1701/2. There are many such passages in the letter-book. For a good example, somewhat less diverse, see ibid., pp. 216-217, letter to Nathaniel Higginson dated November 18, 1699.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Parrington, p. 93.

remark in the course of this study, such a judgment merely indicates what seems trivial to us; it characterizes us, not the things themselves. They weren't trivial to Sewall. As he said to Dummer at the time of his, to Sewall, objectionably rationalistic sermon on the nature of the Sabbath, ". . . however light some may make of these things, to me they are of very great Consequence. . . ." ⁸¹ Furthermore, a thing may appear trivial to us only because we are not sufficiently aware of its historical context. Sewall's interest in the "Hebdomadal Revolution," for example, may very well cause us to smile and is an excellent case in point. An apparently trivial matter by itself, its implications were such as to make it quite otherwise. The New England Puritan had long been interested in demonstrating the rationality of that "Hebdomadal Revolution," but Jeremiah Dummer chose to make its rationality the test of its divine institution. The resulting sermon was what Professor Miller sees as "one of the most important marks of the 'transition' in early New England thought; it shows us, as it were, the 'Age of Reason' in the very act of emerging from the 'Age of Faith'" ⁸² The matter was not trivial.

If the effects of Sewall's education are apparent in his relish for theological speculation, they are equally apparent in his reading. It is impossible here to examine

⁸¹ Letter-Book, I, 302, letter dated October 19, 1704.

⁸² New England Mind, p. 200.

in detail the innumerable items which could quite easily be listed to demonstrate the validity of the conclusion arrived at by Evan A. Evans in his study of Sewall's reading. It was, he says, "intense and almost exclusively religious."⁸³ "Dr. Calamy's Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life," "Dr. Owen upon the Hebrews, all the 4 Books," "Cosmologia Sacra by Nehemiah Grew," "Pope's Synopsis criticorum in five volumes," "Mr. Henry's Annotations so far as he has gone," "All Calvin's Commentaries," "Dr. Calamy of the ejected Ministers two Vol., and his Answer to him that insulted him," "Mr. Thomas Ridgley's Body of Divinity"--these are the sort of books, to name but a random few, which appear in overwhelming preponderance in the long order lists sent to his commercial agents in England.⁸⁴ These lists, however, though doubtless not without significance, are not a completely reliable index to Sewall's reading, because the student was also the merchant, so that we hear of "a parcell of Englands Duty, which are 25, the Sale of which in N. E. I am to warrant."⁸⁵ It is obviously

⁸³ "Literary References in New England Diaries, 1700-1730," unpublished thesis at Harvard. See Thomas Goddard Wright, Literary Culture in Early New England (New Haven, 1920), pp. 148, 150, 194, for some random notes.

⁸⁴ See the Letter-Book, II, 58, letter to John Love dated August 21, 1716; ibid., p. 53, letter to John Love dated March 20, 1715/16; ibid., I, 261, letter to John Love dated October 11, 1700; ibid., pp. 327-328, letter to John Love dated June 10, 1700 (one of the longer lists); ibid., II, 10-11, letter to John Love dated January 7, 1712/13 (another of the longer lists); ibid., 253-254, letter to Samuel Storke dated October 2, 1728; ibid., p. 271, letter to Samuel Storke dated July 23, 1729.

⁸⁵ Diary, I, 284, entry for July 13, 1689.

this we must remember when we see entered "12. Colsons Seaman's Kalendar," "6. Wakely's Compass rectifier," "6. Norwoods Epitome of Navigation" along with "Dr. Bates's Harmony of the divine Attributes" and "Flavels mental errors,"⁸⁶ Or when an order for his beloved "Po[o]lle's Synopsis Criticorum" is accompanied by one for a "gross of Horn-books."⁸⁷

Assuming that he knew and approved of works he gave as gifts, such items offer a more reliable indication of his reading tastes. Here again the number is great and the character mainly theological. Receiving seven "Folios of Dr. Owen's Life," for example, he gave one to Mr. Appleton, at whose house he was when he opened the bill of lading, one to Increase Mather, one to his "dear Son, Mr. Joseph Sewall," one to his "loving Son-in-Law Mr. William Cooper," one to his "dear Son Mr. Samuel Sewall of Brooklin," one to his "dear and only Brother Stephen Sewall esqr of Salem," and one, as he says, "I keep for my self."⁸⁸ At a meeting of Superior Court at Cambridge he distributed to his fellow judges copies of "Maroll's Martyrdom, Marbled."⁸⁹ The speaker of the House

⁸⁶ Letter-Book, I, 248, letter to John Love dated December 25, 1700.

⁸⁷ Ibid., letter to John Ive dated December 20, 1700. Concerning Poole we find, for example: "This day I sent Joseph my Po[o]lle's Synopsis Criticorum. I have enjoy'd them one and thirty years; and now have the pleasure to bestow them on . . . my son" (Diary, II, 418, entry for January 29, 1713/14).

⁸⁸ Diary, III, 289, entry for June 24, 1721.

⁸⁹ Ibid., II, 391, entry for July 28, 1713.

of Representatives received "Mr. Colman's Book of the Virgins";⁹⁰ his pastor, Mr. Willard, "two volums of Rivets works";⁹¹ Edward Taylor, his college bed mate, "Centuriae Maedeburgenses." a church history in thirteen volumes;⁹² his cousin Coffin at Dunstable, "Ainsworth on the Pentateuch";⁹³ and so on, indefinitely. Occasionally, by way of secular relief, he might give almanacs⁹⁴ or old copies of the London Gazette or Boston News-Letter.⁹⁵ This was the great day in New England of the published sermon,⁹⁶ and copies of the words of, for example, the Mathers and of Cotton, of Bishop Burnet and his own pastor, Samuel Willard, he distributed with a truly prodigal hand. At home, at court, in council, by letter, on the circuit, always and everywhere there were sermons, drawn from their company of "Chockaletts," figs, almonds, and other pleasant edibles in his saddle bags

⁹⁰ Diary, III, 7, entry for June 3, 1714.

⁹¹ Ibid., II, 1, entry for January 17, 1699/1700.

⁹² Letter-Book, I, 76, letter dated March 6, 1687/8.

⁹³ Diary, II, 223, entry for July 14, 1719.

⁹⁴ See, for example, the Letter-Book, I, 25, memorandum of a letter of March 6, 1685/6, and ibid., p. 324, letter to John Williams dated January 18, 1705/6.

⁹⁵ See the Letter-Book, I, 16, editors' note. Sewall never identifies further than "Gazette" and "News-Letter." He received "Gazettes" from his English agent, John Ives. See, for example, the Letter-Book, I, 38, 204, letters dated September 4, 1686, and October 28, 1698.

⁹⁶ See Wright, Literary Culture, p. 161.

and in the capacious pockets of his outer garments and hopefully given to the world.⁹⁹

Perhaps the best single index of Sewall's reading tastes is the commonplace book which he kept between the years 1677 and 1686,¹⁰⁰ in which he gathered together extracts from his reading under such headings as "De Honore," "De Obedientia," "De Sabato," and "De Consolatione." Here again the matter is almost entirely theological, being drawn from such favorite Puritan sources as Augustine, Foxe, Calvin, Owen, Pareus, Perkins, Barrow, and Melancthon. Only one secular extract appears, some verses from Dryden's Indian Emperour, which Sewall "accidentally met with" at Samuel Green's and read on his way to Hog Island in Boston harbor on April 9, 1683.¹⁰¹ But though the matter is secular, Sewall's interest in it is not. What interests him is the subject of Mexico and the spread of the Catholic faith in the New World.¹⁰² It is for this that he

⁹⁹ Letter-Book, II, 127, memorandum for letter of December 22, 1720: ". . . presented the Council and Deputies, and many others with . . . sermons. . . ." Such an instance is but one of many. See, for example, ibid., I, 253, letter to Edward Taylor of March, 1700/1; ibid., p. 351, memorandum for August 19, 1797 ("a Hundred" of a sermon for "Her Majesty's Forces Eastward"); ibid., p. 396, memorandum of letter to Edward Taylor dated June 27, 1710; ibid., II, 3-4, letter to Edward Taylor dated August 1, 1712; ibid., p. 30, letter to James Noyes dated March 9, 1713/14; ibid., p. 31, letter to Seth Shove dated July 14, 1714.

¹⁰⁰ The manuscript is at the New York Historical Society.

¹⁰¹ Under entry of this date. See the discussion by R. W. Dykema, "Samuel Sewall Reads John Dryden," American Literature, XIV (May, 1942), 157-161.

¹⁰² For the Mexican interest see the Phaenomena; Diary, II, 53, entry for February 19, 21, 1701/2; Letter-Book, I, 297, letter to Henry Newman dated March 6, 1703/4.

sets down a part of the dialogue between Montezuma and the conquering Cortez. It is for the same reason that he sets about what might seem the secular project of getting "a smattering of the Spanish tongue."¹⁰³ Theological also was his passing interest in such languages as Turkish¹⁰⁴ and Italian.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Letter-Book, I, 123, memorandum, undated but with the material for 1691. He has written to a Mr. Stretton to buy him "Some Spanish Books; Barthol. de las Casas in Spanish, and in English too; Grammar and Dictionary, if to be had. . . ." Seven years later, April 25, 1698, he wrote to Amsterdam for the "Spanish Bible of Cypriano Valero" (*ibid.*, p. 199), and in 1700 he received from Colonel Dudley the "surprising . . . favour" of an "Old Testament in Spanish" (*ibid.*, p. 246, memorandum for November 20). His study of this language of the enemy was thus more than a passing whim.

¹⁰⁴ Diary, I, 34, entry for January 30, 1676/7. He sent to England for the "Turkish Alcoran . . . second Hand."

¹⁰⁵ Letter-Book, I, 199, memorandum for April 25, 1698. He sent to Amsterdam for "Deodats Italian Bible." Italian and Turkish were apparently matters of passing curiosity. Sewall's linguistic acquirements were certainly respectable if not impressive. See, for example, his discussion of the amendment of the word "fold" to "flock" in John 10:16: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. . . ." a change that was made in the Revised Version of 1881 (Letter-Book, I, 297-298, letter to Henry Newman dated March 6, 1703/4), or his "Vindication of Ovid's Beginning of his Metamorphosis" which he wrote to Cotton Mather, who had charged the poet with "Stumbling, and blundering" (Letter-Book, I, 372-373, letter dated September 27, 1708, and *ibid.*, p. 375, memorandum of letter to Edward Taylor dated November 9, 1708). Sewall's own Latin verse (for representative examples of which, see Diary, II, 136, entry for August 24, 1705; *ibid.*, p. 137, entry for September 10, 1705; *ibid.*, p. 140, entry for October 15, 1705; *ibid.*, p. 141, entry for October 28, 1705; *ibid.*, p. 143, entry for November 25, 1705), "however feeble," as William Everett has remarked, is metrically "irreproachable, according to the rules of quantity as recognized by the scholars of his time." He judges that Sewall's verses show a "very sound classical scholarship" (Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, IV, 80).

Such scholarly concerns, however, occupied no central place in his interests. They were rather, so to speak, of his left hand: appropriate as respectable flourishes for one of Harvard background and some intellectual pretension. Like the

To one not acquainted with the Puritans' attitude toward their intellectual heritage Sewall's fondness for such heathenish writers as Horace, Ovid, and Vergil may come as something of a surprise and be taken as an indication of undiluted secular interest. Such a conclusion, however, would be mistaken. The Puritan quite as much as the schoolman of thirteenth century Paris held with the idea of the unity of all knowledge. If theology was queen, then just as surely were all other subjects of humane study her legitimate servants. Classical authors were rich sources of teleological and moral instruction, and they were studied with such aims in mind. As Cotton Mather said of Ezekiel Cheever, his students he "from Virgil did to David train." The study of Greek and Roman authors might be secular in effect, but the intent was quite otherwise.¹⁰⁶

Occasionally, however, but only very occasionally, the reader of Sewall will be surprised by the appearance of lines for which plain enjoyment can be the only justification. Once, for example, on the way down to his Naragansett lands to examine boundaries he stopped off for dinner and while the meal was preparing "read in Ben Johnson, a Folio:

tag ends of Latin quotations, which are frequent in his letters and conspicuously rare in his diary, they are a mark of caste.

¹⁰⁶See Miller, New England Mind, pp. 76, 98, 105-107, for a careful and elaborate demonstration of this point.

Wake, our Mirth begins to dye:
Quicken it with Tunes and Wine.
Raise your Notes; you'r out; fie, fie,
This drowsiness is an ill sign.

These are followed by a dozen more lines of a similarly non moral character.¹⁰⁷ No point of "improvement" is made and none is apparent. This, however, is the single such instance in the half-century long diary record. A single comparable instance in his letters occurs when he encloses to Governor Saltonstall of Connecticut the lines of Prior's epitaph:

Monarchs, and Heraulds, by your leave
Here ly the bones of Matthew Prior;
The Son of Adam and of Eve:
Let Bourbon, or Nassau, goe higher!¹⁰⁸

Why, unless it be simply the communication of something he relished, he wanted the governor to see the lines is not clear. It is interesting to note that the lines were circulating in New England before they appeared in published form at home, a fact which allows us to believe, if not, as Professor Wright says, that "some of the colonists were in close touch with English letters," at least that the literary isolation of the Puritan settlement was not complete.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Diary, II, 167-168, entry for September 16, 1706.

¹⁰⁸ Letter-Book, II, letter dated January 15, 1721/2.

¹⁰⁹ Literary Culture, p. 154. The lines were not published until after Prior died in September of 1721 and Sewall quotes them in January of 1721/2.

An interesting and more extensive evidence of secular poetic interest is contained in Sewall's memorandum book,¹¹⁰ where, in addition to the usual pious and memorial "tributes of tears" of the kind that he himself turned out on various funereal occasions,¹¹¹ he set down others for which the reader of the diary is scarcely prepared. One of these, for example, is a "Letter written from a young man in the Country to a Boon Companion in the City concerning a Mourning Cloak; And his conceited Answer thereunto,"¹¹² four lines of which read:

You say that I shall Smart for the Cloak
Tho I care not a fart for the Cloak
I'lle study the black Art in the Cloak
Rather than yeald [?] to part with the Cloak.

One stanza of another reads:

There is but one and only one
and I am only he
That Loves but one and only one
and thou art only She.¹¹³

¹¹⁰Harold Jantz, "The First Century of New England Verse," *Am. Ant. Soc., Proc.*, ser. 2, LIII (October, 1943), 219, describes this item as "one of the most important single collections of our early verse."

¹¹¹See chap. 5. The selections of this kind are eighteen in number with Benjamin Tompson contributing the most. Others are by Thomas Wally, William Adams, and Joshua Moody. The authors of some are unidentified.

¹¹²Part 2, pp. 14-15.

¹¹³Part 2, p. 2.

Another, entitled "Wit and Folly in a Map," consists of scrambled lines of verse followed by the invitation,

Come try your wits for a merry Pot
In half an hour you read it not,
In its true sence as it ought to be,
Then lay a wager stake and see.¹¹⁴

However damning of Sewall's critical standards such selections may be, they certainly add a fresh touch to our portrait of him.

III

In addition to encouraging him in a theological bent of mind, Sewall's years at Harvard provided him with an important center of affection and action through more than half a century. He remarked of Cambridge that "Rome, in all her Pomp and Glory . . . could not be so much . . . to her Julius and Augustus . . . as that Town must needs be to me,"¹¹⁵ and the concept of "our class" was very dear to him. During a visit to his home at Newbury, while still a student, he wrote from his "Wilderness-Condition" asking his friend Daniel Gookin (?) to "Remember me kindly to all our Class; jointly and severally. . . ."¹¹⁶ This was in March 1671/2. Fif-

¹¹⁴Part 2, p. 1.

¹¹⁵Letter-Book, I, 18, letter to Daniel Gookin (?) dated March 16, 1671/2.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 20.

ty-five years later, after the funeral of Mr. Thacher of Milton, and but four years before his own death, he wrote sadly: "I have now been at the Interment of four of my Class-mates[.] First, the Rev'd Mr. William Adams of Dedham, Midweek, Augt. 19, 1685.¹¹⁷ Second, Mr. John Bowles, at Roxbury, March, 31, 1691. Was one of his Bearers. Third, Capt. Samuel Phips at Charlestown. . . . Inter'd Augt. 9. 1725. Fourth, the Rev'd Mr. Thacher at Milton. Now I can go to no more Funerals of my Class-mates; nor none be at mine; for the survivors, the Rev'd Mr. Samuel Mather at Windsor, and the Reverend Mr. Taylor at Westfield, [are] one Hundred Miles off, and are entirely enfeebled."¹¹⁸ In the next year Samuel Mather died, leaving only Sewall and his "dear Colleague, and Chamberfellow, and Bedfellow!" Edward Taylor,¹¹⁹ who was bedridden and "longing and waiting for his Dismission."¹²⁰ In

¹¹⁷ On this occasion Sewall notes that there were there "Four of our Class, viz: Mr. Thacher, Bowl[e]s, Norton, Self. I took one Spell at carrying him" (Diary, I, 93, entry for August 19, 1685).

¹¹⁸ Diary, III, 388-389, entry for December 22, 1727. Two years before this he had written to the Reverend Peter Thacher, who is the subject of this entry, "Congratulating his Recovery. Mentiond his Letter of July 14, 1676, from London. . . . Our Class. I am under such decays that they ought to put me in mind to cry out, I fall!" (Letter-Book, II, 187, memorandum of letter dated July 13, 1725). Classmates whom Sewall does not mention are Isaac Foster, dead in 1682; Samuel Danforth, dead in 1676; Thomas Wold, dead in 1702; John Norton, dead in 1716 (Diary, loc. cit., editors' note).

¹¹⁹ Letter-Book, II, 105, letter to Taylor dated February 16, 17, 1719/20. See also, ibid., 274, letter to Elisha Williams dated August 22, 1729. Another "former Bedfellow" was a Henry Smith of Hingham, whom Sewall on one occasion tried unsuccessfully to place in a teaching post in Boston (see Diary, I, 35, entry for February 15, 1676/7).

¹²⁰ Letter-Book, II, 241, letter to John Danforth dated April 8, 1728.

these circumstances Sewall prayed "that as my dear Classmates have run their Race, I also may be made ready. . . ." ¹²¹ He noted the passing of this "old Friend" in the summer of 1728 and found himself, with his "Disorder[ed] . . . Back," "weak Hands," and "feeble Knees," ¹²² the last surviving member of his class.

What has been said of the struggling state of Harvard is not to be taken as an indication that the authorities did not recognize the importance of the role it had to play in their Wilderness Israel; for quite the contrary is true. In the struggle during the last years of the seventeenth and first years of the eighteenth century between the conservative forces of the Mathers (which included Sewall) on the one hand and the more liberal forces of John Leverett and the Brattles on the other, the great central object was control of the college. The importance of the prize was well stated by Increase Mather when, with control of it slipping from his grasp, he cried out: "O NEW-ENGLAND! NEW-ENGLAND! Look to it, that the Glory be not removed from thee. For it begins to go. . . . and if the Fountain should fail: I mean the COLLEDGE . . . the Glory is like to be gone . . . in less than one Generation. .

. ¹²³ The inauguration of Leverett in 1708 was in the nature

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., and Letter-Book, II, 270, letter to Mrs. Stephen Sewall dated July 7, 1729.

¹²³ Ichabod: a Discourse Shewing what Cause there is to Fear, that the Glory of the Lord, is departing from New England (Boston 1702), pp. 45-46.

of a victory celebration.¹²⁴ The walls of the old conservatism had been breached at their most strategic point.

As an Assistant of the Colony and later as a member of the Council of the Province, Sewall was automatically one of the Overseers of the college.¹²⁵ This body was not the comparatively meaningless thing it has since become, when, as Professor Morison says, like the English House of Lords, it "does nothing in particular, and does it very well."¹²⁶ It was the governing board. As such it was actively engaged in the Mather-Leverett struggle over the control of the institution and the determination of its character. Sewall's position

¹²⁴ See Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 156. Sewall was at the ceremony and registers a complacent satisfaction rather than the resentment we should more naturally expect. This acceptance of the inevitable was characteristic. Possibly the fact that his student son, Joseph, delivered a Latin address on the occasion partially accounts for his attitude (see Diary, II, 209, entry for January 14, 1707/8).

¹²⁵ That is, from 1684, when he first became an Assistant (his presence at a meeting of the Board of Overseers is first entered for July 1, 1684, in Harvard Records, I, 76, 255), until he resigned as Councilor in 1725 (the last meeting with the Overseers noted in the Diary, III, 354-355, is on May 13, 1725), with the exception of three years during the inter-charter period (1686-92) when he was out of the government (1686-89, the years of Andros). Except for a meeting of the Overseers noted in the Diary, I, 322, on June 12, 1690, a meeting not entered in the college records, this body was in abeyance from 1686 (the year the Charter was lost) until 1708 when the old charter of the college was finally revived. The charter of 1692 made no provision for Overseers, and those of 1687 and 1700 specify "Visitors," of which Sewall as a Councilor would be one (see Harvard Records, I, xxxiv-v). For the magistrate as Overseer see Mass. Records II, 30, and Magnalia, II, 11.

¹²⁶ Harvard College, I, 21.

in this struggle was one which he assumed again and again as the nature of the Puritan state gradually changed: that of the rear guard resister, whose retreat is less angry than sad, who sees what is happening, as signs of a falling away from the spirit of the fathers which he may hinder but cannot prevent. It is an attitude which finds expression in his question at the time of the loss of the precious Colony Charter; "When the foundations are destroyed, what can the Righteous do?"¹²⁷

The most positive action against the liberal forces of the Leverett-Brattle party in which he engaged was in giving his encouragement and advice to the men in Connecticut undertaking the establishment of a new stronghold of the untainted faith at New Haven.¹²⁸ In 1701 they appealed to Sewall and his friend Isaac Addington (then Secretary of State for the Province and, like Sewall, a man of the old cast) for help in framing a charter. In the suggestions which the two sent off the matter of greatest concern was

¹²⁷ Diary, I, 132-139, entry for May 17, 1686.

¹²⁸ In 1698 occurred the famous secession of the Brattle Street Church from the principles of the Cambridge Platform, and in 1699 the religious qualification for Harvard had been negatived by Governor Bellomont. The result was a widespread feeling that apostasy was abroad in the land. Brattle was against the public recital of religious experience as a requirement for church membership, preached at his own ordination, wouldn't allow an elder to lay a hand on his head during the ceremony, etc. Both Brattle and Leverett had been active in the opposition during the witchcraft episode. (The situation is summarized in Quincy, I, 197-199.)

that "the president be enjoined to read and Expound the Scripture in the Hall morning and Evening, #129 a practice which had long been standard at Harvard but in which there had been a recent falling away. Furthermore, they were not satisfied with the vague injunction in the Harvard charter for "the instituting, guiding, and furthering . . . of piety, morality, and learning. #130 Apparently desiring something more definite and safe, they asked that students be required to recite "memoriter" from the Westminster Catechism and from Dr. William Ames's Medulla and Cases of Conscience,¹³¹ in all of which, as in the expounding of Scripture, the charter which was drawn up reflects their wishes. Whether this was a direct result of their suggestions or not is a matter of dispute.¹³² The letter which accompanied these

¹²⁹Letter-Book, I, 260, memorandum of letter to James Pierpont, one of the founders of Yale, dated September 17, 1701.

¹³⁰See Quincy, I, 198.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Inasmuch as these suggestions do find expression in the charter (see William L. Kingsley ed., Yale College: A Sketch of its History [New York, 1879], I, 25) it is somewhat curious that scholars should differ as markedly as they do on their significance. Palfrey, IV, 372, remarks that ". . . whether it was that the arrangements had been already matured, or that a different judgment prevailed, their proposals do not appear to have influenced the projectors. . . ." He cites, of all people, Quincy, whose conclusion is that "the founders of the College in Connecticut adopted, without any material alterations, the draft made by Sewall and Addington. . . ." Kingsley, I, 22, says that though the suggestions arrived in time to be considered, ". . . it appears that only the form and to some extent the phraseology was employed."

"Hints for an Act," as they called them, is an interesting statement of the conservative attitude toward the new undertaking: "We should be very glad," it says in part, "to hear of flourishing Schools and College at Connecticut; and it would be some relief to us against the Sorrow we have conceived for the decay of them in this Province."¹³³ They go on to say that ". . . as the end of all Learning is to search the Scriptures . . . we make no doubt but you will oblige the Rector to Expound the Scriptures deligently, morning and evening."

This matter of the exposition of Scripture by the college head was a sore point with Sewall and one which, curiously enough, brought him into conflict not only with the Leverett forces but with the Mathers as well. Increase Mather was eager enough to assume control of the college, as indeed he had at various times done, but only if he could do so with his left hand. He was unwilling to leave his Boston congregation and devote his full time and energies to the job, preferring to commute between the towns and enjoy the positions both of pastor and president. "Should I," he asked, "Leave off preaching to 1500 souls . . . only to expound to 40 or 50 children?"¹³⁴ Sewall felt that the an-

¹³³Letter-Book, I, 263-264, letter of Sewall and Addington to the Rev. Thomas Buckingham dated October 6, 1701.

¹³⁴Justin Winsor ed., Memorial History of Boston (Boston, 1892), II, 202.

swer to this question should be Yes! and in a memorandum he wrote that in his opinion even if Mather were willing to reside in Cambridge but yet "not Expound the Scriptures, and Pray in the Hall . . . the Example of it would doe more hurt, than his going thither would doe good."¹³⁵ He had delivered a speech in Council to this effect and had apparently therefore favored the appointment of President Willard over Mather. The result was that Cotton Mather came to Mr. Wilkins' shop where young Sam, Sewall's eldest son, was working, and voiced the opinion that Sewall "had used his father worse than a Neger; spake so loud that people in the street might hear him." That morning Sewall had read "Mr. Dod's saying; Sanctified Afflictions are good Promotions," a thought which he now found a "cordial." Recalling that a few days earlier he had sent Increase Mather "a Hanch of very good Venison," he hoped that in that he "did not treat him as a Negro."¹³⁶ Next day he wrote Cotton Mather expressing his "Surprise and Grief" over what he had learned and suggested that they meet at Wilkins' with some mutual friends and there "try to give an Instance of the Truth of that old Proverb; Amantium Irae Amoris Redintegratio est."¹³⁷ The

¹³⁵ Letter-Book, I, 264.

¹³⁶ Diary, II, 43, entry for October 20, 1701.

¹³⁷ Letter-Book, I, 263, letter dated October 21, 1701.

following morning at half past nine Sewall met with the
angry man of God and "expostulated with him from 1 Tim.
5.1. Rebuke not an elder." Cotton Mather replied that
"he had consider'd that" and went on to charge the Council,
as Sewall says, with "Lying, Hypocrisy, Tricks, and I know
not what all. I ask'd him if it were done with that Meek-
ness as it should; answer'd yes. Charg'd the Council in
general, and then shew'd my share, which was my speech. . . .
I ask'd him If I should suppose he had done something amiss
in his Church as an Officer; whether it would be well for
me to exclaim against him in the street for it (Mr. Wilkin
would fain have had him gon into the inner room, but he
would not.) I told him I conceiv'd he had done much unbe-
coming a Minister of the Gospel. . . ." Sewall was called
away to Council at this point, where he "hammer'd out an
Order for a Day of Thanksgiving," a job for which the events
of the afternoon could scarcely have been much encourage-
ment.¹³⁸ Next day, again at Wilkins', Increase Mather ap-
peared and announced his pious opinion that "if I am a Ser-
vant of Jesus Christ, some great Judgment will fall on
Capt. Sewall, or his family."¹³⁹ Two days later, after
Sewall had circulated a copy of his speech "that all might
see what was the ground of Mr. Mather's Anger," the storm

¹³⁸ Diary, II, 44, entry for October 22, 1701.

¹³⁹ Ibid., entry for October 23. The title of Captain refers
to Sewall's role, first with the South Company, one of the
town's train bands, and later with the Ancient and Honourable
Artillery Company. He had at this time been a judge for many
years, but it was the military title by which he was most of
called.

begin to subside and Sewall was able to note: "They seem to grow calm."¹⁴⁰ On December 31 following, in "consideration of this being the last day of the year" and inasmuch as Cotton Mather had honored Sewall's pew by sitting with him in meeting "last Tuesday was fortnight," he wrote saying that he did "now Remise, Release and forever quit claim, as to any personal Controversy we were lately managing at Mr. Wilkins's." He signed the letter "your truly loving friend and humble Servant."¹⁴¹ Besides affording us an idea of Sewall's participation in Harvard politics, this crackling episode gives us some insight into at least a part of the reason why the Mathers found themselves pushed from their dynastic place.

Seventeen years later found the dogged Sewall still waging his fight for a more regular exposition in Hall and gaining at least a paper victory. On November 12, 1718, the business before the meeting of Overseers concerned the dimensions of the proposed Massachusetts Hall. The motion being called for, Sewall arose and said that though the matter in hand was of "great moment" he "apprehended there was an affair of greater moment." "I had heard," he writes,

Exposition of the Scriptures in the Hall had not been carried on [and] . . . enquired of the President [Leverett] whether 'twere so or no. Was silence a little while; then

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., entry for October 25.

¹⁴¹ Letter-Book, I, 266.

the President seem'd to be surpris'd at my Treating of him in that Manner; I did not use to do so. . . . Many spake earnestly that what I did was out of Season. . . . When I was fallen so hard upon, I said I apprehended the not Expounding the Scriptures was a faulty Omission, and I was glad I had that Opportunity of shewing my dislike of it. President said, he had begun to take it up agen; I said I was glad of it. . . . Mr. Belcher stood up, and mov'd earnestly that Exposition might be attended. At last Mr. Wadsworth stood up and spake in favour of it, and drew up a vote that the president should as frequently as he could entertain the students with Exposition of the holy Scriptures. . . . I mov'd that as he could might be left out; and it was so voted. Mr. President seem'd to say softly, it was not till now the Business of the President to Expound in the Hall. I said I was glad the Overseers had now the Honour of declaring it to be the President's Duty.¹⁴²

A week later the President spoke to him again "and intimated that twas not the President's Duty to Expound before this Order," to which Sewall replied that "twas a Shame that a Law should be needed; meaning ex malis moribus bonae Leges."¹⁴³

¹⁴²Diary, III, 202-203.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 203, entry for November 19, 1718.

Three years later he was less successful in his conservative opposition to the course of change at the school. The issue this time was the acceptance or rejection of the Hollis endowment for a divinity professorship, one of the stipulations of which was that the occupier of it should be "in Communion with a Church of Congregational[ists], Presbyterian[s], or Baptists." Sewall objected to such a condition, "chusing rather to lose the Donation than to Accept it." After much debate he finally said: "One great end for which the first Planters came over into New England, was to fly from the Cross in Baptisme. For my part, I had rather have Baptisme administered with the incumbrance of the Cross, than not to have it Administered at all. This Qualification of the Divinity Professour, is to me a Bribe to give my Sentence in Disparagement of Infant Baptisme: and I will endeavour to shake my hands from holding it." When it came to the vote "but very few appear'd in the Negative."¹⁴⁴ Two weeks later Edward Wigglesworth was appointed to the post,¹⁴⁵ and at the installation on the following October 24 it was Sewall himself who administered the oath.¹⁴⁶ In doing this he took what was frequently his conservative course: register resistance and, failing in it, sadly resign himself. Whatever his oppo-

¹⁴⁴Diary, III, 298-299, entry for January 10, 1721/2.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 300, entry for January 24.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 311.

sition to developments at the college it was never such as to shake his allegiance to it. Even at the time that he was supplying advice for the charter of Yale, he was using his influence for the passing of Harvard's charter of 1700 in what he felt to be a satisfactory form.¹⁴⁷ While continuing to be, as he said, "a Well-wisher" to the new college in Connecticut,¹⁴⁸ he likewise and at the same time continued to send up his prayers for the welfare of his alma mater.¹⁴⁹ It was to Harvard that he gave five hundred acres of his Narragansett holdings,¹⁵⁰ and it was to Harvard that he sent in precious trust his son Joseph to be trained for the ministry.

¹⁴⁷Letter-Book, I, 241-242, letter to Governor Bellomont dated August 5, 1700. Support from the Governor would, Sewall assures him, cause his "Praises to spring up amongst this people; which shall flow as long as Merrimack or Hudson's River shall pay any Tribute to the Ocean."

¹⁴⁸Letter-Book, I, 354, letter to Thomas Buckingham dated October 7, 1707. It is easy to imagine the shock and dismay which Sewall felt at the growth of Episcopal influence at Yale in the 1720's, the "plain and loud Thunder-Claps" of which he took as "a Demonstration that the Drying up [of] the Great River Euphrates is near at hand" (ibid., II, 144, letter to Governor Saltonstall of Connecticut dated October 5, 1722).

¹⁴⁹Ibid., I, 354, letter to Samuel Shepard dated December 29, 1707.

¹⁵⁰Harvard Records, I, 272: "On June. 24. 1696. The Honorable Samuel Sewal Esquire and Hannah his wife . . . gave to the college a farm at Petaquamscot in the Narraganset Countrey . . . containing five hundred acres more or less. The Incomes or Profits of this Farm are by the donors direction 'for and toward the Support and Education at the said College, of such youths whose Parents may not be of sufficient ability to maintain them there; especially such as shall be sent from Petaquamscot aforesaid, English or Indians if any such there be['].'"

On November 30, 1698, Sewall asked that the province grant money for building of a house on this land "that it may be ren-

On the subject of Sewall and Harvard there remains only to be considered the marriage to which his years at Cambridge led, a marriage which in the hands of Hawthorne entered the realm of New England legend and which, in a practical sense, was certainly the most important result of those years. Abruptly it changed the course of his life, as the minister-to-be found himself born willy-nilly into the world of property and merchandise.

dred capable of yielding an annual income to said College" (Mass. Archives, LVIII, 181). The income in 1731, the year of Sewall's death, was six pounds, ten shillings per annum (Harvard Records, II, 595).

Chapter Three

MERCHANT AND MAN OF PROPERTY

In the library of the New England Historic and Genealogical Society there is a large folio volume bearing on its cover the words "Samuel Sewall His Ledger." Among some loose pages at the front of the volume is one headed: "An inventory of the Estate of[John] . . . Hull."¹ In this inventory are listed "warehouses," "lands," shares in ships, "dwelling houses," "money and goods," and "Debts owing" to the estimated value of twelve thousand and sixty pounds. In 1680, or shortly after the time at which Hull drew up

¹The word "John" is torn away, but the contents of the paper identify the owner beyond any question. This document has remained unnoted by writers on Hull, with the result that Hermann F. Clarke, for example, in his extremely careful John Hull: A Builder of the Bay Colony (Portland, Me., 1940), chap. 10, passim, the editors of his Diary, American Ant. Soc., Trans., III (Boston, 1857), 124-125, and Samuel E. Morison in his Builders of the Bay Colony (New York, 1930), chap. 5, are able only to speculate on the subject of his wealth. The document is undated but from the ledger entries which accompany it (also Hull's) it is apparently of the 1670's, or around the time that Sewall became a member of the Hull establishment.

Since Sewall's possessions, as will be demonstrated later, were, with the exception of holdings at Newbury and in England received from his father, either a part of the Hull estate or purchased with Hull capital, it is the best evidence we have of his wealth as well. The listing, with values estimated by Hull, is as follows:

To my dwelling house . . . several warehouses and the house that Mrs. Johannah Evans liveth in [570 pounds]

To my warehouses Land and wharffs thereby [400 pounds]

To Cotton House and Land [327 pounds]

To my orchard by Partner Sandersons [120 pounds]

To my pasture by Manditt Inge [200 pounds]

[Shares in ten different ships: Hopewell, Blessing,

this list, Governor Simon Bradstreet, in response to an inquiry from the Lords of the Privy Council, wrote: " . . .

Tryall, Seaflower, etc. (1,943 pounds). Clarke, p. 106, states that Hull had part ownership in fifteen ships during the years 1670-83.]

To quick stock . . . money and goods in the warehouse [2,200 pounds]

To dead stock in Debts owing [3,000 pounds]

Lands at Brantry [1,000 pounds. Clarke, p. 85, states that 500 acres were bought in 1658 and more later.]

To Lands at Sherborn [800 pounds]

To Lands at Muddy River [500 pounds. The place of this farm, in what is now Brookline, is still called Sewall's Point. Clarke, p. 85, says that 300 acres were purchased in 1658 and more later.]

To Lands at Narriganset or Pettaquomscat [1,000 pounds. In 1657, according to Clarke, pp. 88-89, Hull was one of five in a venture called "the Pettiquampscut Purchase." The present Point Judith, at the southwest entrance of Narragansett Bay, was named by Hull for his wife. Here and on near by Block Island he raised horses. In 1714, after having "sold much . . . there" and having given "Five Hundred Acres . . . toward the Support of a School there; and Five Hundred Acres to Harvard-College," Sewall still had "a considerable Interest left . . . the very Point of Point-Judith, containing about Twelve Hundred Acres" (Letter-Book, II, 33, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated August 17, 1714).]

The list does not mention Maine lands "upon Marriconeg Neck in Casco Bay," near the present Portland, a tract of 1,000 acres or more granted to Governor Endicott in 1657 and bought by Hull for fifty pounds in the next year. The boundaries had not been specified, and Sewall in 1693 asked the General Court for one thousand acres. The request was granted, but when it later appeared that the same tract had been granted to Harvard College, Sewall resigned his claim in return for 500 acres at Pennicook. (See Mass. Archives, XLV, 211; Harvard Records, I, 278-279.)

Another Maine holding not mentioned in the list was timber lands and mills at Salmon Falls on the Piscataqua River, near the southern end of the boundary between Maine and New Hampshire (Clarke, p. 91).

Clarke also mentions a "1,000 acres at Boxford," for which the Hull heirs made petition in 1696 (p. 96, citing Mass. Archives, XVI, 520).

there are two or three [merchants] in our Corporation that may be worth sixteen or eighteen thousand pounds a piece, some few others worth eight or ten thousand pounds a piece, a third sort worth four or five thousand pounds a piece. . . . Hee is accounted a rich man in the Country that is worth one thousand or Fifteen hundred pounds."² Edward Randolph, reporting to the home government in 1676, wrote: "There are about thirty merchants that are esteemed worth from ten to twenty thousand pounds. . . ."³ In short, John Hull was one of those Boston merchants to whom Josselyn, in 1675, referred to as being "damnable rich."⁴

It is not possible to trace here the extraordinary rise of the indigent but dutiful young John Hull from silversmith to colonial worthy. Some mention, however, of the man and his career is necessary for understanding both the society in which he prospered and the young man who became his son-in-law. It is suggestive of much, for example, that as a youth his extreme dutifulness to his aged mother, "then weak in body, and poor in estate," was supposed to have caused the Reverend John Wilson to remark: "I charge you to take notice of what I say; God will certainly bless that young man; John Hull . . . shall grow rich, and live to do God good service in his generation!"

²George F. Dow, Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Boston, 1935), p. 150.

³Hutchinson, Papers, p. 485.

⁴An Account of Two Voyages to New England (London, 1675), in Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 3, III (Cambridge, 1832), p. 331.

Cotton Mather, who tells the story, concludes by saying: "It came to pass accordingly that this exemplary person became a very rich, as well as emphatically a good man, and afterwards died a magistrate of the colony."⁵ To the middle-class mind of the Bay Puritan John Hull was an impressive and, indeed, almost heroic example of the kind of happy combination of wealth and righteousness appropriate to the thriving New World theocracy, a man of whom John Danforth, on the occasion of his death, could write:

Choice HULL the fifth Command observ'd so well,
His Carriage to His Parent did Excell;
Wilson Pronounc'd the Promis'd Blessing then;
The LORD of Providence too said AMEN.
The Hull, soon Built upon, became an Argo;
Deep freighted with Terrene & Heav'nly Cargo;
Immortal Vertue gave Immortal Name;
Long Life, Power, Honour Added to his Fame.
Stretching his Course, Refresh'd with Prosperous Gales,
Quitting New-England's Coasts, to Heav'n he sails.⁶

The inevitable accompaniment of piety and riches in seventeenth century Massachusetts was public office. At various times between 1668 and 1680 John Hull was deputy for the towns

⁵Magnalia, I, 314.

⁶"Greatness & Goodness Elegized," a broadside at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

of Wenham, Westfield, Concord, and Salisbury at the meetings of the General Court.⁷ For three years (1676-79) after King Philip's War he served the hard pressed colony as Treasurer, digging deep into his private coffers to support its tottering finances,⁸ and from 1680 until his death in 1683 he was annually elected to the high, sacred, and oligarchic Court of Assistants.⁹ In the role of Boston citizen he was at various times selectman of the town and member and officer of the South Military Company and the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, serving in the latter as Captain from 1671 to 1678, a post of much honor.¹⁰ The significance for the present study of such details as these lies in the fact that Sewall succeeded not only to Hull's wealth but to his social position and responsibilities as well. When, in 1683, Sewall became a member of the General Court, it was as representative of the town of Westfield, which Hull had represented ten years

⁷Mass. Records, Vol. IV, part 2, pp. 363, 484, 507, 553; ibid., II, 98, 260. The early laws of the colony did not require residence in the community represented.

⁸Ibid., V, 78, 131, 184, 210. On December 5, 1683, ". . . Judith Hull, and Samuel Sewall, administrators of the estate of the late John Hull, Esq., sometime Treasurer," petitioned for the payment of "above seventeene hundred pounds due to him from the country" for which he had "charged but fower hundred twenty five pounds fiveteen shillings and fower pence interest. . . ." The Court found at "five hundred forty five pounds three shillings ten pence," and the matter was so discharged. (Ibid., pp. 427-428, 434; and see Charles H. Douglass, The Financial History of Massachusetts [Boston, 1935], pp. 40-41.)

⁹Mass. Records, V, 265, 308, 350, 407.

¹⁰Hull, Diary, p. 122.

before. When Hull's death in 1683 left vacant his seat among the magistrates (i.e., the Court of Assistants), Sewall was elected to that lofty post in the next year. Hull was one of the founders and chief supporters of the South Church, and it was not long after Sewall's marriage before he was also one of its stoutest pillars. In his military career with both the South Company and the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, Sewall followed directly in the steps of his "father." He was, in short, the political, religious, and social, as well as the financial heir of John Hull. Except for his career on the bench, he did not create a life for himself; he merely entered upon his duties.

The aspect of John Hull's career which, more than anything else, gave it and the marriage of his daughter their legendary character was his work as Mintmaster of the Colony, in which capacity he and his partner, John Sanderson, turned out an estimated five million dollars worth of the famous pine-tree shillings.¹¹ When, in 1652, the colony undertook to supply itself with specie, it turned to the devout and able silversmith for supervision of the job, making a contract with him under which he was "allowed . . . to take one shilling out of every twenty."¹² It was not long before

¹¹Dow, Every Day Life, p. 169.

¹²Mass. Records, Vol IV, part 1, p. 84, date of May 26, 1652. The arrangement was not only for shillings but for sixpences and threepences as well. The colony's coinage was one of the things objected to by the home government, and it was finally discontinued in 1686. No new coins were made in Massachusetts until 1775. (See Morison, Builders of the Bay, p. 153.)

the authorities recognized the extravagance of this arrangement and sought to reduce the rate of seigniorage, but he declared himself eminently satisfied and it was not until 1675 that the mintmaster's share was reduced to twelve pence per twenty shillings.¹³ Since it would thus appear that the fortunate Hull had enjoyed a gross return on the project of somewhere around two hundred thousand dollars hard money, an enormous sum in the specie-short colony, it is little wonder that old wives' gossip in Boston placed his daughter's dowery at thirty thousand pounds¹⁴ or that Hawthorne, giving voice to New England legend, should provide him with a strong box "large enough to play at hide-and-seek in . . . full to the brim of bright pine-tree shillings fresh from the mint."¹⁵

II

In the sharp curve of John Hull's rise from a low condition to one of material affluence and power we have an epitome of the experience of the colony as a whole in its first half century. The "howling wilderness," as Cotton Mather liked to describe the land to which the first settlers came, was, after fifty years, a place of which William Harris, an English observer, could write:

¹³Mass. Records, V, 43-44, date of July 9, 1675. See Morison, loc. cit., and Douglas, Financial History, pp. 43-44. Douglas gives the 1675 rate as fifteen pence, an apparent error.

¹⁴I believe the figure is first given by Hutchinson, History, I, 178, who prefaces his statement with the phrase, "as commonly reported."

¹⁵Works, V, 45.

The merchants seem to be rich men, and their houses [are] as handsomely furnished as most in London. In exchange of fish, pipe-staves, wool and tobacco, they have from Spain, Portugal and the islands, the commodities of those islands; their wool they carry to France and bring thence linen; to England they bring beaver, moose, and deer skins, sugar and logwood, and carry home cloth and ironwares; to Barbadoes, in exchange for horses, beef, pork, butter, cheeses, flour, peas, biscuit, they have sugar and indigo; when they trade with Jamaica, as they do sometimes, they bring home pieces of eight, plate and pigs of silver. . . .¹⁶

Already in 1654 Edward Johnson was exclaiming enthusiastically of "this City-like Towne . . . whose continuall enlargement presages some sumptuous City"—and this were but a few years before "Wolfes and Beares nurst up their young."¹⁷ Industry, frugality, and thrift had quickly supplied an overplus of the "Wheat, Pork, Bisket, Beef, and Beer, Masts, Pipe-Staves, Fish" of which Samuel Danforth exuberantly wrote in 1648,¹⁸ and which enabled the New Englander to enter into the great Yankee heritage of shipping and trade. "Upon this tree," wrote Danforth, "PLENTY groweth much. . . ." God had given wonderful en-

¹⁶ Dow, Every Day Life, p. 149.

¹⁷ Wonder-Working Providence, p. 43.

¹⁸ Marion H. Gottfried, "The First Depression in Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, IX (December, 1936), 671. The poem appears in a 1648 almanac.

couragement to his people. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and the saints of the New England Israel set busily to work in subduing and possessing it in his name. Laborare est orare. That prosperity should result was a matter for thanksgiving certainly, but not for surprise.¹⁹ As Cromwell had written when he attempted to interest the New Englanders in removing to Jamaica "in order to the bettering their outward condition, God [had] . . . promised his people should be the head and not the tail."²⁰

In Josselyn's Account is a description of Boston at the time of Sewall's entry into its life as the protege' of John Hull. ". . . the houses," writes Josselyn, are for the most part raised on the Seabanks and wharfed out with great industry and cost, many of them standing upon piles, close together on each side the streets as in London, and furnished with many fair shops [;] their materials are Brick, Stone, Lime, handsomely contrived, with three meeting-Houses or Churches, and a Townhouse built upon pillars where the Merchants may confer [;] in the Chambers above they keep their monethly Courts, Their streets are many and large, paved with pebble stone

¹⁹ See the discussion by E.D. Bebb, Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life (London, 1935), p. 96.

²⁰ Hutchinson, History, I, 190, citing a report by John Leverett to Governor Endecott in a letter of December 20, 1656. See Hutchinson's account (pp. 90-92) of the transition from husbandry to trade and of the great increase that followed as other immigrants arrived "for the sake of gain when they saw a prospect of it."

and the South-side [where the Hulls and Sewall lived] adorned with Gardens and Orchards. The Town is rich and very populous, much frequented by strangers. . . . There is a small but pleasant Common where the Gallants a little before Sunset walk with their Marmalet-Madams as we do in Morefields, &c. till the nine a clock Bell rings them home to their respective habitations, when presently the Constables walk their rounds to see good orders kept [Sewall served as constable in 1678, his first public office], and to take up loose people. Two miles from the town at a place called Muddy-River the Inhabitants have Farms [one of them Hull's, later Sewall's, its occupant finally being Sewall's farmer son, Sam Junior] to which belong rich noble grounds and meadows where they keep their Cattle in the Summer, and bring them to Boston in the Winter; the Harbour before the town is filled with Ships and other Vessels for the most part of the year.²¹

Boston was, as Edward Randolph noted, "the metropolis of the colony."²² With its twenty-five hundred houses,²³ its busy shipyards, wharves, shops, and counting houses, its imposing

²¹Pages 319-320. The work appeared in 1675.

²²See his "Narrative" of 1676, in Hutchinson, Papers, p. 487.

²³Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, American Population before the Federal Census of 1790 (New York, 1932), p. 14. The figure is their estimate for 1675. Randolph, loc. cit., gives the number as "about 2000."

military installations,²⁴ its several churches, its governmental pomp, it was a thing to excite satisfaction in the breasts of its founders, such of them as were yet alive. Certainly the young Samuel Sewall, returning to it from the drowsing atmosphere of rural, outlying Newbury, must have looked about him, considered the position he had suddenly reached by "graduat[ing] from Harvard into the arms of a Boston heiress," as one writer has remarked,²⁵ and thought of God's kindly providence in his life.

Unfortunately, however, neither Sewall nor his fellow Puritans in the colony felt themselves able to enjoy undisturbed so simple and pleasant a reaction to their prosperity. The doctrine of stewardship, by which the Puritan came to terms with the world, setting about industriously to subdue it for the glory of God instead of rejecting it for the same reason, was logical and righteous--in theory. Its effects, however, were sometimes disturbing; for proper stewardship frequently brought great wealth, and great wealth offered grievous temptation even to the elect. The proper middle course was easy for a preacher to talk about

²⁴See Samuel Maverick, A Briefe Description of New England, in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, I (October, 1884), 257-258. Manuscript written about 1660.

²⁵George P. Winship, "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., LXVII (1941-44), 65: "Sewall introduced a new factor into the social and civic life of Boston. . . . He was the first noteworthy instance of a youth from an outlying community who graduated from Harvard into the arms of a Boston heiress."

and most difficult for the man of every day business to pursue. John Cotton, for example, could speak of "diligence in worldly businesses, and yet deadnesse to the world" as a "combination of vertues" desirable in "every lively holy Christian,"²⁶ but the sad practical fact was that the second of the two virtues had a way of being consumed in the exercise of the first, so that the early prosperity of the colony was accompanied by a sense of defection from the primitive glory of the first years. This sense of a "falling away" continued through the first century and was finally lost in the indifference of the second.²⁷ For Sewall it provided a mournfull and dominating theme throughout his entire adult life.

In the same years that Edward Johnson waxed enthusiastic over the commercial prosperity of the colony (i.e., the 1650's), John Norton expressed concern lest New England forget that it was "originally . . . a Plantation Religious, not a plantation of Trade" and that in forgetting her first profession she should earn the name of Ichabod.²⁸ His point was well taken,

²⁶ Miller, Puritan Mind, p. 42, cited. See Bebb, Nonconformity, p. 94.

²⁷ See the discussion by Henry B. Parkes, "New England in the Seventeen Thirties," New England Quarterly, III (July, 1930), 397-419. The early Calvinistic spirit, product of an essentially aggressive and fighting creed, had died, not from opposition but from a much more deadly foe, namely indifference and apathy.

²⁸ The Heart of New England Rent (London, 1660), p. 79. Election sermon of 1657. Johnson's work had appeared three years before.

My reading in early New England sermons has been guided for the most part by the references in Wertenbaker's Puritan Oligarchy.

or so at least it seemed to Increase Mather, who shortly after the turn of the century (1702) chose to apply that very name. In fact, he called up the memory of John Norton to mark the passing of the glory from Boston's pulpits. When, he asked, will the town see the like of him or Cotton again? "And almost every where 'tis so, whether in our Ecclesiastical, Military, or Civil State. So that what our Great Hooker long since predicted, that the People of New England would be punished with the want of Eminent Men to manage Publick affairs, both in Church and State is in part sadly verified already." The first generation lived for the church; their sons live for the world. The cause of the church is displaced by "Trade and Land."²⁹ The unclerical Ned Ward, writing of the people of New England at about the same time, put it more succinctly. "Interest," he said, "is their Faith, Money their God, and Large Possessions the only Heaven they covet."³⁰ In their hunger for land, lamented the Reverend Joseph Easterbrook, men had abandoned the old village system under which the clergy had at one time been able to control the life of the various communities; the result was "nurseries of ignorance, profaneness and atheism."³¹ Cotton Mather looked

²⁹Ichabod, pp. 69, 71, 85.

³⁰A Trip to New England (London, 1699), p. 5. This work, printed in 1699, though quite obviously prejudiced, is a delight to read. "The Buildings, like the women," he writes (loc. cit.), are "Neat and Handsome. And their Streets like the Hearts of the Male Inhabitants, are paved with Pebble."

³¹Wertebaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 183. Wertebaker makes much of this point.

back to the times, for him only a matter of sad report, when ministers were regarded as "Angels of God," without whose advice the people "would rarely do anything that was considerable."³²

Turning specifically to the decade of the 70's, in which Sewall entered on the Boston scene and was himself forced to make the troubling choice between ministry and merchandise, one finds Eleazar Mather reminding his prosperous audience that though such prosperity as theirs might be taken as a sign of blessing to a people in "heartly obedience" to God, ". . . when men have prosperity, outward riches, and know not what to do with them, besides making gods of them, this is a sign that the Lord's gracious presence" is not among them. He wants "less Trading, Buying, Selling . . . more Praying . . . more close walking." "You had once another Spirit, had you not? A right New-England Spirit. . . . Are you the same men you were? Are you not strangely changed. . . ?" Ezekiel was commanded to prophecy over dead bones. "I know," said the speaker, "I have dead hearts to deal withal. . . ."³³

"All sides are agreed," cried Sewall's Cambridge friend, Urian Oakes, "that things are in a declining posture, that there is a great degeneracy . . . that there is a defection and declension. . . ." He reminded his audience, as he may

³²The Good Old Way (Boston, 1706), p. 3.

³³A Serious Exhortation (Cambridge, 1671), p. 9.

very well have reminded the ministerially inclined Sewall, that ministers were now reckoned "Bills of Charges." He hoped never to see the day when "houses and lands, lots and farms and outward accomodations are of more value . . . than the Gospel and Gospel ordinances. . . . Surely there were other and better things the people of God came hither for than the best spot of ground, the richest soil."³⁴ Samuel Torrey asked that the colony recover its "first New-England Interest." "We have been changing . . . our . . . fundamental Interest."³⁵ The calamities of King Philip's War were, concluded William Hubbard, a bloody sign of God's recognition of "a falling away from first glories." God used to be interested in his New England vine. Now he "seems only to look on. . . ."³⁶ "God sifted three Nations," declared Increase Mather in 1679, ". . . so he might bring over choice grain into this wilderness." "There never was a Generation that did so perfectly shake off the dust of Babylon." But "this Generation is not like the first." ". . . the Interest of New-England is now changed, from a Religious to a worldly Interest. . . ." ". . . this thing is the great Radical Apostasy of New-England."³⁷ In this same year there was

³⁴New England Pleaded With (Cambridge, 1673), pp. 24, 30, 33.

³⁵An Exhortation (Cambridge, 1674), pp. 27-28.

³⁶The Happiness of a People (Boston, 1676), p. 50.

³⁷A Discourse Concerning the Danger of Apostasy (Boston, 1679), pp. 55-56.

published, as a result of a meeting of elders and ministers in Boston, a work entitled The Necessity of Reformation, which Professor Wertenbaker terms "a landmark in the history of the Bible Commonwealth, hardly less significant than the loss of the Charter."³⁸ One was significant of political deterioration, the other of moral. It spoke of the "Great and visible decay of Godliness," of "Oathes . . . in ordinary discourse," of Sabbath breaking and irreverence at worship, of the debauching through liquor of Indians "by those who call themselves Christians," of increase in adultery, of "farms and merchandising . . . [being] preferred before the things of God," of the languishing of schools through a decline of public spirit, of selling at "excessive rates," of deceitful dealings with the Natives.³⁹

Statements such as these may undoubtedly be accounted no more than the mouthings of unfriendly critics and disappointed divines. Gathering lugubrious judgments from scattered sermons, one might say, is a meaningless exercise, one that would produce similar results for any age. Possibly so. There are many facts, however, that give the appearance of truth to these judgments, the most significant of which are those having to do with the loss of the Colony Charter. The story has been often told, and it is beside our purpose to repeat it here. The precious document, suffice it to say,

³⁸ Puritan Oligarchy, pp. 181-182.

³⁹ Pages 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

embodied the very "foundations," to use Sewall's word, of the great theocratic experiment, and its loss marked the ruin of the old order. Attacks on it by the enemies of the colony were nothing new; they dated from the first years of the settlement. What was new was the timorous spirit with which men of Sewall's position met those attacks when they were renewed during the reign of Charles II. In 1634 Gorges, supported by such other disgruntled men as Morton, Ratcliffe, and Gardiner (all of whom had suffered at the Puritans' hands--Morton at Merrymount, for example, and Ratcliffe through the loss of his ears), had obtained a Quo Warranto and appointment as Governor. The colony's decision was "not to accept him, but defend our lawful possessions."⁴⁰ Endecott in his wrath tore the hated cross from the English flag. Fortifications were begun on Castle Island, and a military committee was appointed. The colony was prepared for the worst. Fortunately for it, events at home kept the threat from materializing, and it entered an unmolested quarter century during which its sovereignty was very nearly complete. When the threat was renewed the men of the first generation were largely gone. "Friday, December 18, 1685," wrote Sewall in his diary, "Father John Odlin, one of the very first Inhabitants of Boston, dies; know not of above one more besides the Governour [Brad-

⁴⁰Mass. Records, I, pp. 136-139.

street].⁴¹ This was at the same time that the colony was brooding over "a Rumor that the Government will be Changed, this Fall or Winter, by some Person sent over, or a Commission to some here."⁴² Effective resistance to such a change, of the kind undertaken fifty years before, was apparently never considered by the leaders of Sewall's generation and certainly not by him. Instead, he merely records, fatalistically, the developments leading to the destruction of the old system. His feelings, apparently, are mainly of sadness and resignation; his voice is the voice of submission. His affections are touched, moving him to tears; but of passion there is nothing. On January 7, 1684/5, they "had the newes of . . . [the] Charter's being condemned, just as going to Meeting."⁴³

⁴¹Diary, I, 112. A month before (November 12) Mr. Moodey preached on the death of Rev. Israel Chauncy of Hatfield and said that there were "but 2 of the First Generation left" (ibid., p. 103). On the same day, significantly enough, the ministers of the town "come to the court and complain against a Dancing Master who seeks to set up here and hath mixt Dances, and his time of Meeting is Lecture-Day." This person, a Francis Stepney, was reported to have said that "by one Play he could teach more Divinity than Mr. Willard of the Old Testament. Mr. Moodey said 'twas not a time for N. E. to dance." By the use of fines and restraining orders the authorities were able to rid the colony of him by the following July, when he "runs away for debt" (ibid., p. 112, entry for December 17; ibid., p. 121, entry for February 4, 1685/6; ibid., p. 145, entry for July 28, 1686). Recalling Merry Mount of a half century before, we can imagine what treatment would have been accorded Mr. Stepney then.

⁴²Diary, I, 105, entry for November 13, 1685; similarly, ibid., p. 107, entries for November 19 and 20.

⁴³Ibid., p. 116, entry for January 7, 1685/6. He is recalling the event in the year following. Because of the loss of one manuscript volume, there is a gap in the diary for the period 1677-85.

On July 24 following there were "very sharp debates about submission &c. upon a Governour's Arrival, occasioned by a vote from the Deputies to the purpose that the Court be Adjourned till third Wednesday in August except some demand of the Government from His Majestie be made before." The decision, finally, was to so adjourn, Sewall taking the indecisive course of not voting.⁴⁴ In December, Samuel Shrimpton refused to appear at court because if "proceeded upon a Law made since the vacating the Charter . . . so that," remarks Sewall, ". . . we begin palpably to dye."⁴⁵ This case dragged on through several months, engendering considerable "Heat between the Members of the Court"⁴⁶ and no decision. "Such discourses and arguing before the People," says Sewall, made the government "grow weaker and weaker."⁴⁷ ". . . the symptoms of Death are on us."⁴⁸ On May 21, 1686, the magistrates and deputies went to the home of Governor Bradstreet. There "Adjournment . . . was declared by the Weeping Marshal-Generall. Many Tears Shed in Prayer and at parting." Sewall was "moved to sing, so sang the 17. and 18. verses of Habbakuk."⁴⁹ Two days later Joseph Dudley took

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 89-90.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 110, entry for December 4, 1685.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 128, entry for March 23, 1685/6.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 131, entry for April 1, 1686.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 118, entry for January 20, 1685/6. See also, pp. 133, 134, 135, entries for April 15, 22, and 24.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 140.

office as President of the provisional government in accordance with instructions from England, and on December 19 following: "As I was reading the Exposition of Habakkuk third, which this morning sung and read in the family, I heard a great Gun or two . . . which made me think Sir Edmond might be come."⁵⁰ He was right, and five days later: "About 60 Red-Coats are brought to Town, landed at Mr. Pool's Wharf, where drew up and so marched to Mr. Gibbs's house at Fort-Hill."⁵¹ The old order was dead; so that on the day assigned for the meeting of the Court of Assistants, there was nothing for the deposed magistrate to record in his diary save that it had been "a great day of feasting on Board Capt. Head."⁵² When the General Court should have met there was instead a celebration of the King's birthday, with a firing of guns and people marching through the streets "with Viols and Drums, playing and beating by turns."⁵³

Such is Sewall's record of the great change that came to Massachusetts during the reign of James II. Of anger or outrage over the course of royal policy there is not a word. Instead, there is self-recrimination, a feeling ex-

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 159.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 163, entry for December 24, 1686.

⁵² Ibid., p. 151, entry for September 7, 1686.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 154, entry for October 14, 1686.

pressed in the words, "we . . . deserv'd to be turn'd out long ago."⁵⁴ There was the vague feeling, too, that God had failed his people, the Wednesday night meeting of the South Church Society at Sewall's house asking itself: ". . . How shall we attend known Duty with cheerfulness and Constancy: though God impart not so much of his Counsel as we could desire?"⁵⁵ The sense of hopelessness and tired resignation was aptly expressed by Sewall when, at the time of Dudley's exhibiting to the General Court the condemnation papers, he rose to speak against a protest, "which some spake for," saying, ". . . the foundations being destroyed what can the Righteous do. . . ."⁵⁶

Certainly it would be oversimplifying merely to say that an adherence to radical principle in the leaders of the first generation had been supplanted by a conservative regard for property in their sons. Many other forces were at work to change the spirit of the colony besides that of the growing property interest. Foreign trade and the arrival of strangers in ever-increasing numbers worked inevitably to destroy the intellectual isolation of the colony's first years. The concentration of authority in the hands of the ministers and magistrates which accompanied the village sys-

⁵⁴Letter-Book, I, 24, letter to his Aunt Rider in England, dated March 1, 1685/6.

⁵⁵Diary, I, 123, entry for February 24, 1685/6.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 138-139, entry for May 17, 1686.

tem tended to disappear as villages became flourishing cities and the common fields gave way to individual farms.⁵⁷ Most important of all, the great Puritan movement of the seventeenth century had spent its force, as all such movements must finally do. The creation of the fathers had become the inheritance of the sons, and the psychology of the builder had given way to that of the conservator. No one who reads Sewall can doubt his devotion to the old Charter government and all that it meant in both church and state, but caution to him and his kind was always the better part of valor. It was not that they were less devoted than their fathers; it was only that they were lesser men, or, if we would be sympathetic, lived in lesser times. An Endecott rending the idolatrous cross from the English flag, a Hooker ready to "put a king in his pocket"--such things were but memories. The desire now was for safety, and safety said Submit.

But if we thus account for what was happening in the colony in terms of other causes than merely that which Increase Mather described as the change "from a Religious to a worldly Interest," we should not make the mistake, so far as Sewall is concerned at least, of failing to recognize the importance of this factor. The inability to act from which, as we have noted, he suffered at the time of the losing of the charter, was suddenly overcome when it became

⁵⁷ See the discussion in Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, pp. 184, 206, 250.

plain that the rights of property were at stake, the Andros government contending that the cancelling of the charter cancelled rights to property granted or sold under it.⁵⁸ On July 12, 1688, Sewall heard that there was "a Writt out against [him] . . . for Hog-Island [a Sewall property in Boston Bay], and against several other persons for Land, as being violent intruders into Kings Possession."⁵⁹ Next day he tried to go to the island to see if such a writ had been served on his tenant there but had to give up because of the wind and tide and a broken oar.⁶⁰ This was on Friday. On Saturday he wrote to influential friends in England through his agent, Edward Hull, enclosing fifty pounds "to pay them . . . if they call'd for it."⁶¹ On the following Monday he wrote to Ephraim Savage, from whom he had bought the property, asking him to "consider seriously what may be most proper for defence."⁶² A few days' thought on the subject brought him to a typical decision, namely to try making his peace with Andros through a petition "humbly praying" for "Grant and Confirmation of the said Hogg-Island . . . upon such moderate Quit-Rent as your Excellency shall please

⁵⁸ There is a long and able discussion of this involved legal point by the editors of the Letter-Book, I, 71-73, note.

⁵⁹ Diary, I, 219.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 220.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Letter-Book, I, 87, letter dated July 16, 1688.

to order."⁶³ It was not an easy decision to make, for, as he wrote to Increase Mather, Massachusetts' agent in England during these years, "I was urg'd by my friends two contrary wayes; but at last have . . . petition'd. . . . Mr. Dudley, Stoughton and several principal men having taken Patents, and intend to doe it; some of which were formerly most averse." Then follows this illuminating statement: "The generality of People are very averse from complying . . . and look upon me very sorrowfully that I have given way."⁶⁴ Sewall had chosen to identify himself with Dudley and Stoughton, leaders of what has been described as the "party of prerogative and submission," men who were "trusted by the people, and were ready to betray them and become servants of England."⁶⁵ Later in the same year he wrote again to Increase Mather on the same subject, repeating the facts already stated and adding these troubled words: "Am so sensible of the miseries this people like to undergoe, if that course be follow'd [i.e., the course he had already taken], that I shall be very willing to give more than comes to my share, if some general way of Relief might be obtain'd. I was so concern'd, that I had cast myself on the sea to come for England before petitioning, but knew not how to get away . . .," his wife being

⁶³ Diary, I, 220-221, entry for July 24, 1688; Mass. Archives, CXXIV, 110, date of July 23, 1688.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 231. The letter is dated July 24, 1688.

⁶⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge, Studies in History (Boston, 1884), p. 30.

"very near her time," as he had noted in the earlier letter. He ends with: "Praying God you may hapily finish what you have so well begun, especially about Property, I take leave . . .," etc.⁶⁶

He cast himself on the sea, as he says, in the following month and arrived in an England that had undergone its Bloodless Revolution. William was on the throne and Increase Mather was at court working to obtain for Massachusetts a new and more favorable charter. Sewall's English Journal shows him doing what he can to help, consulting with Mather about "a virulent Libel" which had appeared against New England and helping him frame his reply,⁶⁷ visiting influential persons "to promote our Interest,"⁶⁸ going to Westminster "to give Evidence for N. E." and finding his testimony unwanted,⁶⁹ appealing for a new policy for New England in the name of "Religion, Liberty and Property."⁷⁰ That the third of these principles provided him with a livelier motivation than the other two seems fair enough to say. At the time of the loss of the charter, the threat to "Religion" and "Liberty" had found him unable effectually to move; it was only the threat

⁶⁶ Diary, I, 229-230, letter dated October 8, 1688.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 256, entries for May 18 and 20, 1689.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 251, 257, entries for April 23 and May 31, 1689.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 266-267, entry for July 18, 1689.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 251, letter to Thomas Papillon, merchant and member of Parliament.

to "Property" that brought him, though his temper was still a submissive one, to a more effectual course of action than resort to prayer.

A final bit of insight into Sewall's character as revealed in his actions and attitudes of these years may be gained from the record of his relations with Andros. On June 28, 1689, as he sat in a London coffee house reading a letter from home, he found himself "surpris'd with joy."⁷¹ The cause of his pleasure was news of Andros' overthrow. The reader of the diary may at that point recall that this same Andros was the man with whom he had gone to considerable pains to remain on agreeable personal terms. On July 30, 1688, for example, he "went to Dedham to accompany his Excellency in his way to New-York and Jersey . . . to take the Government of those places."⁷² A week earlier he had engaged in friendly discourse with Andros' chaplain, Mr. Ratcliff, whose Episcopalianism was to him a hateful thing, about his proposed journey to England.⁷³ Shortly before he left in November, having business at the Town House, he stopped to "ask his Excellency" if there was any "service" which he might perform for him in England. Andros "said none in particular; Ask'd whom I went in; said in Capt. Clark. He

⁷¹ Ibid., I, 261.

⁷² Ibid., p. 221.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 233, entry for October 24, 1688.

said 'twas very well, and passed away out of the Porch."⁷⁴ This relationship with Andros may be taken as a type of the sort that was repeated again and again throughout Sewall's life. It bespeaks a trait of character which may be described as either friendly or submissive, conciliatory or opportunistic, amicable or meek, according to choice. A man whose natural friendliness and real gentleness chiefly account for the attraction of his character, he was also one who was quite able to recognize on which side his political bread was buttered and to act accordingly.

III

Eighteen months passed between the time when, as Sewall later declared, Hannah Hull "set her affection" on him at his graduation in the summer of 1674, and their marriage at the house of her father. Upon leaving Harvard, Samuel went with his two brothers, Stephen and John, home to Newbury.⁷⁵ Here he whiled away the next year and a half, apparently doing nothing in particular, but watching his brothers and friends marry and become settled in their various callings, visiting his old master, Thomas Parker, and tending to odd jobs, such as family correspondence with relatives in England, getting in the beans, and felling an oak near the house as his mother and sister

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 235, entry for November 7, 1688.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 5, entry for August 14, 1674.

stood near by weeping copiously (Matre et Sorore valde plangentibus).⁷⁶ The time and reason for giving up his plans for the ministry are not told us. Soon after arriving home he received a call to Woodbridge, New Jersey, a town settled by people from Newbury, to be their pastor,⁷⁷ but he did not accept. In the following April he took over Parker's pulpit for one service and had a discouraging time of it. "Being afraid to look on the glass," he says, "ignorantly and unwillingly I stood two hours and a half."⁷⁸

That his marriage, with the duties and responsibilities to which it made him heir, was the decisive, if not the only, factor in his decision to abandon the ministry, one can scarcely doubt. He would have been less than human had he not told himself what the Reverend Thomas Prince told the South Church congregation at the time of his death, namely that he was "by

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-12, passim, entries for August 18, 1674 through January 10, 1675/6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 7, entry for November 24, 1674.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 9, entry for April 4, 1675. Whatever his abilities as a preacher, his staying power was in the best Puritan tradition. As Morison, Puritan Pronegs (New York, 1936), p. 162, says: "The sermon was timed by an hour glass for minimum, not maximum length. A preacher who ended before the hour was up was considered deficient in his duty; and Edward Johnson describes listening with rapt attention to a sermon by Thomas Shepard which must have been over two hours long, since 'the glasse was turned up twice.'" One is reminded of George Whitefield's saying to an audience: "Well, my brethren, since this is the last time we are able to be together, I'll take another glass with you," turning up the hour glass once more (see William Everett, "Six Provincial Worthies" [unpublished manuscript at the Boston Athenaeum], p. 43). Sewall's apparent embarrassment at standing two hours and a half is understandable, however, it being understood that the sermon would ordinarily draw to a close as the sands marked the end of the first hour (see Ezra H. Byington, The Puritan in England and New England [Boston, 1896], pp. 152-153).

the call of Providence directed from it," and that his being "put into the early Possession of Secular Wealth" offered him "a larger Sphere and Power of Employing his Talents for the Glory of God."⁷⁹ There is good evidence that during this period of indecision over his vocation he experienced spiritual distress, but whether or not as a direct result of the problem of his "calling" it is possible only to guess. Every earnest Puritan youth faced such a problem, for getting into the wrong calling meant a diminished glory for God, whose title of Taskmaster was a very apt and meaningful one. Sewall faced the problem long and distressingly in his son, Sam Junior, whose troubled search for a role in life caused his father to pray for his "settlement in a Trade that might be good for Soul and body,"⁸⁰ a "Calling . . . wherein he may abide with God."⁸¹ At the time when his own decision had to be made, and only three months before his marriage, he wrote: "Morning proper fair, the wether exceedingly benign, but (to me) metaphoric, dismal, dark and portentous, some prodigie appearing in every corner of the skies."⁸² It was four months after his marriage before he went with Hull "to Mr. Smith's,

⁷⁹ A Sermon . . . Upon the Death of the Honourable Samuel Sewall . . . (Boston, 1730), p. 32.

⁸⁰ Diary, I, 418, entry for December 23, 1695.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 398, entry for February 19, 1694/5.

⁸² Ibid., p. 11, entry for November 11, 1675.

there to see the manner of the Merchants,⁸³ and eight months later the question was apparently still unsettled: "Feb. 23, 1676/7. Mr. [Samuel] Torrey spake with my Father [Hull] at Mrs. Norton's, told him that he would fain have me preach, and not leave off my studies to follow Merchandize." Sewall had been meaning to speak with Torrey about becoming a member of the South Church and "the temptations that made me to fear. But he went home when I was at the Warehouse about Wood that Tho. Elkins brought."⁸⁴ Two months earlier Reverend John Reyner of Dover, a relation by marriage, had given opposite advice. Walking with Sewall in the orchard, he urged him "not to keep over much within, but goe among men," that he should thereby "advantage" himself.⁸⁵ A Mr. Dean similarly urged him to become acquainted with the merchants and invited him "to their Caballs."⁸⁶ This was approximately a year after his marriage and almost two and a half years from the time of his graduation. Gradually, however, his

⁸³ Ibid., p. 14, entry for June 16, 1676.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 36. There are numerous other indications of distress of spirit at this time (see, for example, ibid., pp. 32-33, entry for January 10, 1676/7; ibid., p. 37, entry for March 6, 1676/7; ibid. p. 39, entry for March 31, 1677; ibid., p. 44, entry for May 23, 1677), but these seem mainly to derive from a rather ordinary sense of unworthiness at a time of joining the church and do not justify an interpretation involving his entry into business.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 32, entry for December 21, 1676.

⁸⁶ Ibid., entry for January 6, 1676/7.

uncertainty seems to have ended, not so much through decision as through a rather passive acceptance of the inevitable, and by the spring of 1677 he was in active apprenticeship with Hull, drawing up a "Joynt Account between my Father in Law, and me" involving "three Bayles and two Hoggsheds of English Goods received from on Board the Blessing."⁸⁷ Such items in this account as "Calico," "Blankets," "Ruggs," "Blew Linnen," "green Serge Curtains" with "French Fringe," "Mens Felts," "Mens Castors" (a kind of beaver hat), "Black Taf-fata," "Lawn," and "Cambrick are concrete reminders of the distance Sewall had travelled from the vocational interests of the ministry. However much his private interests remained theological--and, as earlier noted, they remained strongly so--he nevertheless illustrates the movement in New England away from the pulpit as a seat of power and the growing attraction of wealth and secular interests.⁸⁸ During his visit to New England at this time, Jaspas Danckaerts observed the growing secular spirit and remarked: "When we were there, four ministers' sons were learning the silversmith's trade."⁸⁹ Sewall's course was more direct:

⁸⁷ "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," foll. 13-14, 16-17. This is not the earliest evidence of his activity in Hull's affairs (see Diary, I, 25-27, letter to Edward Hull, agent in England, dated October 23, 1676, and entries for October 23-28, when he visited Hull's Naragansett lands), but it is the first in which he appears formally settled in his new role.

⁸⁸ See Adams, Provincial Society, pp. 63, 114.

⁸⁹ Journal, pp. 274-275.

he married a silversmith's daughter, the richest in the colony. Let it be said once more that there is nothing which should cause us to believe that in making this marriage he was following a course of shrewd Yankee ambition, as Professor Parrington suggests.⁹⁰ There is a rough truth in the observation that there are two kinds of men, those who act upon life and those who are acted upon. During these first years in Boston, as at most other stages of his career, Sewall showed himself to be among the latter.

If the diary says little of his decision to abandon the ministry, it says even less of his courtship and marriage. In fact, it says nothing at all, in striking contrast to the extreme detail it contains for the courtships and marriages of his old age. If he ever went down from Newbury and "had a discourse" with Hannah Hull, as he notes his brother doing in his courtship of Hannah Fessenden of Cambridge,⁹¹ he never confided the matter to his diary, and during the month preceding his marriage, even on the day of the famous occasion itself, he is silent. Writing to his son Sam many years later, he said: "Gov. Bradstreet married us . . . in the Old Hall [of Hull's residence on High Street]; 't was then all in one, a very large Room";⁹² and John Hull noted in his diary: "Feb.

⁹⁰ Colonial Mind, p. 90.

⁹¹ Diary, I, 5, entry for September 7, 1674.

⁹² "Gen. Letter," xiv. The letter was written August 26, 1720.

28, being Monday, Mr. Broadstreet [sic] married my daughter Hannah to Samuel Sewall, in the evening."⁹³ Clarke's description of the wedding as a festive occasion, with great preparation of cakes, puddings, and ale; articles arriving from England for the bride to wear, and she spinning and weaving for her wedding chest; flames leaping in an immense fireplace and silver tankards of Hull's making warmly reflecting the glow; the aristocracy of the colony gathering⁹⁴--all this is pleasant speculation, of a more believable kind than Hawthorne's having John Hull wear pine-tree shillings for buttons or his equally fantastic weighing-in of the bride, whom he describes as being "round and plump as a pudding,"⁹⁵ but it is still only speculation.

Of the dowry paid in pine-tree shillings, it has been remarked that if it was the traditional thirty thousand pounds, the daughter could not have been weighed against it, however round and plump she might have been. Such an amount, rating a silver pound as four ounces at the time, would have come to something over three tons.⁹⁶ As a matter of fact, there was probably a settlement of five hundred pounds. Such, at any rate, was the amount Sewall entered about this time in his account book, designating it as "My Father-in-law, Mr. John

⁹³Page 162.

⁹⁴John Hull, pp. 162-163.

⁹⁵Works, V, 42-43.

⁹⁶Dow, Every Day Life, p. 169. See also the comment of the editors of Hull's Diary, appendix, p. 275.

Hull, to his Free Promise.⁹⁷ The editors of Hull's Diary conclude that this was "very clearly the amount of the dowry"⁹⁸ and add, after pointing out that such an amount would come to about one hundred and twenty-five pounds troy weight, that this weight would be about right for a young lady of eighteen.

For our understanding of Sewall's position in the colony after his marriage, it means little that popular belief in the matter of the dowry is without demonstrable basis in fact. What is important is that in the eyes of the ordinary citizen of Boston, Hull's wealth was such as to become the material for legend.

IV

Through the apparent loss of a manuscript volume of Sewall's diary, there is a gap in its existing form from March, 1677, to February, 1685. Since the letter-book does not really begin until 1686, we are without any considerable record for his activities during the years of his business and political apprenticeship. It is fairly clear, however,

⁹⁷ "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 15. There is no record of his receiving this full amount. Shortly before the marriage (February 11) he noted receipt of thirty pounds, and shortly after (March 13) of thirty-five pounds (ibid.). He then transferred the balance of 435 pounds to "new Started Accts.," which we do not have.

⁹⁸ Appendix, p. 275. To say that it was "very possibly the amount of the dowry" would be more accurate. Professor Morison, Builders of the Bay, p. 138, accepts the five hundred figure.

that in the last years of his life Hull turned more and more of his earthly affairs over to the younger man. When, for example, a business correspondent wrote suggesting a cargo of hoops, fish and pipe-staves for the Canaries, Hull replied that he wished more "to embrace oppertunty of getting out rather than running into the business of this world Speacially forraigne traffique as desirous to be more thoughtfull of Launching into that vast ocian of Eternity whether we must all shortly bee carried. . . ."⁹⁹ That Sewall was taking over Hull's accounts is indicated in Hull's writing to Daniel Allen in London on December 27, 1680, that he had received his shipment of "glasses and hats" and had turned the matter over to "my Son-in-law, Samuel Sewall. . . . He hath sold your hats and some glasses; and as he can sell the rest, and receive in, so he will render you an account, and make you a return; and I hope with prudence and faithfulness, for he is both prudent and faithful."¹⁰⁰

Because of his inexperience in business affairs, it is probable that the prudence for which Hull here commends him had not always been apparent. There is something a bit pathetic in a set of entries from the first year of his apprenticeship with Hull which show the conscientious young man,

⁹⁹ William B. Weedon, Economic and Social History of New England: 1620-1789 (New York, 1890), I, 249, citing his letter-book at the American Antiquarian Society.

¹⁰⁰ Diary, p. 124.

DECEMBER hath XXXI Days.

First Quart. 7 day at 11 Morning.
 Full-Moon 15 day at 2 Night.
 Last Quart. 23 day at 8 Night.
 New-Moon 29 day at 3 Night

MW	Courts, Spring Tides	K	☉	☽	☽	pl.	p.	lt	Sea.
D	Aspects, Weather, &c.	h.	m.	h.	D	M	H.M.		
1	Int. ☉ N. N. imp.	7	32	5	20	7	19	11	3
2	* ☉ ☽	7	33	5	21	8	18	11	51
3	Inf. ☉. Trnsf. E. fall.	7	33	5	22	10	17	11	39
4	☽ ☽ Snow.	7	33	5	23	11	16	11	27
5	☽ ☽ ☽	7	33	5	24	12	15	11	15
6	☽ ☽ ☽ Cold weather.	7	34	5	25	14	14	11	3
7	☽ ☽ ☽	7	34	5	26	15	13	11	51
8	Inf. ☉. Chastown.	7	34	5	27	16	12	11	39
9	* ☽ ☽	7	34	5	28	18	11	11	27
10	☽ Apoge. Fair Cold	7	34	5	29	19	10	11	15
11	☽ ☽ ☽ Weather.	7	34	5	30	21	9	11	3
12	☽ ☽ ☽	7	34	5	31	22	8	11	51
13	☽ ☽ ☽ Unsettled	7	34	5	32	24	7	11	39
14	☽ ☽ ☽ Weather.	7	34	5	33	25	6	11	27
15	Inf. ☉. Pym. E. rise.	7	34	5	34	26	5	11	15
16	(☽ ☽ ☽ 15 d)	7	34	5	35	27	4	11	3
17	☽ ☽ ☽ Cloudy S. Mod	7	34	5	36	29	3	11	51
18	☽ ☽ ☽	7	33	5	38	30	2	11	39
19	Narraganset Fort taken,	7	33	5	39	31	1	11	27
20	(1675)	7	33	5	40	32	0	11	15
21	☽ ☽ ☽	7	32	5	40	32	0	11	3
22	Falling	7	31	5	41	34	0	11	51
23	☽ ☽ ☽ Weather.	7	31	5	42	35	0	11	39
24	☽ ☽ ☽ Perige. Very high	7	30	5	43	36	0	11	27
25	☽ ☽ ☽ Tides.	7	30	5	44	38	0	11	15
26	☽ ☽ ☽	7	29	5	45	39	0	11	3
27	☽ ☽ ☽	7	28	5	46	41	0	11	51
28	☽ ☽ ☽ Cloudy.	7	28	5	47	42	0	11	39
29	Inf. ☉. Salem.	7	27	5	48	44	0	11	27
30	☽ ☽ ☽ A Storm	7	27	5	49	45	0	11	15
31	☽ ☽ ☽ of Snow.	7	26	5	50	46	0	11	3

30-A. A great Storm of Snow.
 31-5. Dr. C. weather for a h'd
 in Letter from Rev. 2. 17.

Dec 2. 1719. Thomas Hill,
 Nathaniel Gill & Co Bar.
 Represent that ye Honorable
 of the Court of King's Bench
 doth not seem to be minded in
 their Proceedings the whole and
 made both to make a just
 and equal adjustment of the
 same for the same.
 Samuel Sewall Esq. pro.

Dec 2. 1719. Thomas Hill,
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 Represent that ye Honorable
 of the Court of King's Bench
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 their Proceedings the whole and
 made both to make a just
 and equal adjustment of the
 same for the same.
 Samuel Sewall Esq. pro.

fresh from his theological studies, getting his fingers burned in transactions with "Some petty Debtours . . . to whom I delivered goods of my Father's, trustingly. . . ." ¹⁰¹ The goods involved such things as "a Barrel of Rum," "13 Bus. $\frac{1}{2}$ of Malt," and "2 Length. of Rope & a Bus. $\frac{1}{2}$ of wheat." On one occasion his experience with Hull was so distressing that he retreated into Latin when writing of it in his diary. Someone had angered Hull, as Treasurer of the Colony, by bringing him, without prior consultation, oats rather than money for the payment of taxes. When, then, Sewall threw on the fire a larger log than the old man thought proper, he found himself suddenly told that if he would be so foolish Hull could have no confidence in him, "for that his mind would be as unstable as if it were akin to the wind." ¹⁰² Sewall's patient observation was that "no godly man hath any more afflictions than what he hath need of," but one wonders if when, in 1683, Hull "watched his last," ¹⁰³ Sewall's sorrow was entirely unmixed with a sense of relief. The subordinate character of his position was definite; he was in his thirty-first year, father of four children, ¹⁰⁴ and still "son Sewall."

¹⁰¹ "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675-," foll. 10 and 11.

¹⁰² Diary, I, 35, entry for February 14, 1676/7. The Rev. Samuel Sewall's translation of the passage, which I have used, is in Hull's Diary, p. 253, note.

¹⁰³ Diary, I, 50, notes from Sewall's interleaved almanacs, entry for August 14, 1683. For the diary gap from 1677 to 1685 the editors have supplied material from various sources.

¹⁰⁴ Five counting the first son, John, born in 1677 and dead the next year.

In the fall of 1681 he had made a move toward occupational independence when he undertook the management of Boston's only printing press. Located in a shop "over against the Sign of the Dove" (an inn on Snow Lane),¹⁰⁵ the press had begun operation in 1674 under the management of John Foster. After Foster's death, Sewall, "at the instance of some friends, with respect to the accommodation of the publicke," was "prevailed upon" to take over.¹⁰⁶ Though the actual work of printing the various governmental documents and the score or so of books, all of them religious, which appeared during the two years of his management, was largely in the hands of his assistant, Samuel Green, it is interesting to note that occasionally he worked at the case himself.¹⁰⁷ On

¹⁰⁵ George E. Littlefield, The Early Massachusetts Press: 1638-1700 (Boston, 1907), II, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Mass. Records, V, 323-324, date of October 12, 1681. Stephen Daye had set up a press in Cambridge in 1638, and until 1674 printing was confined to that town. In this year the General Court ordered that printing might be done "elsewhere than at Cambridge," and John Foster, a Harvard graduate of 1667, set up a press in Boston. (See Winsor, Memorial History, I, 455-457. Details of Sewall's managership are in Thomas, History of Printing in America, I, 84-86, and Littlefield, Massachusetts Press, II, 12-19.)

¹⁰⁷ Littlefield, p. 19, says that during the two years of Sewall's management he published "twenty or more books, a goodly showing." The titles in Charles Evans, American Bibliography (New York, 1941), I, 53-59, which carry his name (e.g., "Printed by S. Green upon assignment of S. Sewall," "Printed for Samuel Sewall," "Pr. by S. G. for S. S.") are fourteen in number:

Samuel Willard, Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam. or Brief Animadversions upon the New-England Anabaptists . . ., 1681.

Samson Bond, A Publick Tryal of the Quakers in Bermudas . . ., 1682.

Increase Mather, Heaven's Alarm to the World, second impression, 1682.

February 2, 1684/5, he wrote to his uncle Nathaniel Dummer in England:

It so fell out that not long since I was the owner of a printing press and Letters, and practised something myself in that science. Not to mention other things, I composed the Assemblies Catechism with the proofs, Mr. Oakes's Artillery Election Sermon at Cambridge. . . . [I] have sent six hundred of them [the catechisms] in a small box, which intreat the young persons of Bishop Stoke [Sewall's birthplace] will kindly accept from him who cannot but affectionately remember his native soil. . . . If you have to spare, let Baddesley [to which the Sewall family had moved from Bishop Stoke] next partake.¹⁰⁸

Increase Mather, The Latter Sign Discoursed of, 1682.

Increase Mather, Practical Truths Tending to Promote the Power of Godliness . . . , 1682.

Increase Mather, A sermon wherein is shewed that the church of God is Sometimes a subject of Great Persecution, 1682.

Urian Oakes, The Sovereign Efficacy of Divine Providence . . . , 1682.

Samuel Willard, Covenant-Keeping the Way to Blessedness . . . , 1682.

Samuel Willard, The Fiery Tryall No Strange Thing . . . , 1682.

Cotton Mather, The Boston Ephemeris . . . , 1683.

Increase Mather, A Discourse Concerning Comets . . . , 1683.

Samuel Torrey, A Plea for the Life of Dying Religion, 1683.

Westminster Assembly of Divines, The Shorter Catechism, 1683.

Samuel Willard, The High Esteem which God Hath of His Saints . . . preached Oct. 7, 1683. Occasioned by the death of . . . John Hull, Esq., 1683.

¹⁰⁸The letter is printed in the New England Hist. and Gen. Reg., IX, 287-288. A letter to another uncle, Stephen Dummer

The lost diary record for these years would tell much about which we can now only speculate. Apparently his interest in managing the press was a somewhat casual one. Samuel Willard's sermon preached on the occasion of Hull's death was the last work he published, and in the next year he obtained from the General Court a formal release from the post, which then passed to Samuel Green.¹⁰⁹

V

At the death of John Hull, Sewall came into what he later modestly described as "an Estate that might afford a competent Subsistence according to our manner of living in N. E."¹¹⁰ By agreement among the heirs (Hull having died intestate) somewhat more than a third of the estate remained in the hands of mother Hull, but since she and her son-in-law enjoyed a most

dated simply 1684/5, is similar in content and says of the "Catechises," "They were composed with my own hand. . . ." (ibid., p. 287).

¹⁰⁹ Mass. Records, V, 452, date of September 12, 1684. He asks to be "freed from any obligation unto duty respecting that affaire" as being "by the providence of God . . . unable to attend the same." Littlefield, II, 21, is irritated with Sewall for this action, taking it to indicate that he "wished to magnify the importance of the office by having it appear that it was an official appointment. As a matter of business it was unnecessary. Samuel Green, Jr., had continued with Sewall during the whole time of his management, and when Sewall retired took his place." Inasmuch as Sewall's public career was notable in its absence of self magnification, and inasmuch, also, as his managership of the press did involve official action by the General Court, such a judgment, while possibly right, is more possibly quite unjustified.

¹¹⁰ Diary, I, 251, letter to Thomas Papillon dated April 26, 1689.

affectionate relationship this was but a nominal limitation, and it was agreed that at her death (which occurred in 1695) all that she possessed should go to Samuel and Hannah and their children.¹¹¹ Rentals, both in money and in kind, flowed

¹¹¹The agreement (Suffolk Court Files, number 2190) is entitled "Proposals for Division and Settlement of the Estate left by John Hull." Its provisions are complicated ("the mansion house . . . wherein hee dyed, with all the land there-to adjoining" and certain other houses and lands to go to her alone and at her death to her grandchildren, Sewall to act the part of trustee; household goods to be divided half and half, etc.), but the one-third-and-two-thirds principle is its chief feature. The items mentioned in it are all contained in the earlier description of John Hull's properties.

Sewall's devotion to his "dear Mother Hull," as he repeatedly refers to her, was apparently very real. When he named his daughter Judith for her he prayed that she might "follow her Grandmother Hull . . . being not slothfull in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord" (Diary, I, 328, entry for August 24, 1690). At her deathbed he "took the opportunity to thank her for all her Labours of Love to me and mine, and ask'd her pardon of our undutifullness; She after a while, said, God Pity 'Em; which was the last prayer I heard her make. About six I ask'd if I should call Mr. Willard, (for had said to him that he should come again if he could). As far as I could perceive, she said, Not so soon. But I called, or sent; yet could not discern any attention to the prayer . . . and a little before Sunset she expired, to our very surprising Grief and Sorrow. Roger Judd was here about noon, and said, that when some in the next room spake about who should Watch, my dear Mother answer'd, She should need no Watchers, she should be above at Rest" (ibid., pp. 408-409, entry for June 21, 1695). In the broadside that Sewall wrote and distributed after her death, he described her as,
An Humble Soul, Trimd with an High Neglect
Of Gay Things, but with Ancient Glories deck't.

(Printed, Am. Ant. Soc., Trans., III, 272.)

When, on August 13, 1695, a fast was kept at his house "after the death of my dear Mother" he "burst so into Tears" during the singing of the twenty-seventh psalm that he could hardly continue (Diary, I, 410). More than a year later he sent his friend Bridget Usher "a small book . . . in remembrance of my Dear Mother Hull, for whoes Loss I am still mourning and that justly" (Letter-Book, I, 171, letter dated September 28, 1696).

It is worth noting that there are no such expressions concerning John Hull.

in from every direction. Income from Boston property alone, of which few men owned more than he (in 1687, one of the few years for which there are surviving tax lists, there were but four)¹¹² was considerable. Looking through the close-packed pages of "Samuel Sewall his Ledger," one finds such entries as: sixteen pounds a year from "Walker's House," fourteen from the "House at Cotton Hill," six from "the new warehouse," four from "rent of the stables," sixty from Hog Island, six from the shop on Newbury street occupied by William Howell the cabinet maker, three from "a shop at the warehouse," ten shillings from a "Lot in Hull Street," four pounds from Joshua Lane, shoemaker, for the "Shop next Mr. Poles," twenty from "Hoar's House," four pounds ten shillings from "Part of the house by the Dock," and so on, innumera-¹¹³bly.

¹¹²Record Commissioners of the City of Boston, Reports (Boston, 1876-1909), hereafter referred to as Boston Records, I, 91-133. Sewall paid the immense sum of fourteen shillings and ten pence. Samuel Shrimpton, Henry Maier, Edward Shippen, and Ephraim Savage paid more, Shrimpton's payment of three pounds, one shilling, and eight pence being the highest. Sewall's taxes for 1712-28 averaged about six pounds a year (Ledger, fol. 148). This higher figure does not, presumably, result from a vast increase in his holdings but from its being for his provincial holdings generally and from the fact that the second and third decades of the eighteenth century were years of intense inflation, the price of silver, basis of exchange, rising 250 per cent between 1712 and 1733 (Weeden, II, 473, 484).

¹¹³Folio pages cited are 25, 32, 54, 57, 91, 117, 126, 138, 145, 153. Both here and in the material which immediately follows, no attempt has been made to arrive at a real meaning for the figures given. They are a representative sampling from entries covering a period of several decades. Because of the frequent vagueness of the property designations it would be extremely difficult to arrive at even a rough estimate of his income from Boston property in any one year or even at any one period. In the later years inflation was in progress, so that

Around twenty pounds a year came from property at Rumsey in Hampshire, England, given him by his father in 1680.¹¹⁴ Narragansett holdings brought in anywhere from fifteen pounds a year in 1694-97 to forty-six in 1711.¹¹⁵ Revenue from Hog Island out in Boston Bay stayed at sixty pounds for several years after 1715 and by 1729 was up to eighty.¹¹⁶ Rentals from other outlying properties were at various times: twelve shillings from his "Share of Meadow in the Land of Noq,"¹¹⁷ one pound for "Rent of the Saw-Mill Stream at Braintry,"¹¹⁸ ten pounds a year from the lands at Muddy River,¹¹⁹ one pound for a "Meadow in Shrewsbury,"¹²⁰ two pounds ten shillings for "Ram Island in Merrimak River,"¹²¹ six pounds

the income from the Cotton Hill house, for example, went from ten pounds annually to forty pounds. Even if a rough figure were arrived at for, say, 1685, no one, so far as I know, has arrived at a means of translating such a figure into terms that are really meaningful. While it is true that the real value of money was, generally speaking, many times what it is today, it is also true that someone like Sewall was rich in terms of what he was able to buy of the products of New England and poor in terms of what he could afford to buy of manufactured products from abroad.

¹¹⁴ See Letter-Book, II, 90, letter to Governor Shute dated February 11, 1717/18; ibid., 44-47, letter of John Storke, his English agent for this property, to Sewall, dated February 8, 1714.

¹¹⁵ Ledger, fol. 39.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., foll. 138, 168.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., fol. 99, entry made in 1701.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., fol. 46, entry made in 1706.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., fol. 41; the account runs from 1693 through 1702.

¹²⁰ Ibid., fol. 163; the account runs from 1718 through 1720.

¹²¹ Ibid., fol. 179; the account runs from 1724 through 1731.

from Moses Adams of Sherborn for his farm there,¹²² one pound ten shillings for "5 acres of Salt-Marsh at Newbury,"¹²³ etc. If some of these amounts seem unimpressive, it should be remembered that even the smallest had a purchasing power for local products that surpasses belief. This is illustrated in instances where the renting parties paid Sewall off in produce rather than money. In 1694, for example, he rented four acres of "Marsh" to Thomas and Joshua Gardener at one pound ten shillings a year. In the next five years they supplied him with approximately twenty loads of oak and walnut firewood, three pigs, and numerous "fowl." In doing this they built up a credit of four pounds, leaving them Sewall's debtors to the amount of three and a half pounds!¹²⁴ Sturgeon, corn meal, sides of pork, tubs of butter, hay, cider, malt, turkeys, cattle--everything that the New England countryside produced and that the Sewall domestic establishment could use flowed in from tenants at such places as Muddy River, Sherborn, Hog Island, Shrewsbury, and Newbury.

If Hull's wealth was sufficient to enable Sewall to lead a life of comfortable leisure, it is quite certain that he never entertained the thought. Regardless of his circumstances, the Christian, he knew, must have a calling and "walk diligently" in it. One who did not, though he have

¹²²Ibid., fol. 153; the account runs from 1709 through 1718.

¹²³Ibid., fol. 157, entry made in 1716.

¹²⁴Ibid., fol. 58.

"two thousands to spend," was "an unclean beast." Man had been sent into this world, not "as into a Play-house, but a Work-house,"¹²⁵ and those who would not sweat on earth would certainly sweat in hell.¹²⁶ Sewall, consequently, bent himself to his commercial tasks. Though they were tasks to which his abilities and natural temper did not strongly incline him, he accepted them as marked out for him by divine providence.

Statistical information on New England trade for the period in which we are interested is meager,¹²⁷ but the pattern of that trade, its extensive character, and its importance to the prosperity of the colony are all clear enough. Since the balance of trade between England and New England was heavily in favor of the mother country,¹²⁸ it was necessary for Boston merchants to find a means of supplying themselves with the necessary credit abroad. This they did by maintaining a balance of trade with the West Indies which was heavily in favor of New England.

¹²⁵ Miller, New England Mind, p. 44, source not named.

¹²⁶ The remark of "silver-tongued Smith," a popular preacher during the reign of Elizabeth. See Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp. 389, 397.

¹²⁷ See Emory R. Johnson et al., History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1915), I, 73, note.

¹²⁸ New England's role as a supplier of raw materials for the mother country was unimpressive, but as a market for English goods her importance was considerable and steadily increasing. By 1715 she was importing thirty thousand pounds more annually than Virginia, which at the beginning of the

Thus emerged the famous triangular route of Boston to West Indies, West Indies to England, England to Boston. It is the pattern seen in the dealings of John Hull,¹²⁹ and it is the one with which the reader of Sewall becomes familiar. Indeed, everything about Sewall's trading activities is a copy of those of the older man--routes, commodities, ships, and agents. He simply took over at the point where his predecessor had left off. In small square-rigged ketches such as the Seaflower, Hopewell, Pink Pomgranet, and Fidelity his cargoes of New England staples "for the proper account and risque of Mr. Samuel Sewall" went to Port Royal, Jamaica, St. Christopher, Barbados, and Antigua in the West Indies, and occasionally to Bilbao, Spain. The most important commodity was, of course, fish--barrels, hogsheads, and "quintals" of "good sound Mackarell," "good merchantable codfish," "dry Bass," "pickled Bass," "Alewives," and "scale fish." For West Indian rum and sugar there were staves (white oak for rum casks, red oak for sugar)¹³⁰ to be fashioned into barrels and hogsheads by a ship's cooper on the outward voyage.¹³¹ There were barrels of pork and beef, hogsheads of

century was importing 215,000 pounds to her 187,000. Virginia's imports in this same fifteen year period declined by ten thousand pounds. (See Curtis H. Nettels, "The Menace of Colonial Manufacturing," New England Quarterly, IV [April, 1931], 231.)

¹²⁹See Morison, Builders of the Bay, pp. 173-175. The famous rum trade and the resulting triangle of New England, West Indies, and the African Gold Coast had scarcely begun.

¹³⁰William B. Weeden, "The Early African Slave Trade in New England," Am. Ant. Soc., Proc., new series, V (October, 1887), 116.

¹³¹The importance of the item is shown in the fact that in

"bread and pease," "firkins" of butter, "sidar," "unyons," and apples. Occasionally there were candles, "train oyll," and tar.¹³² Proceeds from the sale of these products were

the Colonial Laws, ed. William H. Whitmore (Boston, 1897), p. 122, there is provision for a public official who took a solemn oath under the title of "Viewer of Pipe staves."

¹³²The best single record of Sewall's ventures in the shipping trade is his Bill of Lading Book. The entries in this book during three of his more active years are as follows:

November 16, 1685, to Port Royal: 25 bbls. mackerel, 25 bbls. pork, 10 bbls. tar, 6 boxes candles, 16 hhds. codfish, 6,000 staves, 5 bbls. "sidar," 3 bbls. "unyons," 1 bbl. apples.

December 7, 1685, to London: 435½ ozs. of plate "in one entire piece in a Bagg."

July 15, 1686, to London: 25 bbls. of "boyle," 39½ ozs. of silver, 1 "box of beaver."

August 24, 1686, to Jamaica: 46 bbls. "Mackarell," 12 hhds. codfish.

April 18, 1687, to Jamaica: 40 bbls. mackerell, 6 hhds. cod fish, 48 bbls. tar.

October 12, 1687, to Jamaica: 8 hhds. "Bass fish."

November 10, 1687, to Bilbao: 267½ quintalls "good merchantable codfish."

November 11, 1687, to St. Christopher: 6 bbls. pickled bass, 2bbls. mackerel, 4 hhds. "bread and pease."

November 28, 1687, to Barbados: 10 bbls. pickled bass, 6 hhds. "Dry Bass," 2 hhds. codfish.

December 6, 1687, to Antigua: 8 bbls. mackerel, 5 hhds. bass, 1 hhd. codfish.

April 3, 1688, to Port Royal: 40 "small bbls." bass, 32 bbls. mackerel, 3 hhds. codfish, 3 firkins butter.

April 6, 1688, to London: 60 ozs. in money, pieces of eight "in a leather bag."

May 20, 1688, to St. Christopher; 8 bbls. "mackrill," 1 hhd. bass.

June 9, 1688, to Barbados: 12 bbls. alewives.

June 30, 1688, to Jamaica: 7 bbls. mackerel.

July 10, 1688, to London: 10 ozs. in pieces of eight and "a skillet."

October 9, 1688, to London: 2 bbls. of "train oyll."

November 8, 1688, to London: 675 ozs. of "fine silver in three pieces," 125 ozs. of "English coin," 7ozs. of "Dust gold."

This brings the record down to the time of his departure for England in November of 1688, the 807 ozs. of gold and silver being sent to finance this expedition. During his absence



SHIPPED by the grace of God in good Order and well conditioned
 by Sam^r Sewall of Boston in N.E. Merchant
 for his own use & Profit
 in and upon the good Ship called the Briganteen Friend Ship
 whereof is Master under God for this present Voyage Nathanael
 Green Jun^r and now riding at anchor in the Harbour of Boston
 and by Gods grace bound for the Island of Barbadoes to say
 Four & twenty Barrels of Mackerell

S.S.

being marked and numbred as in the Margin, and are to be delivered in the like
 good Order and well conditioned at the aforesaid Port of Barbadoes (the
 dangers of the Seas only excepted) unto said Nathanael Green or to
 his Assigns, he or they paying freight for the said Goods Fifty
 Shillings of Tax

Primage paid

with Primage and average accustomed. In witness whereof the Master or Purser
 of the said Ship hath affirmed to three Bills of Lading, all of this tenour and
 date, the one of which three Bills being accomplished, the other two to stand void.
 And so God send the good Ship- to her desired Port in safety, Amen.
 Dated in Boston Aug 29th
 1690.

Primage paid

Contents Unknown of Nath^l Green Jun^r
 Recd Lined Rigging Eight Bar more of
 Ditto of Nath^l Green Jun^r

A Page from the Bill of Lading Book

sometimes converted to goods for return to Boston,¹³³ but more often either money or bills of exchange were forwarded to his agents in London, most important of which was his "Loving Cousin," Edward Hull "at the Hat in Hand within Algate."¹³⁴ The problem was to maintain credit in England. To do this some goods were sent, such as "oyle," beaver, "Cramberries," molasses, sugar, and "logwood," but more often the cargo was "fine silver," pieces of eight, "dust gold," "money of England," "Spanish pistolls," "Arabian Gold," and "Mexico pieces melted down."¹³⁵ Income from

from Boston in 1688-89 Eliakim Mather acted for him, sending off several cargoes for his account. After his return from England there is a falling off in the amount shipped, and between 1691 and 1695 there are no bills of lading at all, though at least two shipments during these years are noted in the Letter-Book (Vol. I, 133-134, letter to William Adams dated December 23, 1692; ibid., 141-142, letter to Edward Hull dated May 3, 1694). Between 1695 and 1698 the only shipments are of bullion to England, except for a single cargo of 2½ tons of "logwood" in 1696. After 1698 the record ceases, and the book was turned over to Eliakim Mather, who used the remainder of its pages.

After Hull's death, in short, Sewall's career as an exporter lasted but about a decade, and about half of this time his activities were inconsiderable. This conclusion is largely supported by what evidence the Letter-Book provides (see Vol. I, 2-4, 84, 89, 90, 112, 114, 133, 141-142). The diary is almost silent on the subject.

¹³³ See, for example, Letter-Book, I, 64, letter to John Richardson dated November 10, 1687.

¹³⁴ See, for example, ibid., p. 114, letter of December 10, 1690, to Samuel Veazie; ibid., p. 133, letter of December 23, 1692, to William Adams.

¹³⁵ Much of this is in the Bill of Lading Book. In the Letter-Book, see, for example, Vol. I, 85, letter to Edward Hull dated July 10, 1688; ibid., p. 92, letter to Edward Hull dated November 21, 1688.

the property in England was remitted to his London agents for this same purpose.¹³⁶

From England, in return, came "hard mettald" sithes, "rub stones," "good strong serviceable knives," "worsted Damask stuffs, several colors," "Castors," "Good black Broad-Cloth," casks of the "best sweet-Meats," "Nailles," various kinds of "sive Bottoms," "cod hooks," "blew duffals," "mixt sad coloured searg," "coloured callico," "Wickar Fans to fan Corn with"---everything, in short, which the mother country could supply and New England lacked.¹³⁷ Some of this came for use in the Sewall household, some as consignments to be resold on a commission basis,¹³⁸ some because he was "importuned to send" by Boston citizens in need of particular products.¹³⁹

In addition to his activites as merchant and property owner, Sewall acted at various times, though never in a large

¹³⁶ See, for example, Letter-Book, I, 64, letter to John Richardson dated November 10, 1687.

¹³⁷ The possible citations here are innumerable, and the source is simply Letter-Book, I, passim. Pages for the specific items noted are 33, 34, 44, 46, 67, 75, 96, 116, 118, 134, and 169.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Letter-Book, I, 33, letter to Daniel Allen dated July 16, 1686, and ibid., p. 154, letter to Thomas Burbank dated July 22, 1695.

¹³⁹ See, for example, Letter-Book, I, 96, letter dated February 4, 1689/90.

way, the part of banker, money-lender, and, somewhat surprisingly, pawnbroker. One page of his accounts, for example, carries the note that "at the latter end of the Summer [of 1679] Mary Howen pawned a Warming Pan for ten shillings of Mother Hull." Apparently needing the pan during the following winter, she brought "in the room of it . . . two Platters." Later she brought "two small Platters for Six Shillings," "a whole Apron laced at the gathers, and an old Scarf" for four shillings, and "three small Pewter platters" for five shillings. In 1680 the scarf and apron were redeemed for four shillings, and ten years later "the Seven Platters" were redeemed for one pound, Sewall apparently standing a money loss on the transaction of one shilling!¹⁴⁰ In accordance with the principle that nothing should be taken from the poor that is necessary for livelihood,¹⁴¹ the pawn was generally some object of silver. Widow Bridgham, for example, received twenty-five pounds and four pence for "one Silver Salt Maker . . . one Silver plate . . . one Silver Cup . . . three Porrengers, one Dram Cup, [and] . . . a Duz. gold Rings," all of which were kept "in a Linnen Bagg in the closet."¹⁴² Seth Perry received two pounds two shillings for "a Silver Goblet," Mr. Bethia Collucott fifteen pounds nine shillings for "a Silver Bowl and small scollopt cup," and Abigail John-

¹⁴⁰ "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 26.

¹⁴¹ Bebb, p. 106.

¹⁴² Account Book, entry for April 7, 1690.

son five pounds for "a wrought Silver Serving Plate."¹⁴³

Persons wanting a place of safekeeping for large sums of money found it in Sewall's "Iron chest," the same chest, supposedly, which John Hull had once filled with fresh pine-tree shillings, silver bullion, and funds of the colony's treasury.¹⁴⁴ Out of it, also, were taken shillings and pounds for those who came wanting loans.¹⁴⁵

Much controversy has centered around the thesis advanced by Max Weber, a German economist of the last century, that, to

¹⁴³ Ibid., entries for January 12, 1690/1, October 23, 1691, and November 30, 1691. He weighed Seth Perry's goblet the day after he received it ("7 days Liberty to redeem . . . else it is mine") and, finding it heavier than Perry had said, notes that he "must have credit for four ounces and three quarters." Abigail Johnson dealt with the mother-in-law: "Mother Hull let the money, and the Pawn belongs to her."

Since the items in the account book run only from 1688 to 1692, these examples are from that limited period. In the records for the later years I find only one reference to his playing the part of pawnbroker; it is in the Diary, III, 281, entry for February 22, 1720/1.

¹⁴⁴ Account Book, entries for April 26, 1692 ("Capt John Higginson leaves . . . two hundred pcs of Eight in a Canvas Bag. . . . I give him a check"), and June 30, 1691 ("John Hathorne of Salem Puts into my hand to keep for him a bagg of Money. . .").

¹⁴⁵ According to the account book, he made at least twenty-six such loans in the four years of 1688-92. They ranged all the way from one shilling to Atherton Haugh (entry for May 19, 1691) to twenty pounds to Nathaniel Henschman "very good money" (entry for January 7, 1690/1). When repayment was made in country produce, as it frequently was, the high real value of money is again demonstrated. Between 1694 and 1696, for example, Joshua Kible borrowed fourteen pounds four shillings. In 1713 he was still paying off his debt with pumpkins, eggs, pork, veal, quarters of mutton, pigeons, cheeses, butter, bushels of wheat meal, etc.; and he still owed five pounds (Ledger, fol. 47).

use Professor Morison's apt paraphrase, "Calvinism released the business man from the clutches of the priest . . . , sprinkled holy water on economic success,"¹⁴⁶ and provided him with a "justification for usury."¹⁴⁷ The purpose here is not to speculate in general terms about the applicability of this thesis to the Puritan business man. It would seem to need, at the very least, careful qualification.¹⁴⁸

Certainly it does if applied to Samuel Sewall. The marked effect of economic influences on his life has already

¹⁴⁶Builders of the Bay, p. 160.

¹⁴⁷Puritan Pronaos, p. 8. A valuable critical summary by Kemper Fullerton of Weber's controversial Die Protestantische Ethic und der Geist des Kapitalismus appears in the Harvard Theological Review, XXI (July, 1928), 163-195.

¹⁴⁸Morison, Builders of the Bay, p. 160, and Puritan Pronaos, p. 8, repudiates the theory in its application to early New England. E. A. J. Johnson, American Economic Thought in the Seventeenth Century, p. 92, concludes that "there is little significant evidence to support this thesis in the writings of the American Puritans. To be sure one finds the familiar doctrine of stewardship . . . but this is not peculiar to Calvinism. There is no more idealization of wealth accumulation than there is in the Catholic economic literature." Perry Miller, The New England Mind, p. 43, recognizes that the doctrine of the "weaned affections" was a considerable psychological stimulus to the new capitalism, but he does not accept the idea that Puritan piety may be explained simply as "a rationalization of economic change." Economic change came as a result of what the Puritan believed about the place and role of man in the universe, not the other way around. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 353, points out that the middle class became the proponents of the Puritan doctrine partly because "it was too cold and intellectually complicated for the lower classes, and a creed which might set a lord on the penitent stool before an entire congregation was no religion for a gentleman." The Puritan intelligentsia needed allies for their program, and they found them in the rising middle class.

been noted. He came to terms with the world, abandoned the ministry for a life "among the merchants," married great wealth, and loaned money at interest without spiritual qualms.¹⁴⁹ His course of action at the time of the loss of the Colony Charter was determined more by a concern for the preservation of property than of political principle. His "Lines for a Sun dial"¹⁵⁰

Keep in God's way; keep pace with evry hour

Hurt none; do all the Good that's in your Power.

Hours can't look back at all; they'll stay for none

Tread sure, keep up with them, and All's your own.¹⁵⁰

--are an early voice of Franklin's Poor Richard. His prayer that he "might have an Interest in God, Signed, Sealed, and Delivered" is a nice expression of the merchant mind.¹⁵¹ All these things are true, but they do not present the complete picture. Just as true and just as important is the fact that the sanction given to the business life by Puritan doctrine did not, in Sewall's case, even with all the preliminary advantages of the Hull inheritance and business connections, result in a life of eager and successful devotion to economic gain. Within a decade after the death of John Hull

¹⁴⁹ Though he made many loans, the times that interest is mentioned are few. Two instances are: Letter-Book, I, 132, memorandum of letter to Edward Hull dated October 4, 1692; ibid., p. 133, memorandum of letter to Cousin Storke dated October 19, 1692.

¹⁵⁰ Printed, Am. Ant. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, LII, 311.

¹⁵¹ Diary, I, 312, entry for March 21, 1689/90.

his mercantile career had faltered and come almost to a standstill,¹⁵² possible reasons being a growing preoccupation with public affairs (e.g., in 1692 he began his long career on the judicial circuit, the duties of which frequently took him away from Boston for weeks at a time), increased risks of ocean commerce as a result of renewed war with the French,¹⁵³ and simple lack of business ability.

¹⁵²The record of his participation in the export trade has already been discussed. The record of imports for resale is roughly the same. One need but glance through the pages of the letter-book, the best source of information on this point, to realize that his work as an importer came to a virtual end around 1690. Professor Parrington, The Colonial Mind, pp. 88-97, is apparently uncognizant of this fact, with the result that much of his essay on Sewall derives from the assumption that he was "a Puritan embodiment of Defoe's merchant ideal" (p. 91). Considerably more knowledge of the facts is shown in George P. Winship's "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," in which he states (p. 65) that "after Hannah Hull selected him for a husband, her father introduced him to the life of the merchants, at which he did well enough under a father-in-law's guidance. When this prop was removed, his mercantile correspondence declined . . . drifting into futile efforts to arouse neglectful creditors to a realization of their obligations."

¹⁵³Diary, I, 184-185, entry for August 1 and 2, 1687: "Brother [Stephen] comes to Town and brings word that two Salem Catches are taken by the French. . . ." Letter-Book, I, 86, letter to Nathaniel Dummer dated July 10, 1688: "Fear Nathaniel Man is lost and then I have lost 2 or 300£." Ibid., p. 159, letter to Edward Hull dated December 24, 1695: he has a "piece of Plate" to send to balance accounts but "our ships are so generally taken, that I am afraid to send it yet." In 1691 Sewall bought a one quarter interest in a cargo of "the Pink Pomegranate" at a cost of more than 270 pounds and entered the fact in his ledger (fol. 23). The opposite page, where returns should appear, is blank, a fact which may very possibly have resulted from seizure of the ship by the French. Carrying on in the face of such discouragements and uncertainties would, to use one of Sewall's favorite words, be very "heterogeneous" to a man of his cautious temper.

There is considerable evidence that his managerial abilities were of a rather low order. In 1704, for example, he noted in his diary that he had turned over most of his cash to his wife, telling her that henceforth she should "keep the Cash." He adds: ". . . if I want I will borrow of her. She has a better faculty than I at managing Affairs: I will assist her; and will endeavour to live upon my Salary: will see what it will doe. The Lord give his Blessing."¹⁵⁴ There is also sufficient evidence that he never became at home with the every day routines associated with the commercial life. When, for example, he became treasurer of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a job requiring careful annual accounting to the society's London commissioners of the funds made available to the organization by English contributors,¹⁵⁵ he experienced all the difficulties of the amateur accountant. And this despite the fact that at this time (1700 and after) he had been keeping the accounts of his own business affairs for many years. On January 14, 1703/4,

¹⁵⁴ Diary, II, 95, entry for January 24, 1703/4. The arrangement was apparently not a new one. An entry in the account book for February 11, 1689/90, reads: "Received cash . . . for pocket-Expence--~~al~~-O-C."

¹⁵⁵ The holdings of the society were surprisingly large. Winship, "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," p. 56, states that "in five years the London Corporation, to which the control of the money collected had been entrusted by the 1649 charter, was in possession of city lots and country estates with an income nearing a thousand pounds a year." The sum was considerably less when Sewall became treasurer around 1700, but from such causes as the Plague and the Great Fire rather than negligent administration.

he got the New England overseers for the society together to pass on his accounts, but they "could not get through with it; met with so[me] gross mistakes or such as fear'd were so; and had not time. Col. Foster offers me to carry all I have done, into Leger parcells."¹⁵⁶ Four years later Col. Foster was still lending a hand.¹⁵⁷

How much the limitations of his business abilities affected the management of his property it is impossible exactly to say. Winship expresses the belief that he "was not a good manager of his wife's property,"¹⁵⁸ and certainly there is evidence to suggest that this is true. There is no evidence, on the other hand, to suggest the steady accumulation of wealth ascribed to him by Parrington.¹⁵⁹ The estate left by him at his death as seen in the record of its division among his heirs contains little (two or three items are vague; e.g., "a piece of land near the New South Meeting

¹⁵⁶ Diary, II, 92. On January 29, 1704/5, he bought "two Folios of Mr. Flavell's works . . . and gave them to Mr. Foster for his helping me in my Account last winter. . . (ibid., p. 122).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 218-219, entry for March 6, 1707/8. Having his account written out, he went to Foster "to pray him to be present to examin it. . . ." He "got well through it," he says, "by the Kindness of God."

The nature of Sewall's bookkeeping is suggested by the fact that in the ledger he kept as treasurer for the society he entered such items as the amount in fines paid him as a Justice of the peace (entry for April 3, 1718) and money paid out for "fitting up" his tomb in the "new burying place" (entry for November 20, 1718).

¹⁵⁸ "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," p. 65.

¹⁵⁹ The Colonial Mind, p. 90.

house") which he had not either inherited (from his father or from John Hull) or bought with Hull capital.¹⁶⁰ Instead of "accumulating steadily," as Parrington says, he found it continually necessary to sell parts of his holdings to keep himself in funds. In a letter of December 10, 1706, to Cotton Mather he wrote as follows: "When I returnd from England, I had some thought of carrying out the Wharf, so as to fit it for a Building yard; that fell through. . . . about the year 1701, I found myself under a necessity to sell it for the payment of my debts; and to that purpose a Note was publickly affixed: yet no Chapman appeared, which put me upon selling other Lands to my great Loss."¹⁶¹ In this year he sold three hundred acres of his farm at Woburn (sometimes referred to as "the Land of Nod")¹⁶² and probably the Piscata-

¹⁶⁰After Hull's death the executors of his estate (i.e., Sewall and the Hull women) paid out 695 pounds to clear the titles to several pieces of Boston property (Suffolk Deeds, XIII [Boston, 1903], 61-62, 79, 133, 92). The designations are interesting but vague: "All that their Tenement . . . neuer unto the third meeting house," a dwelling house "by the Great Dock," etc. In 1687 (four years after Hull's death and before he could possibly have accumulated such a sum on his own) he bought Thomas Savage's share of Hog Island for two thousand pounds (Suffolk Deeds, XV, 181). This purchase left him "straitned for mony" (Letter-Book, I, 82, letter to Mr. Pynchon dated May 30, 1688) and was the last sizeable addition to his property holdings. The "Division and Settlement" agreed on by Sewall's heirs is a manuscript document of twenty, large folio pages (Suffolk Deeds, XLV, unpublished volume).

¹⁶¹Letter-Book, I, 341. Three years before he had sold six hundred acres of his Naragansett holdings (Diary, I, 475, entry for April 7, 1698).

¹⁶²Ledger, fol. 99. The sale brought him one hundred pounds.

ous lands in Maine.¹⁶³ In 1702 he wrote complaining that he was "now, not only out of Cash, but in Debt."¹⁶⁴ Four years later he "importunes" his agent at Rumsey to send "all that is due to me" to his agent in London because "next Summer we must make some new Cloaths . . . and this little Spring [i.e., the Rumsey income] is our Supply."¹⁶⁵ In 1719 he sold "the Malt-house and land" for three hundred pounds, and forty acres at Newbury went for one hundred more.¹⁶⁶ In 1727 he disposed of what remained of his holdings in "the Land of Nod" to Samuel Dummer for a little over two hundred pounds.¹⁶⁷

The point of this rather extended recital of facts is that it would appear to invalidate the thesis of the most significant critical evaluation of Sewall which has appeared in this century, that by Professor Parrington in his Colonial Mind. In this essay Sewall appears as a man who plied "the gospel of thrift with notable success," one who was a "worthy representative" of the "rising world of mercantilism" and "made full use of his opportunities to worship God, to thrive and rise," who reveals "the newer practice of incipi-

¹⁶³ Letter-Book, I, 251-252, letter to William Partridge dated March 1, 1700/1. Pointing out that the property had "stood [Hull and him] in above Two Thousand Pounds" and that it had recently suffered "Desolation by the Indians," he is now ready to sell at "such Low Terms" as can be "discoursed of."

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 274, letter to Francis Collins dated September 3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 332, letter dated October 12, 1706.

¹⁶⁶ Ledger, foll. 159, 160.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., fol. 183. An entry for which I do not have the date concerns the sale of "the New Warehouse" for 280 pounds (fol.31).

ent capitalism" as John Winthrop had revealed "the older ideal of theocratic stewardship," who spent his years "busily adding new acres to his holdings," who "with excellent thrift . . . fixed his young affections upon the only child of a wealthy merchant" and "proved himself a shrewd husbandman," "a capable executive and administrator," "a Puritan embodiment of Defoe's merchant ideal," "progenitor of a practical race that was to spread the gospel of economic individualism across the continent."¹⁶⁸ Such conclusions, it must be said, reflect either a prejudiced point of view or an unawareness of the facts. Probably both. When they are not wholly wrong, they stand in need of such extensive qualification as to be virtually meaningless.

One of Parrington's judgments that deserves added comment is that which declares Sewall to be representative of the "newer practice of . . . capitalism" as against the older ideal of "theocratic stewardship" represented by John Winthrop.¹⁶⁹ Ned Ward, writing in 1682, declared that it was a proverb among "those that know them" that "whosoever believes a New-England Saint, shall be sure to be cheated: And he that knows how to deal with their Traders, may deal with the Devil and fear no Craft."¹⁷⁰ If, as seems reasonable

¹⁶⁸Pages 89-97, passim.

¹⁶⁹Page 88.

¹⁷⁰A Trip to New England (London, 1699), p. 45.

to think, this is the kind of "newer practice" which Par-
rington had in mind,¹⁷¹ the reader of Sewall will be hard
put to find convincing illustration of it in his pages.
When he quotes the hard dealing old Thomas Dudley (father
of Governor Joseph Dudley), saying, "A bargain's a Bargain
and must be made good,"¹⁷² it is not to one of his delinquent
creditors but to George Lason, mariner, who had left his
wife and "lay with another woman." The hardest bargains
Sewall ever drove were the oft-cited marriage settlements
of his last years, the niggling character of which scarce-
ly warrants the name of "capitalism." They were simply
petty, and perhaps slightly senile, examples in the Euro-
pean tradition of mercenary marriage. If he let out money
at interest or for pawns the amount was never such as to
suggest the true-born money-lender, and it was far exceeded
by the amount which he put under the headings of either
"forgiven" or "gratuities." The number of the latter, par-

¹⁷¹ He says of Sewall (p. 96) that those who committed "a
certain prank . . . may have had him in mind," citing
the lines which, according to Sewall (Diary, III, 116-117,
entry for August 3, 1717), were "starch'd on the Three Doors
of the Meeting House":

Good people, within this House, this very day,
A Canting Crew will meet to fast, and pray.
Just as a miser fasts with greedy mind to spare;
So the glutton fasts, to eat a greater share.
But the sower-headed Presbyterians fast to seem more holy,
And their Canting Ministers to punish sinfull foley.

¹⁷² Diary, II, 125-126, entry for March 3, 1704/5. Governor
Belchar used the saying in his epitaph:

Here lies Thomas Dudley, that trusty old stud,
A bargain's a bargain, and must be made good.

(See John Winthrop, History of New England, ed. James Savage
[Boston, 1853], II, 61.)

ticularly, is, in fact, so large as to make it seem only fair to ascribe to him a fairly real sense of that "stewardship" of earthly goods which Parrington would deny him, even if his frequently careful noting of shillings and pence suggest that he was at the same time, as they say in New England, "a little near." His largest benefactions were from his Narragansett lands: five hundred acres, as we have earlier noted, to Harvard for youths "whose parents may not be of sufficient ability to maintain them there, especially such as shall be sent from Pettaquamscutt . . . English or Indians";¹⁷³ five hundred more "towards the Support of a School there";¹⁷⁴ one acre for "a meeting house in Kings Town" where the word of God "may be Received Offered and kept pure and Entire."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³Letter-Book, I, 26, editors note. See also: ibid., II, 33, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated August 17, 1714; Harvard Records, I, 272; Caroline Hazard, Judge Sewall's Gifts in the Narragansett Country (Providence, 1936), p. 14. According to Miss Hazard the principal in 1935 from the sale of these lands was \$16,455.77, providing an annual scholarship of five hundred dollars.

¹⁷⁴Letter-Book, II, 33, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated August 17, 1714. The land was given "for and towards the Encouragement of Literature and good Education, and the Maintenance of a learned, sober, and orthodox School-master. . . (Hazard, pp. 12-13, citing North Kingstown Records, II, 167). The tract was sold in the 1820's and a fund set up which in 1935 was \$11, 765, with an income of over five hundred dollars a year.

¹⁷⁵Hazard, p. 17, citing South Kingstown Records, II, 153. "The deed of this land," says Miss Hazard, ". . . may well be considered the charter of the church in the Narragansett Country." For other evidence of his desire to support schools and the ministry in the Narragansett country see Letter-Book, I, 25, memorandum of letter to Josiah Arnold dated March 13, 1685/6; ibid., p. 105, letter to Major Walley dated February 21, 1689/90; ibid., p. 124, memorandum of letter to Major Walley dated November 24, 1691.

Eleven of his acres at Sherborne went for the maintenance of a minister at that place.¹⁷⁶ A part of his "Elm Pasture" he deeded to the town of Boston for an annuity during his life "for the Use of the School at the South End."¹⁷⁷ Five pounds went toward a meeting house at Shrewsbury and a pound ten shillings for its minister.¹⁷⁸ In 1692 and 1693 he sent at various times more than one hundred pounds to Nicholas Morey of Taunton "for his encouragement."¹⁷⁹ For help toward "Rumney Meetinghouse" he gave eight pounds, six shillings, and six pence;¹⁸⁰ toward a new meetinghouse in Cambridge seven pounds;¹⁸¹ for the inside finishing of one at Sandwich two pounds more,¹⁸² etc. Grindal Rawson got seven pounds "toward his Academical Education."¹⁸³ Seth Shove, son of George Shove of Taunton, was taken into the Sewall household, educated at Harvard with Sewall's help, and finally established as a minister of the

¹⁷⁶ Diary, II, 76, editors' note.

¹⁷⁷ The annuity, made in 1721 in memory of "the Wife of his youth," was to be five pounds, four shillings (Letter-Book, II, 134-135, a copy of the deed; and see the ledger, fol. 170).

¹⁷⁸ Ledger, fol. 167, entries made in 1721 and 1724.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., fol. 36.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., fol. 135, entry made in 1710.

¹⁸¹ Diary, II, 165, entry for August 19, 1706.

¹⁸² Letter-Book, I, 113, memorandum of letter to Edward Milton dated December 3, 1690.

¹⁸³ Ledger, fol. 174, entries for 1725-28.

church at Danbury.¹⁸⁴ It would be possible to go on almost indefinitely with a listing of Sewall's cautious efforts to do good. Though the amounts are generally small, their number is large. On a single page of the ledger, for example,

¹⁸⁴The story of Seth Shove runs through the entire five volumes of Sewall's diary and letters. The first entry concerning him deserves quoting at length:

Dec. 14, 1676, Seth Shove was brought to our House to dwell. . . . In the evening, seeing a shagged dogg in the Kitchin, I spake to John Alcock, I am afraid we shall be troubled with the ugly dogg: whereupon John asked which way he went. I said out at the Street door. He presently went that way, and meeting Seth (who went out a little before) took him for the dogg, and smote him so hard upon the bare head with a pipe staff, or something like it, that it grieved me that he had strook the dogg so hard. There arose a considerable wheal in the child head, but it seems the weapon smote him plain, for the Rising was almost from the forehead to the Crown, grew well quickly, wearing a Cap that night. 'Twas God's mercy the stick and manner of the blow was not such as to have spilled his Brains on the Ground. The Devil, (I think) seemed to be angry at the childs coming to dwell here. (Diary, I, 30.)

In the next year he began to "goe to School to Mr. Smith" (Diary, I, 41, entry for April 9, 1677). Ten years later his father died at Taunton and Sewall lent him a horse to go to the funeral (ibid., p. 173, entry for April 22, 1687). Hearing that his home town of Newbury was without a schoolmaster, Sewall recommended Shove, "who proceeded Bachelour the last Commencement. . . . He has liv'd in our house sundry years and have found him a person of sobriety and Commendable behavior. . . ." (Letter-Book, I, 49, letter to John Richardson dated July 14, 1687). Shove got the job and later became a minister, settling down in Danbury. Sewall kept in touch with him through letters, sending him at various times "a packet," "a chest of Books," and books in "a little Linen Bag." (Letter-Book, I, 76, letter dated January 13, 1687/8; ibid., p. 88, letter dated September 6, 1688; ibid., p. 113, letter dated November 13, 1690; ibid., p. 127, letter dated January 9, 1691/2; ibid., p. 398, letter memorandum dated July 7, 1710; ibid., II, 175, memorandums for letters of September 16 and 18, 1724; ibid., p. 208, letter dated July 12, 1726.)

On November 7, 1692, Sewall entered in his ledger (fol. 27): "By Profit and Loss, freely given," "Cloaths, Books, Cash" for Seth Shove worth eleven pounds eighteen shillings.

there are approximately sixty separate "gratuities," none of which has here been mentioned.¹⁸⁵ What his motives were it is impossible to say. It is certainly unlikely that whatever sense of concern he had for the right use of his possessions was entirely free from the prudential thought that in that right use lay the possibility of divine reward. At the same time, it is quite clear that he was a kindly affectioned man, of a nature sufficiently guileless to wish to do good for the simple reason that he believed God wished it.

The aspect of Sewall's career as a business man and property owner in which he found the most satisfaction was that which allowed him to play the part of countryman and farmer. He loved to plant and graft and prune. "Grafted the Button-pear tree stock, which dies at the lower end of the Garden, and several Apple Trees."¹⁸⁶ "Friday April 3rd, Mr. Joseph Eliot and I graft some Walnut Trees."¹⁸⁷ ". . . set sweet-briar seeds at the Pasture by Mr. Saunderson's. . . ."¹⁸⁸ ". . . plant Six Chestnut trees at Hog Island."¹⁸⁹ "April 13, 1688. Grafted a Stock next John Wait's, pretty

¹⁸⁵Fol. 171. The amounts are mostly from one to three pounds, "for a Bell at Providence," "to the Charity School," "For Mr. Secomb's education with Mr. Wigglesworth," etc.

¹⁸⁶Diary, I, 173, entry for April 15, 1687.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 69, entry for April 3, 1685.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 155, entry for October 26, 1686.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 208, entry for March 31, 1688. Ibid., p. 212, entry for May 2: "Water the Chesnut Trees."

high out of the Cows reach, with cions from Mr. Moodey's Orange Pear, and grafted Two Appletree Stocks with Mr. Gardener's Russetings. . . .¹⁹⁰ Such entries appear throughout the diary.¹⁹¹ The feeling he had for his fledgling stocks is suggested by his remark at a time when freezing rain ruined many of the town's trees: ". . . my little Cedar almost quite mortified."¹⁹² At the age of sixty-seven he helped his farmer son, Sam, to "cut his Stalks" and gather in apples,¹⁹³ and at sixty-eight he "Cock'd Hay at Saunderson's pasture."¹⁹⁴ On a page of accounts that he kept during the years of his Hull apprenticeship (1676-83), after entries having to do with such things as an "interest in the John & An," another in "the Pink Hopenwell [sic]," "Cash Recd," etc., there is one

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 210.

¹⁹¹ See, for example: ibid., p. 367, entry for October 11, 1692; ibid., p. 376, entry for March 23, 1693; ibid., p. 369, entry for April 2, 1694; ibid., p. 401, entry for April 3, 1695; ibid., p. 478, entry for April 15, 1698; ibid., II, 343, entry for April 10, 1712; ibid., III, 217, entry for April 4, 1719.

¹⁹²Ibid., I, 506, entry for November 30, 1699. He was apparently a self-appointed planter of trees for the community at large. An entry in the town records for March 25, 1695, reads: "Whereas Capt. Samuel Sewall hath been at Charge in severall essays to plant trees at the south end of the Town, for the shading of Wheeler's Pond, therefore it is ordered that the said Sewall and his Heires and none else shall have liberty from time to time to lop the trees so planted, and to cut them down and Dispose of them, he or they planting others and causing them to grow in stead of those cut down" (Diary, I, 401, editors' note).

¹⁹³Ibid., III, 225, entry for September 1, 1719.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 258, entry for June 14, 1720.

which reads, "Gather the Pears."¹⁹⁵ On another page he has added a note concerning "Cherry the red cow-calf" and the cost "to ty her Legs, & carry . . . to Braintrey." Another concerns five cherry trees "well wrapt up in wet straw (the roots)."¹⁹⁶ Had he felt the interest in trade that he did in gathering pears and planting cherry trees he might have become what Parrington terms him, "a worthy representative" of the "rising world of mercantilism."¹⁹⁷ But he didn't; and the figure which he presents as he rides off to Watertown, in his calash or on his "Sorrel Horse,"¹⁹⁸ to see about some hay,¹⁹⁹ or to his lands at Newbury to view "the sheep shearing,"²⁰⁰ embodies the conventional country squire more than it does "Defoe's merchant ideal."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., fol. 6. On May 3, 1685, Sewall wrote in his diary: "This day our old Red Cow [Cherry?] is kill'd, and we have a new black one. . . . Had served this family above Ten years, above Nine since my dwelling in it." Four days later he wearied himself "walking from one end of the town t'other to seek our lost Cow." (Vol. I, 75, 76.)

¹⁹⁷ Colonial Mind, p. 88.

¹⁹⁸ Ledger, fol. 35. He also laid out money for "a Hoggeskin Saddle," "Swivel Stirps," and a "saddle cloth."

¹⁹⁹ Diary, I, 67, entry for March 14, 1684/5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., II, 16, entry for May 26, 1706.

²⁰¹ Parrington, p. 91.

Chapter Four
SERVANT OF COLONY AND PROVINCE

At the base of any society are some few authoritative ideas which, according to the degree that they enjoy uncritical acceptance, give shape to its institutions. In Puritan Massachusetts such an ultimate principle was the authority of the Bible. Only in the light of this fact can we understand the public career of such a man as Samuel Sewall.

The radical theocratic ideal was expressed by John Eliot in his Christian Commonwealth (London, 1660), wherein he declared it to be "the Commandment of the Lord, that a people should enter into a Covenant with the Lord to become his people . . . submit[ting] themselves to be ruled by the Lord in all things, receiving from him, both the platform of their Government, and all their Laws. . . ." The latter they will "fetch out of the Word of God, making that their only Magna Charta."¹ John Cotton had already thus "fetched out of the Word" in a work entitled "Moses his Judicials" (1636), the declared aim of which was "to show the complete sufficiency of the word of God alone to direct his people in judgment of all causes."² This body

¹Mass. Hist. Soc., Coll. IX, 143.

²Page 29. This work was published in 1641 in London under the inappropriate title of An Abstract of the Lawes of New England; inappropriate because, though submitted to the govern-

of laws, drawn up by Cotton at a time when the freemen of the colony were demanding a codification as a protection against the exercise of unlimited authority by the magistrates,³ represented a theoretical extreme which the General Court was unwilling to accept, moved as it was by a consideration of the charter provision against passage of laws "repugnant to the laws of England" and the practical desire to supplement the word of God with what John Winthrop termed their own "right reason."⁴ That it did, however, reflect in a general way the mind of the colony is shown by the fact that in the same year (1636) the Court passed a resolution favor-

ment for consideration, the code was never adopted. Richard B. Morris, Studies in the History of American Law (New York, 1930), p. 28, characterizes it as a "rearrangement and almost a complete copy of Pentateuchal enactments."

³History, I, 388: "The people had long desired a body of laws, and thought their condition very unsafe, while so much power rested in the discretion of magistrates." Winthrop goes on to give two reasons why "most of the magistrates and some of the elders [were] not . . . very forward in this matter." One was "want of sufficient experience of the nature and disposition of the people, considered with the condition of the country." In other words, new conditions, new laws; but just what these new laws should be, it was difficult to say. Ideally, they "should arise pro re nata . . . [;] so the laws of England and other states grew." The second reason was the charter specification that no laws should be made "repugnant to the laws of England." If they put into a code the laws which they wanted (e.g., one against marriages being solemnized by ministers), some of them would violate the charter. If, on the other hand, instead of codifying their laws, they allowed them to become established merely as "customs," they could enforce the desired practices without offending the home government.

What Winthrop manages to leave unsaid is that in such a procedure the people would not get the protection they desired against the exercise of unlimited power by the magistrates.

⁴Ibid., II, 352. They were not willing to be bound by

ing a draft of laws "agreeable to the word of God" and stipulating that until such a draft could be agreed upon the magistrates should go by laws already passed or, where any might be lacking, "then as near the law of God as they can."⁵ Though the codification finally adopted (the Rev. Nathaniel Ward's famous Body of Liberties, which was requested by the General Court in 1641, circulated among the towns, and adopted in 1648) departed from the letter of Mosaic law,⁶ it departed even more from the common law of England.⁷ The precedents it cites are Biblical precedents,⁸ token of a habit of the

Scripture to the extent which, for example, the Brownists were, for whom it represented an all-sufficient legislative enactment. Hutchinson, History, I, 435, says of the Bay Puritans that "in punishing offenses they professed to be governed by the judicial law of Moses, but no farther than those laws were of a moral nature." When they prescribed death, for example, they did so with Mosaic precedent; but they did not prescribe death for all Old Testament causes (see T. C. Gray, "Remarks on Early Laws of Massachusetts Bay . . .," Mass. Hist. Soc., Coll., ser. 3, VIII [Boston, 1843], 199).

⁵Mass. Records, I, 174.

⁶Gray, loc. cit.

⁷Shortly before its adoption Robert Child in his "Remonstrance" of 1646 had objected to departures from English law in the colony. The "Declaration" which was drawn up in answer sets forth parallels between the Massachusetts and English systems. Richard B. Morris, "Massachusetts and the Common Law: the Declaration of 1646," Am. Hist. Rev., XXXI (April, 1926), 452, terms it "disingenuous," pointing out that the departure from English law was much greater than the "Declaration would admit.

It is worth noting that, in some respects at least, the departures from English law were in the direction of greater liberality. The Body of Liberties contains, for example, but twelve offenses for which the punishment is death as against one hundred fifty in the laws of England in the same period. (See John S. Barry, History of Massachusetts [Boston, 1856-57] I, 276-278.)

⁸See the section on capital crimes in Colonial Laws, p. 1

Puritan legal mind which caused Thomas Lechford, an English lawyer visiting the colony, to remark angrily on the "slight-[ing of] all former lawes of the Church or State, cases of experience and precedents, to go hammer out new . . . upon pretence that the Word of God is sufficient. . . ."9

This reliance on Biblical authority had several interesting and important results in the Puritan community. It elevated the clergy to a position of such power that in the early years of the colony "the preachers made . . . all the magistrates," as Winthrop remarked, "and kept them so entirely under obedience that they durst not act without them."¹⁰ The magistrate, too, was of awful stature, for in a theocratic society the civil power that he represented was literally the embodiment of God's will on earth. He was, by Calvinistic precept, God's "vice regent."¹¹ The Boston Synod

⁹Plaine Dealing, or Newes from New England (London, 1642), in Mass. Hist. Soc., Colla., ser. 3, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1832), 86.

¹⁰Morris, Studies, p. 26.

¹¹See the discussions in Morris, p. 35, and George Ellis, The Puritan Age and Rule in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay (Boston, 1888), p. 188. The last chapter in John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. John Allen (Philadelphia, n.d.), entitled "On Civil Government" is a primer of Puritan political theory. ". . . magistracy," he says (p. 775), is a calling not only holy and legitimate, but far the most sacred and honourable in human life." Again (p. 797): ". . . it is impossible to resist the magistrate without, at the same time, resisting God himself. . . ."

The laws of the colony declared that anyone who should "willingly defame" a magistrate for "Sentences and Proceedings" in the line of his duty, should be punished by whipping, fine, imprisonment, disfranchisement, or banishment, as the quality

of 1680 declared that those who resist magistrates "resist the ordinance of God." It instructed the people to pray for them, "honour their persons . . . pay them tribute . . . obey their lawful commands, and . . . be subjects to their authority for conscience sake."¹² On January 2, 1717/18, speaking on the occasion of the death of Chief Justice Waitstill Winthrop (grandson of the governor), Sewall reminded his audience that "Councillors and Judges [are] . . . by the Supreme Authority called gods" and that when the court judges "the Judgment is the LORD's."¹³

Another result of the acceptance of the Bible as the primary authority in the management of civil affairs was the derogation of the legal mind in favor of the ecclesiastical. The New England Puritan felt it more important that a judge be instructed in the word of God than that he be skilled in the common law of England. The feeling toward practicing lawyers went beyond indifference to active opposition. Of the two earliest lawyers in the colony, Thomas Lechford and Thomas Morton, one returned to England by his own will, and the other was expelled by the colony. Item twenty-six of

or measure of the offense shall deserve.

¹² Magnalia, II, 201-202.

¹³ Letter-Book, II, 86-87. Sewall spoke as "the last of the Council left Standing in the Charter." The address was delivered preliminary to his charge to the grand jury, at Charlestown, Sewall "Turning toward the Chief Justices Empty Seat."

the Body of Liberties gives the defendant the right to employ an advocate, but only without fee, a fact which makes it understandable that those who appeared in the role of attorneys were of every profession but that of the law.¹⁴ The General Court was, it is true, English-minded enough to realize the need for "better light for making and proceeding about laws" and sent to England for legal texts which would provide such light;¹⁵ and several of the early leaders, such as the Winthrops (father and son), Bellingham, Bradstreet, Nathaniel Ward, and Samuel Symonds, were men of some legal training.¹⁶ It was not until 1712, however, that the first really trained lawyer sat on the Massachusetts bench in the person of Benjamin Lynde,¹⁷ and almost

¹⁴C. J. Hilkey, Legal Development in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630-1786, Col. Univ. Stud. in Hist., Ec., and Public Law, XXXVII, No. 2 (New York, 1910), 62-63, gives examples.

¹⁵Mass. Records, II, 212. On November 11, 1647, the General Court ordered "procured for the use of the Court . . . : Two of Sir Edward Cooke upon Littleton; two of the Book of Entries; two of Sir Edward Cooke upon Magna Charta; two of the New Terms of the Law; two of Dalton's Justice of the Peace; Two of Sir Edward Cook's Reports."

¹⁶Nathan Mathews, "The Results of the Prejudice Against Lawyers in Massachusetts in the Seventeenth Century," Mass. Law Quarterly, XIII (May, 1928), 77.

¹⁷F. W. Grinnell, "The Bench and Bar in Colony and Province," in Commonwealth History of Massachusetts, ed. A. B. Hart (Boston, 1927), II, 171. Lynde was trained at the Inns of Court in London. The next trained lawyer to be appointed was Paul Dudley, son of Governor Joseph Dudley, in 1718.

On July 29, 1712, the day of Lynde's installation at a sitting of the court in Charlestown, Sewall wrote in his diary: "Before Mr. Lynde's Commission was read I said, Although the

a century later (1810) Jefferson wrote concerning the possible appointment of a Massachusetts judge as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States: "He is not thought to be an able common lawyer, but there is not and never was an able one in the New England States. Their system is sui generis in which the Common law is little attended to."¹⁸

The scarcity of trained legal talent resulted in, among other things, an informality and simplicity of courtroom practice which is characteristic of frontier societies and reflects the layman's impatience with the elaborateness of traditional procedures.¹⁹ The following picture of informal, lay justice

Court be not so full as we could have desired, yet through the good providence of GOD there is a Court, a Court consisting entirely of such as have been brought up in the Society happily founded in this place by our Ancestors. . . . In the Gentleman present I hope we shall have an Instance of the Advantage of an Inns of Court education superadded to that of Harvard College.

¹⁸P. 3. Reinsch, "English Common Law in the Early American Colonies," in Select Essays in Anglo-American Legal History (Boston, 1907), I, 385, cited. Reinsch also notes that in 1774 John Adams, writing as Novanglus, declared: "How then do we New Englanders derive our laws. I say not from Parliament, not from the common law, but from the law of nature [an old phrase in New England but with changing connotations; to the Puritan it meant roughly the word of God as interpreted and supplemented by 'right reason'] and the compact made with the king in our charter."

¹⁹Hutchinson, History, I, 452, says: "Their judicial proceedings were in as summary a way, as could well consist with the preservation of any tolerable degree of method or order." Theodore F. Plunkett, in a review of the Records of Suffolk County Court: 1671-1680 (Col. Soc. of Mass., Publ., XXIX, XXX [1933]), New England Quarterly, VII (September, 1934), 586-587, remarks that "they suggest the ingenuity of the amateur rather than the science of the professional man of law."

in the New England of Sewall's day was set down by Sarah Kemble Knight while travelling in Connecticut in 1704:

A negro slave belonging to a man in the Town, stole a hogs head from his master, and gave or sold it to an Indian, native of the place. The Indian sold it in the neighbourhood, and so the theft was found out. Thereupon the Heathen was Seized, and carried to the Justices House to be Examined. But his worship (it seems) was gone into the feild, with a Brother in office, to gather in his Pompions. Whether the malefactor is hurried, and complaint made, and satisfaction in the name of justice demanded. Their Worships cann't proceed in form without a Bench: whereupon they order one to be Immediately erected, which, for want of fitter materials, they made with pompions--which being finished, down setts their Worships . . . and the inquiry proceeds.²⁰

There was little attempt at the traditional elaborateness of statement. Legal proceedings were, for the New Englander, "just like other business affairs, where a clear expression of the meaning was sufficient." Morris, Studies, pp. 46-47, quotes a New England judge of a later day as saying: "We regard the ignorance of the first colonists of the technicalities of the Common Law as one of the most fortunate things in the history of the law, since . . . we happily lost a great mass of antiquated and useless rubbish, and gained in its stead a course of practice of admirable simplicity." There is a good discussion of the matter by Emory Washburn, Sketches of the Judicial History of Massachusetts from 1630 to the Revolution in 1775 (Boston, 1840), chap. 3.

²⁰ The Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York in the Year 1704 (Albany, 1865), p. 51. A similarly lively and satirical picture of court procedure in Maryland at this

The intent in presenting this anecdote is not, let it be said, to show early New England justice in caricature. The higher courts at least, as will later be shown, frequently proceeded with a considerable show of dignity and pomp. The fact remains, however, that the student of Sewall, upon encountering Miss Knight's story, may recall Sewall's complaint that in his role as a "tryer of Small Causes" (not to be confused with his more august duties as a member of the Court of Assistants and later, under the Province government, of the Superior Court) he complained that "persons often come upon me unawares";²¹ which could very well mean that they found him out cultivating his bean rows or inspecting his "pippins," both favorite occupations. He may be reminded, also, of various

period is given by Ebenezer Cook in his poem The Sot Weed Factor (London, 1709), ed. B. C. Steiner (Baltimore, 1865), p. 15. He writes of the "planting Rabble" sitting around "Carousing Punch in open Air," of "Their drunken Worships" the judges, and of the lawyers "Wrangling for Plaintiff and Defendant." In one of his notes he declares that "in the County-Court of Mary-Land, very few of the Justices . . . can write or read." The differences between this and a New England court are interesting, as is the similarity of the social climate of the frontier.

²¹Diary, I, 314, copy of a letter to Joseph Webb, "Clark of the Writts," dated March 1, 1689/90. He asks Webb "to grant no Attachment for the Trial of any cause before me except on the first Monday of the Moneth." He asks, also, that Webb not send him any "whoes Book-Debts are old enough to be senior Sophisters, being of more than three years standing."

It is amusing to note with what solemnity Washburn, best known of the writers on Massachusetts' judicial history, treats of these rather slight requests by Sewall. He takes them to indicate "a natural taste for legal science. . . . He saw how chaotic was the system of legal practice at the bar, and endeavored to introduce a corrective. . . . it shows a disposition on the part of Mr. Sewall to introduce something like order into the practice of the law" (Sketches, pp. 259-260). Perhaps he is right, but the evidence is certainly not very impressive.

occasions demanding impromptu judicial action, such as that on which Mrs. Obinson presented herself at Sewall's door "complain[ing] of her Husband's ill usage of her; kick'd her out of bed last night. . .";²² or the time when he fined "Widow Gutteridge's Negro Ned" five shillings for "breach of the Sabbath yesterday Robbing my Orchard"; or that on which he fined James Barry a similar amount "for his misdemeanour in Sounding and Halooing several times, at twenty minutes past six a clock--to my great disturbance as I was reading in my family the Lord's Day-Eve."²³

The power of thus fining a man for "Halooing" at twenty minutes after six on a Saturday evening grew out of an action by the General Court in the year (1684) in which Sewall first took his place among the magistrates. It reads: ". . . in case of misdemeanor, or vehement suspicion thereof, where no Court is at hand, any magistrate . . . being present . . . may empower any person to make search and apprehend any disorderly person, whereby their misdemeanors may be brought forth & punished. . . ."²⁴ Magistrates, in short, were to act as a kind of moral Gestapo of the kind for which the town of Boston still enjoys an unpleasant notoriety. What they lacked in legal qualifications, either in impromptu proceedings or in the courtroom, would be made up for by that "natural sense" of right and wrong which man has always thought

²²Diary, I, 410, entry for August 6, 1695.

²³Ledger, fol. 113, entries for August 21, 1721, and October 16, 1710.

²⁴Mass. Records, V, 453, action of October 15, 1684.

of himself as possessing; and which in the case of the Puritan magistrate was buttressed by the added sense of being privy to eternal truth as revealed in God's own sacred word.²⁵

This proceeding by rule of moral thumb, so to speak, encouraged some surprising corruptions of traditional legal practice, such as the hearing of causes and giving of private advice by magistrates before a case came into court,²⁶ making juries the judge of both law and fact, and the finding of guilt on the basis of "strong suspicion."²⁷ Despite such practices, however, a rude kind of justice seems to have been generally obtained, and the simplicity of form and manner that

²⁵Hutchinson, History, I, 435, says: "In civil actions, equity, according to the circumstances of the case, seems to have been their rule of determining. The judges had recourse to no other authorities, than the reason and understanding which God had given them. In punishing offenses, they professed to be governed by the judicial law of Moses, but no farther than those laws were of a moral nature." No farther, that is, than they conformed to their private views of right and wrong. On May 27, 1685, the General Court, "for releife against the rigour of the common law," ordered that magistrates acting in the county courts should "make their decree and determination according to the rule of aequity" (Mass. Records, V, 477-478).

Proceeding without the support of law could be embarrassing however, as Sewall found on February 16, 1685/6, when he wrote: "Great disorder in the Town by Cock-skilling: I grant 2 warrants. . . . but for want of a Law and Agreement shall find much ado to supress it" (Diary, I, 122).

²⁶On June 2, 1641, Nathaniel Ward held against the practice in an election sermon. A proposal of reform was turned down, however, because it would have meant the hiring of attorneys. See Hilkey, Legal Development, p. 61, and Morris, Studies, p. 42.

²⁷Dow, Every Day Life, p. 201.

tended to accompany the proceedings is a thing we are inclined to admire, living as we do under a frontier tradition which places high value on the rough-and-ready approach as well as on certain varieties of ignorance.

But the assumption that justice would be served as well by righteousness as by legal learning was one that had in it dangers for the magistrates as well as for the James Barrys and Negro Neds of the colony. ". . . take heede my brethren," wrote Thomas Lechford after his departure from the colony, "despise not learning, nor the worthy Lawyers of either gown, lest you repent too late."²⁸ The warning went unheeded, and it was not until after the struggle over the charter and the threat to land titles during the administration of Andros that the meaning of an untrained Bench and Bar became painfully apparent. It is less humorous than pathetic that, at the last meeting of the magistrates and deputies under the old government, a man of Sewall's position in the colony and consequent responsibilities to it should have been unaware of the possibility of challenging, on the grounds of illegality, the measures taken by the English government, and was able, consequently, to think of nothing better to do than sing "the 17. and 18. verses of Habbakuk."²⁹ When, under Andros, the

²⁸Plaine Dealing, p. 86. The book was published in 1642.

²⁹Diary, I, 140, entry for May 21, 1686. Nathan Mathews, "The Results of the Prejudice against Lawyers . . .," p. 81, gives convincing demonstration of the idea that "the charter was allowed to go by default," their being no one in the colony with sufficient knowledge of the law to challenge, as might

colonists found the titles to their lands challenged by Writs of Intrusion, they got a minister, John Higginson, to state their case. The best he could do was argue a derivation of rights "from the grand charter from Genesis where God gave the earth to the sons of Adam and Jonah," an argument which, though doubtless of some remote theoretical validity, was scarcely as effective as the citing of recent and pertinent acts by the Crown and Privy Council might have been.³⁰ But of this important possibility the Puritan leaders were apparently unaware. Sewall shared in the general helplessness of ignorance and made unhappy submission, as we have already seen, to Andros' demands.

II

Such, in its more significant aspects, is the background against which the greater part of Sewall's career as a public servant must be viewed. He took his place among the magistrates as one trained for the ministry. In a theocratic society such training, obviously, far from unfitting him for the exercise of civil power, was most appropriate and desirable. "The Employment of the Magistrat and Minister," being, as he said, "so much akin,"³¹ his qualifications for avoiding

have been done, the legality of certain steps taken by the Crown. See similarly, Grinnell, "Bench and Bar," Comm. Hist., II, 162.

³⁰ Mathews, "The Results of the Prejudice against Lawyers," pp. 84-85. Every claim against land titles, says Mathews, "could have been met by citing acts of the Privy Council or the Crown . . . between 1660 and 1680."

³¹ Letter-Book, I, 357, letter to Gurdon Saltonstall, Governor of Connecticut, dated February 9, 1707/8.

what he termed "the disagreement of Moses and Aaron" were excellent.³² Succession to the estate of John Hull gave assurance, furthermore, that his concern would be with the affairs of New England as well as with the approaches to heaven.

The known facts concerning Sewall's public life during the ten last years of the Charter Government, except for those having to do with its downfall, a subject which has already been dealt with at some length, are neither very numerous (the lost volume of the diary being for the years 1677-85) nor of great significance. On March 30, 1676/7, he joined the Third or South Church, "making a Solemn covenant to take the L. Jehovah" for his God, and to "walk in Brotherly Love and watchfulness to Edification."³³ He was considerably "tormented" in his mind as to his possible want of grace, nor was he sure that the South Church had been "in God's way in breaking off from the old"³⁴ (on the issue of the half-way covenant, which the new church espoused). But his wife would soon bear him a child which he wanted to see baptized, and, a fact he does not mention, church membership was a qualification of the franchise. A year later (May, 1678),

³²Letter-Book, II, 173, letter of September 5, 1724, written to his associates on the bench when he was sick and unable to travel the circuits.

³³Diary, I, 39.

³⁴Ibid., p. 46, entry marked simply "March 1678/9."

having proved himself industrious and law abiding, and possessing the necessary two hundred pounds (or income equal to that from such an amount)³⁵ he was made a freeman (one of an approximate one thousand in a colony with a population about twenty-five times that number),³⁶ swearing "by the Great and Dreadfull Name of the Ever-Living God" to bear faith and true allegiance, plot no evil against the state "but . . . discover and reveal the same to Lawfull Authority," and use his vote as he should in his "own Conscience judge best to Conduce and tend to the Publick Weale."³⁷

The oath thus taken was no light affair, for it meant active partnership in the high enterprise of establishing and guarding the Puritan state. More than a privilege, it meant the obligation to serve. Office was given more often than it was sought, and the man who did not perform "such public service as [he might] . . . be chosen to by the freemen of the severall townes, as cunstables, jurors, selectmen, and surveyors of high wayes" was fined for "every such refusall . . . not exceeding twenty shillings."³⁸ Sewall's "first

³⁵W. E. Woodward, The Way Our People Lived (New York, 1944), p. 24.

³⁶Ibid. Woodward gives the figure of eleven hundred. Adams, Provincial Society, p. 21, notes that in 1703, under the somewhat more liberal provisions of the provincial charter, only two hundred and six votes were cast for representatives from Boston, out of a population of around seven thousand.

³⁷Col. Laws, pp. 163-164.

³⁸Mass. Records, II, 208. Weeden, I, 78, discusses the point.

publick Entrance into the Civil Order," as he wrote long after,³⁹ was in his first year as a freeman. The office was that of constable, an unpopular post which frequently drew the prescribed fine from men appointed to it but unwilling to serve.⁴⁰ The conscientious Sewall was willing, however, and he took the oath from Governor Leverett. The principal duty of the office was direction of Boston's night watch, to see to it that the "Watch men . . . duely examine all Night walkers after ten of the clock at night (unless they be known peacable Inhabitants) to inquire whether they are going, and what their business is . . . to see all noises in the streets stilled, and lights put out."⁴¹ Anyone giving an unsatisfactory answer was to be kept until morning and then taken to the nearest magistrate. Sewall apparently found the duties of watch keeping congenial, for in one capacity or another--"perambulator of bounds for

³⁹Letter-Book, II, 223. The statement is in the form of a diary entry for March 13, 1726/7. He is reminiscing after attending a "Boston anniversary Town-Meeting."

⁴⁰At the first town meeting Sewall attended in Boston he heard several men fined for unwillingness to serve as constables (Diary, I, 37, entry for March 12, 1676. See similarly, ibid., p. 125, entry for March 7, 1685/6.).

⁴¹Col. Laws, p. 154. The watch was patterned after that of London. In the next century there were five wards, with a watch house in each. Summer duty was from ten at night to daylight. Winter hours were from nine at night to eight in the morning. (See Sherwin L. Cook, "Boston: the Eighteenth Century Town," Comm. Hist., II, 245.) Palfrey, III, 55, would seem to be mistaken in saying the watch was kept only from the beginning of May till the end of September, for Sewall frequently went the rounds during the winter months.

Muddy River" (i.e., Brookline; he was appointed to this office in March, 1679),⁴² officer of the South Company (one of the Boston train bands), "Overseer of the Poor" (a town office which he held for several years), or simply as a conscientious magistrate⁴³—he made tours of inspection around the town for at least thirty years.⁴⁴ His satisfaction in this work resulted in some of his pleasantest diary entries.

March 12, 1684/5: "Watched with Isaac Goose and Sam. Clark, had a pleasant Night. Gave each Watch 12 d. to drink."⁴⁵

⁴²Diary, I, 56, editors' note. The source is not given, and I have not come across it. Nor can I say exactly what the office means. The time is during the 1677-85 gap in the diary, but in an interleaved almanac for 1679 there is the entry: "April 15, 3 [i.e., the third day of the week]. Perambulation." In an interleaved almanac for 1678 there is the entry: "Aug. 23, 6. Watch begins to be warned out of my precincts," an apparent reference to the constabulary watch.

⁴³Diary, II, 267: "November 5. [1709] I walk'd at night with Col. Townsend, Mr. Bromfield, Constable Williams, and a Man or two. Find the Town quiet and in good order. Were jealous the 5th November [Guy Fawkes Day] might have occasioned disturbance."

⁴⁴The last entry I have noted is for August 13, 1716: "Goe through the Town to Suppress Disorders, with Col. Townsend, Mr. Marion, Capt. Clar, Constable Shaller: Wallie and I were on Horse-back; set out at 11. at night, return'd at $\frac{1}{2}$ hour past one. Found the Watch and Town generally in good order." (Diary, III, 98.)

⁴⁵Diary, I, 67. He is acting at this time in his capacity as an officer of the South Company. At the end of the first manuscript volume of his diary he has copied an order designating officers who "shall each in their respective turn . . . take unto them one or two more that live in the Precincts of their own Company [and walk] . . . throughout the Town . . . and . . . take Inspection of the several Guards and Watches. . . ." The head of the inspecting party was to "march with a Half Pike with a fair head, by which he may be known to the Commander of the Watch, and in the next morning leave the same with him whoes Turn is next, which shall be accounted a sufficient Warning. . . ." (Diary, I, 54.)

November 25, 1685: "I go the Rounds with Cous. Quinsey and Isaac Goose, a very severe night for Cold, yet 'twas fair and comfortable: came home at 5. mane."⁴⁶ It might be "a very pleasant Moonshiny night,"⁴⁷ or it might be one on which the snow was "extream deep";⁴⁸ in either case he would have himself "a very comfortable night." On at least one occasion he tells of making the rounds as an Overseer of the Poor. February 9, 1707/8: "Mr. D. Oliver, Capt. Keeling, Constable Loring and myself walk'd in the 7th Company to inspect Disorders [poverty and "disorders" apparently being regarded as synonymous]. Found this to our Comfort, that the widow Harman's daughter Ames is gon to her Husband at Marshfield, which was a gravamen [i.e., a charge on the town] for many years. . . . I carried $\frac{1}{2}$ Duz. Catechises in my Pocket, and gave them to such as could read, Orphans several of them. . . . Had a very comfortable day overhead."⁴⁹

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 131, entry for March 31, 1686.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 119, entry for January 26, 1685/6. Other notations of watch keeping as a part of his military duties are: ibid., p. 96, entry for September 20, 1685; ibid., p. 145, entry for July 29, 1686; ibid., p. 340, entry for January 11, 1690/1 (skipping the period, that is, from the time when Joseph Dudley took over the reins of the government after the loss of the charter to the time when, after the overthrow of Andros, a provisional government was set up under Bradstreet); ibid., p. 341, entry for February 12, 1690/1; ibid., p. 342, entry for March 16, 1690/1; ibid., p. 346, entry for June 22, 1691. Apparently the arrangement ended with the advent of the Provincial government.

⁴⁹Diary, II, 216, entry for February 9, 1707/8. Robert F. Seybolt, The Town Officials of Colonial Boston: 1634-1775

In 1683 Sewall served the town of Boston as an assessor (one of seven) and as a member of the committee to draw up

(Cambridge, 1939), first notes Sewall as an Overseer of the Poor in the records of a town meeting held March 10, 1700/1 (p. 100, citing Boston Records, VII, 243-244). He gives two other references, one for March 9, 1701/2 (p. 102, citing ibid., VIII, 22-24) and one for February 16, 1702/3 (p. 105, citing ibid., VIII, 26). He has not noted a meeting of the "Justices, Select men & Overseers of the Poor" held on January 27, 1706/7, which Sewall attended as one of the overseers for the seventh ward. It was here agreed that the overseers would "Vissit the Familyes of this Town on Wednesday the fifth of February next. And that like Vissits be made once in every quarter of the year ensueing, in Order to prevent & redress disorders." (Boston Records, XI, 55-56.)

On January 31, 1723, the duties of the overseers were more specifically defined as being "to Inspect Disorderly Persons [,] new Comers, the Circomstances of the Poor and Education of their Children. . ." (ibid., XIII, 122). Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, A Topographical Description of Boston (Boston, 1890), p. 128, cites an act of November 26, 1692, which declared that overseers must be "able and discreet, of good Conversation." By it they were "impowered and ordered to take effectual Care that all Children, Youth, and other persons of able Body . . . do not live idly, or misspend their time in loitering; but that they be brought up or employed in some honest Calling, which may be profitable to themselves, and the Publick." If no other solution offered, the children of the poor might be bound out as apprentices.

The subject of colonial poor relief is an interesting one. The laws of the colony provided that any town resident of three months, the town not notifying him it was unwilling he should remain, should "in case of necessity" be "provided for . . . at a Town-charge" (Col. Laws, p. 123). In 1679 the Boston Town Meeting declared that "the Towne is fild with poore idle and profane persons" because of "the resort of all sorts of persons from all parts, both by sea and land, more than any other towne in the Collony" (Boston Records, VII, 315). The policy followed by the colony was that set down under Elizabethan poor law, deriving from ancient Teutonic custom whereby a person who remained unchallenged in a community for twelve months gained the freedom of the place, and the community became in various ways responsible for him. The result was an intense suspicion of strangers and the growth of the custom called "warning out." (See J. H. Benton, Warning Out in New England [Boston, 1911], p. 5; Albert Deutsch, "The Sick Poor in Colonial Times," Am. Hist. Rev. XLVI (April, 1941), 560-561; Marcus W. Jernegan, Laboring and Dependant Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783

instructions for its deputies to the General Court.⁵⁰ In the same year he appears in the colony records as a deputy from Westfield (residence requirements not being put into effect until ten years later),⁵¹ and on May 7, 1684, he was chosen to the Court of Assistants, the oligarchic group of eighteen⁵² which was supreme court, executive council, and upper legislative house all rolled into one.⁵³ Exactly what brought the

[Chicago, 1931], chap. 13, passim.) The movement toward the establishment of private philanthropical organizations came toward the end of the provincial period.

⁵⁰Diary, I, 57, editors' note. The source, apparently town records, is not given and I have not come across it.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 386, entry for November 28, 1693. Sewall voted in favor of the bill, which carried, limiting representation from towns to "freeholders and residents with such towns." For Sewall's appearance as deputy from Westfield, see Mass. Records, V, 421.

⁵²The number of assistants had varied from fourteen to twenty, but in 1680 it was put at eighteen and remained that for the rest of the colonial period (Mass. Records, V, 437; Hilkey, Legal Development, p. 44). For his election, see Mass. Records, V, 437.

⁵³It has not seemed necessary to describe in detail the legislative and judicial organization in the colony. The charter statement was fairly simple and explicit:

. . . Governor, Deputie Governor, and Assistants . . . shall . . . once every moneth, or oftener at their pleasures . . . [meet] for the better ordering and directing of their affaires. . . . any seaven or more . . . of the Assistants, together with the Governor or Deputie Governor . . . shalbe . . . a . . . sufficient Courte . . . for . . . all businesses, and . . . there shall or maie be held [on specified Wednesdays in each quarter] . . . one great . . . Generall Court . . . which shall have full power . . . to choose such . . . others as they shall think fit . . . to be free of the said Company . . . and to elect . . . such officers as they shall thinke fitt . . . and to make lawes and ordinances for the good . . . of the . . . Company . . . and the people inhabiting the same. . . . So . . . such lawes . . . be not contrarie or repugnant to the lawes and statutes of . . . England. [Mass. Records, I, 11-12.]

thirty-two year old Sewall to this, next to that of the Governor, the highest office in the Puritan state, is not plain. One must admit as probable, however, that it was less his record of performance in such probationary assignments as Boston constable, Perambulator of Bounds for Muddy River, and deputy for Westfield, than it was the fact that he was John Hull's heir. If the total record of his life be taken as a basis for judgment, he had not so much proved his worthiness as he had shown himself to be, as cautious phrasing has it,

The key body was not the General Court, despite its being designated "the chief Civil Power of this Commonwealth" (Col. Laws, p. 34), but the Court of Assistants. General Courts, with the exception of the prescribed annual meeting, were held only "when the importancy of the business doth require it." At all other times business was to be "Ordered and dispatched by the Major part of the Council" (ibid., p. 333); i.e., the so-called Council of Magistrates, the records of which have been lost (see Ellen E. Brennan, "The Massachusetts Council of the Magistrates," New England Quarterly, IV (January, 1931), 79, 98. John Dickinson, "The Massachusetts Charter and the Bay Colony," Comm. Hist., I, 115-116, says of this group:

It is hardly too much to say that the entire administrative as well as the judicial machinery of the colony was gathered by the Assistants into their own hands. In a judicial capacity, they sat as judges in every one of the courts of the colony. Sitting as a body with the Governor and deputies they constituted the General Court. Sitting in a body they constituted the Quarter Courts. Sitting in small groups, or individually in company with commissioners, they constituted the county courts. Individually they had jurisdiction over small causes.

In an administrative capacity, they fixed some taxes, determined who should be admitted freemen, and appointed petty officials.

The best description of the colonial court set up is in Washburn, Sketches, chap. 2. Palfrey, Vol. II, chap. 2, has a useful summary, as does Hutchinson, History, Vol. I, chap. 5. See also: Joseph Willard, An Address to the Members of the Bar of Worcester County, Mass. (Lancaster, 1830); William T. Davis, Bench and Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Boston, 1895), I, 43, 64-65, and the same author's History of the Judiciary of Massachusetts (Boston, 1900), p. 28; Dow, Every Day Life, pp. 200-201.

"not unworthy." John Hull had quit New England's to sail for heaven, to use his elegist's figure, on August 14, 1683. Before another year was out the son-in-law was settled in the vacated magisterial seat.

The Charter government had not long to live. The day that Sewall was chosen deputy for Westfield (November 7, 1683) was the day on which Edward Randolph, hated agent for the Crown, arrived with the quo warranto charging the colony with abuse of its corporate franchise.⁵⁴ The charter was not vacated, however, until the following year (October 23, 1684), and yet another year passed before the General Court made its last adjournment, orders having arrived (May 20, 1686) for Joseph Dudley to head a provisional government pending the arrival of a Royal Governor.⁵⁵ In the meantime the old government, with ancient Simon Bradstreet at its head, continued to function, drawing up a "Humble petition & addresse" to the King, in which they declared themselves to be "prostrate" at his "majesties royal feete";⁵⁶ framing instructions for the colony's agent in England;⁵⁷ and seeing to such every day matters as licensing public houses "for . . . enterteinement, and retayling wine & licquors,"⁵⁸ regulating the size of

⁵⁴Mass. Records, V, 421.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 516.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 439-441. This was the same session in which Sewall was first chosen Assistant.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 421.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 450.

bricks,⁵⁹ and ordering a day of fasting and humiliation because of the spread of smallpox.⁶⁰

During these years (1684-86) Sewall had been twice re-elected magistrate and was in faithful attendance at the meetings of both the General Court and the Court of Assistants.⁶¹ Since the latter body, in addition to its appellate function,⁶² had original jurisdiction in "all Capital and Criminal Causes, extending to Life, Member or Banishment,"⁶³ the records of its actions show life in the Puritan community in its most violent aspects. Rape, murder, piracy, stealing, manslaughter, infanticide--all are here in amounts which must have moved the youthful magistrate to a consideration of the awful power of the devil among God's people. James Morgan, for example, "not having the feare of God before his eyes being Instigated by the divill . . . on the tenth day of december [1684] . . . in the house of constante worcester

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 450-451.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 510.

⁶¹ For his election, see Diary, I, 77, entry for May 27, 1685; ibid., p. 132, entry for April 13, 1686; Mass. Records, V, 475, 513.

For his presence at meetings of the General Court, see Mass. Records, V, 449 (September 10, 1684), 465 (January 28, 1685), 472 (May 6, 1685), 494 (July 21, 1685), 500 (September 16, 1685), 506 (November 17, 1685), 506 (February 16, 1686).

⁶² The Records of the Court of Assistants, ed. John Noble (Boston, 1901) consist mostly of unrevealing verbal machinery for recording appeals from the lower courts. In such cases, not even the nature of the case is given, only the names of the parties and the court's findings.

⁶³ Col. Laws, p. 36.

widdow in Boston did about ten of the clocke that night . . .
wound kill & murder Joseph Johnson Butcher . . . by running
a spitt into his belly a little above the navell. . . ."
He was found guilty and Bradstreet pronounced the words,
". . . you James morgan for the murther you have committed
are to Goe hence to the place whence you Came & from thence
to the Gallowes & there be hanged by the neck till you be
dead & the Lord have mercy on your soule."⁶⁴ John Balston,
"upon the nineteenth day of July [1685] . . . being the Lords
day Commit[ted] a Burglary on the dwelling house of Sarah
Noyse widow in Boston. . . ." For this he was "to be branded
with the letter B on the forehead and have his Right eare Cutt
of[f]," pay the costs of the trial, and "make treble Resti-
tution to the party Injured & in defect thereof . . . be
sold to any of the English plantations."⁶⁵ Joseph Indian,
"on the 12th or 13th of February [1685] . . . did . . . mur-
der his squaw . . . and . . . drew her . . . on the ground
to the lime house . . . and left her there with severall
mortall wounds on her head. . . ." He was found guilty of
cruelty and sentenced to be "severely whipped with thirty
stripes" and to pay the costs of the trial or be sold out of
the country.⁶⁶ So the parade of "divillish" acts continues.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Records of the Court of Assistants, I, 294, entry for
March 4, 1685. See the Diary, I, lll, entry for December
14, 1685.

⁶⁵Records of the Court of Assistants, I, 283-284, entry
for September 18, 1685.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 295, entry for March 4, 1685.

⁶⁷For other such items in the pre-Provincial years see th

If the pious Sewall, in his place among the judges of the court,⁶⁸ was ever distressed by the proceedings, it was for the evidence they gave of the unregenerate state of natural men rather than for the severity of punishments suffered. After the execution of James Morgan, for example, he who killed Joseph Butcher "by running a spitt into his belly," Sewall wrote in his diary: "Thorsday, March 11 [1685/6]. Persons crowd much into the Old Meeting-House by reason of James Morgan [who would be on exhibit and provide the subject for the afternoon's discourse]. . . . Mr. Mather's Text was from Num. 35. 16. And if he smite him with an Instrument of Iron &c. Saw not Mr. Dudley at Meeting, nor Court; suppose he might not be in Town. Mr. Stoughton

Diary, I, 88, entry for July 19, 1685 (housebreaking); ibid., p. 103, entry for November 9, 1685 (abandoning of an infant); ibid., p. 123, entry for February 28, 1685/6 (infanticide); ibid., p. 172, entry for April 9, 1687 (trepanning); ibid., p. 183, entry for July 16, 1687 (drunken raving in the streets at night); ibid., p. 194, entry for November 3, 1687 (infanticide); ibid., p. 216, entry for June 9, 1688 (robbery and assault); ibid., p. 349, entry for September 25, 1691 (infanticide).

⁶⁸As always throughout his life, he was in faithful attendance at his judicial post. For his presence in court, see Records of the Court of Assistants, I, 254, entry for September 2, 1684; 266, entry for March 3, 1684; 273, entry for September 1, 1685; 287, entry for March 2, 1685; 296, entry for March 26, 1686; 297, entry for April 1, 1686; 298, entry for April 15, 1686; 300, entry for April 22, 1686. After this the record breaks off (Dudley's provisional government beginning in May), and when it begins again Andros has been overthrown and the year is 1689.

For a discussion of punishments in the period, see John Noble, "Notes on the Trial and Punishment of Crimes," Col. Soc. of Mass., Pubs., III (February, 1895), 51-56, where is presented a rather harrowing collection of cases involving branding, mutilation, whipping, and death by hanging. For entries

here. Morgan was turn'd off about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour past five. The day very comfortable. . . ."⁶⁹ Gentle hearted as he was, there was in him no trace of that sentimentality in the matter of punishment which has become common in more recent times. The philosophy was eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and stripes well laid on in the name of the Lord. When, as the story goes, a man at the whipping post prayed that the "scourgineer" might remember the Scriptural saying, "Blessed is the Merciful Man," he was told of that other Scriptural saying which declares, "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently."⁷⁰

When, under Dudley's provisional government, Sewall, who had been passed over in the new Council appointments,⁷¹ was asked to continue as a Justice of the Peace, he replied mildly that he would feel obliged if the matter were to "rest in a Nomination." Explaining his stand to Dudley, he wrote: "What station I formerly had in the Government

in the diary relating to such matters, see Vol. I, 86, 88, 308, entries for July 6 and 10, 1685 (whipping and branding), and for January 9, 1689 (the hanging of a pirate; it had been expected that several would be "turn'd off," and the fact that there was only one "gave much disgust to the people").

⁶⁹Diary, I, 125-126.

⁷⁰Ned Ward, A Trip to New England, p. 11.

⁷¹In the Council Records (at the Boston Statehouse, Archives Division), Vol. II, which covers the years of the Dudley and Andros regimes, Sewall's name does not appear. Dudley's designation was President. Deputy President was Stoughton. See Washburn, Sketches, pp. 94-98, 126, for structure and personnel of the Andros government.

of this place it hath pleased God to cast me out of. . . ."

There were, he said, plenty of good men, and "besides, my Mother [i.e., his mother-in-law] and wife are incessantly importunat with me to accept at least a part of that Retirement which God hath dismissed me to."⁷² When, in the fall of 1688, he decided to journey to England and aid Increase Mather, if possible, in obtaining restoration of Charter rights, he went as one without official ties of any kind. In the year of his absence, however, the Andros regime was overthrown in imitation of the revolution in England, and the Charter government re-established. His return to New England, therefore, was a triumphant return to office as well,⁷³ and when the Court of Assistants reconvened in December, 1689, he was once more in his familiar place.⁷⁴ The

⁷²Diary, II, 9*-10*, letter of June 2, 1686.

⁷³ On his return home he landed to the north of Boston and came down through Ipswich and Newbury. The journey assumed the nature almost of a triumphal progress. See the Diary, I, 308, entries for November 30 through December 5, 1689.

⁷⁴Records of the Court of Assistants, I, 302, entry for December 24, 1689. The record of his attendance between this time and the arrival of Phips and establishment of the new, Provincial government, is as follows: Vol. I, 305, entry for January 7, 1689/90; 321, entry for January 20, 1689/90; 322, entry for January 23, 1689/90; 327, entry for September 2, 1690; 336, entry for March 3, 1690/1; 345, entry for September 1, 1691; 359, entry for October 16, 1691, 361, entry for March[n.d.], 1691/2, last session of the court. See also General Court Records (Boston Statehouse, Archives Division), VI, 97, meeting of December 4, 1689, through XII, 339, meeting of May 26, 1692.

government thus re-established was as feeble, however, as the eighty-seven year old Bradstreet at its head. Like him, it was waiting to die; for the Charter struggle had been abandoned by the colony's agents in England in favor of an attempt to get such provision of rights as they could in its status as a royal province.

III

When, on May 14, 1692, Governor Phips arrived to establish the new government, he found the province, as he said, "miserably harassed with a most Horrible witchcraft or Possession of Devils which had broke in upon severall Townes, some scores of poor people were taken with preternaturall torments [;] some scalded with brimstone [;] some had pins stuck in their flesh [;] others hurried into the fire and water [;] and some dragged out of their houses and carried over the tops of trees and hills for many Miles together. . . ."⁷⁵ There had been instances of supposed witchcraft in the colony before,⁷⁶ and an occasional unfortunate had

⁷⁵ "Letters of Governor Phips," in Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, ed. George L. Burr (New York, 1914), p. 196. The letter is dated October 12, 1692, and is addressed to Increase Mather (?) in England.

⁷⁶ See Hutchinson, History, I, 150-151, 187-188, and II, 12-15. The first instance was in 1648, when Margaret Jones of Charlestown was charged with having, as Hutchinson says, "such a malignant touch, that if she laid her hands upon man, woman or child in anger, they were seized presently with deafness, vomiting, or other sickness. . . ." After her execution, her husband was seized on board a ship which was "observed to rowl on a sudden as if she would overset." After he was committed to prison the ship "ceased her rowling."

been brought to the gallows for what Cotton Mather described as "entring hellish Contracts with infernal Spirits."⁷⁷ But whereas previously those experiencing "preternaturall torments" had been content with the vilification of an old woman whose appearance and manner might suggest truth in their charges, the sufferers at Salem (principally eight, over-wrought, teen-age girls)⁷⁸ were making accusations by the score. Hearings and examinations had begun at the end of February under Magistrates Corwin and Hathorne of Salem with occasional assistance from a visiting colleague (Sewall, for example, had come to Salem on April 11 during the proceedings against Elizabeth Proctor and found it "awfull to see how the afflicted persons were agitated"),⁷⁹ and by the time Phips arrived three months later he found the jails "thronging" with the accused, many of them having "lyen long

On January 20, 1685/6, Sewall learned of "a maid at Woburn who 'tis feared is Possessed by an evil spirit" (Diary, I, 118).

⁷⁷Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcraft and Possessions (Boston, 1697), in Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, p. 96.

⁷⁸See Samuel G. Drake, Annals of Witchcraft (Boston, 1869), p. 187 ff. Only two of them could either read or write.

⁷⁹Diary, I, 358. His first entry relative to the Salem affair, it reads as follows: "Went to Salem where, in the Meeting-house, the persons accused of Witchcraft were examined; was a very great Assembly; 'twas awfull to see how the afflicted persons were agitated. Mr. Noyes pray'd at the beginning and Mr. Higginson concluded." In the margin are the words, apparently written after he came to realize the horror of what had taken place, "Vae, Vae, Vae, Witchcraft" (alas! alas! alas!). See William Woodward's Records of Salem Witchcraft (Roxbury, Mass., 1864), p. 101, where Sewall's name appears among the examiners for this day.

. . . at this hot season of the year."³⁰ Obviously something had to be done, and, "there being no Judicatores . . . yet established,"³¹ Phips determined on the emergency device, customary in England, of a Court of Oyer and Terminer (i.e., a court to hear and decide),³² named nine judges to sit on it (one of them being his recently appointed "Trusty and Welbeloved" Councillor, Samuel Sewall),³³ and departed on an expedition against the Indians in Maine. The work of this court in its five months of existence³⁴ was summarized by Robert Calef, a merchant of Boston and its angriest contemporary critic, in these words:

And now Nineteen persons having been hang'd, and some prest to death, and Eight more condemned, in all Twenty and Eight, of which a third part were Members of some of the Churches in N. England, and more than half of them of a good Conversation in general, and not one clear'd; About Fifty having confessed themselves to be Witches [it being the only means of their escaping the gallows], of which not one Executed; above an Hundred

³⁰ Council Records, II, 176, entry for May 27, 1692.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See Winfield S. Nevins, Witchcraft in Salem Village (Salem, 1916), p. 71.

³³ Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay (Boston, 1869-1922), I, 10.

³⁴ Diary, I, 367: "Oct. 26, 1692. A Bill is sent in about calling a Fast, and Convocation of Ministers, that may be led in the right way as to the Witchcrafts. The season and manner of doing it, is such, that the Court of Oyer and Terminer count

and Fifty in Prison [all later set free],⁸⁵ and above Two Hundred more accused [most of them later declared guiltless by the courts, the few judged guilty being pardoned by Phips],⁸⁶ the Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer comes to a period. . . .⁸⁷

themselves thereby dismissed. 29 Nos. and 33 yeas to the Bill."

⁸⁵Robert Calef, More Wonders of the Invisible World (London, 1700), in Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, p. 384: "The conclusion of the whole in the Massachusetts was, Sir William Phips, Governour being called home [to England; he left November 17, 1694, according to Sewall's Diary, I, 393], before he went he pardoned such as had been condemned. . . ."

⁸⁶At the first meeting of the regularly constituted Superior Court, convened at Salem on January 3, 1692/3 (see Superior Court Records [at the Suffolk County Courthouse, Boston], Vol. I, opening pages), the parade of the accused began. It continued at Charlestown, where the court met on January 31 (ibid., pp. 31-35); at Boston, where the court met on April 25 (ibid., pp. 36-52); and at Ipswich, where the court met in May (ibid., pp. 53-63). At the Boston meeting, John Alden, a friend of Sewall's charged with witchcraft (Sewall attended a fast held on his account while Alden was in Boston jail [Diary, I, 361, entry for July 20, 1692]) was "discharged by proclamation." Alden had the courage to describe the Salem witnesses as "wenches, playing their juggling tricks." At this same meeting, the judges, wiser by now in the ways of the delusion, threatened Mary Watkins with punishment for false reports against "Dame Swift." According to Calef, pp. 383-384, this caused her quickly to change her mind. Something of the delusion apparently remained when the court first met, however, for then three women were judged guilty and turned over to the "keeper of the gaole." When news of their reprieve reached the court during its meeting at Charlestown, Chief Justice Stoughton, one of the die-hards in the delusion, who never admitted his error in it, declared in a rage: "We were in a way to have cleared the land. . . ." (Calef, p. 382). After this, however, there were no more convictions.

⁸⁷More Wonders, p. 373. To Cotton Mather this book by Calef was something written by "a sort of Sadducee." It was a "vile Volume," an "abominable Bundle of Lies" written "with a Quill under a special Energy and Management of Satan, to damnify my precious Opportunities of Glorifying my Lord Jesus Christ." (See Burr's introduction to Calef in his Narr. of the Witchcraft Cases, pp. 293-294.) Increase Mather ordered the book

Many of the details of this summer of the Salem delusion, though frequently grisly and almost always fantastic, are as charged with drama and human interest as anything in our early history. Witness, for example, this exchange between the questioning judges and Susanne Martin, a woman whose wit and independence of spirit had long brought her under the imputation of witchcraft and were shortly now to cost her her life:

Magistrate. "Pray what ails these people?" (i.e., the afflicted).

Martin. "I don't know."

Magistrate. "But what do you think ails them?"

Martin. "I do not desire to spend my judgment upon it."

Magistrate. "Don't you think they are bewitched?"

Martin. "No. I do not think they are."

Magistrate. "Tell us your thoughts about them, then."

Martin. "No, my thoughts are my own when they are in, but when they are out they are another's. Their master--"

Magistrate. "Their master! Who do you think is their master?"

Martin. "If they be dealing in the black art, you may know as well as I."

Magistrate. "Well, what have you done toward this?"

Martin. "Nothing at all."

burned in Harvard Yard.

Calef's statement is in general agreement with that of the modern authority on the subject, C. W. Upham. See his Lectures on Witchcraft (Boston, 1832), p. 35.

Magistrate. "Why, 'tis you or your appearance." (The fatal spectral evidence, against which the defendant was obviously powerless.)

Martin. "I can't help it."

Magistrate. "Is it not your master? How comes your appearance to hurt these?"

Martin. "How do I know? He that appeared in the shape of Samuel, a glorified saint, may appear in any one's shape."³⁸

Susanna Martin was one of five led to Gallows Hill on the nineteenth of July. Even more obstinate was Giles Cory. Sewall tells his story: "Monday. Sept. 19, 1692. About noon, at Salem, Giles Corey was press'd to death for standing Mute [the "peine forte et dure" for one who refused to be tried]; much pains was used with him two days, one after another . . . but all in vain." Next day Sewall learned the wonderfully significant fact that "about 18 years agoe, he was suspected to have stampd and press'd a man to death, but was cleared. Twas not remembred till Anne Putnam was told of it by said Corey's Spectre the Sabbath-day night before the Execution."³⁹ The fate of the man inspired a popular ballad of the time which ran:

Giles Corry was a Wizzard strong,

A stubborn Wretch was he,

And fitt was he to hang on high

³⁸Upham, Lectures, pp. 82-83, cited.

³⁹Diary, I, 364, entry for September 19, 1692. Calef, p. 367, says: ". . . his Tongue being prest out of his Mouth, the Sheriff with his Cane forced it in again, when he was dying."

Upon the Locust Tree.

.
"Giles Corey," said the Magistrate,
"What hast thou heare to pleade
To these that now accuse thy Soule
Of Crimes and horrid Deed?"

Giles Corey--he said not a worde,
No single Worde spoke he;
"Giles Corey," Sayth the Magistrate,
"We'll press it out of thee."

They got them then a heavy Beam,
They laid it on his Breast.
They loaded it with heavie Stones,
And hard upon him prest.

"More Weight," now said this wretched Man,
"More Weight," again he cryed,
And he did no Confession make,
But wickedly he dyed.⁹⁰

He was hung on the sixteenth of September, and six days
later his wife, a woman whose very blamelessness of life
caused her to be "cried out upon," suffered the same end:

Dame Corey lived but six Dayes more,
But six Dayes more lived she,

⁹⁰Salem Papers (at the Essex County Courthouse, Salem, Mass.), I, n.p. Also in Drake's summary account of the victims in his Annals, pp. 187-208.

For she was hanged at Gallows Hill
Upon the Locust Tree.⁹¹

So the parade of victims continues, with a variety of detail that is continually fascinating: Sarah Good being told at the place of execution by Nicholas Noyes (Sewall's good friend, companion in his prophetic "bickerings," and sharer of his views on the evil of wigs) that she was a witch and knew it, replying, "You are a Liar. I am no more a Witch than you are a Wizzrā, and if you take away my Life, God will give you Blood to drink";⁹² this same Nicholas Noyes piously declaring after the executions on the twenty-second of September, "What a sad thing it is to see Eight Firebrands of Hell hanging there";⁹³ Mary Easty, one of the eight "Firebrands," a mild and meek woman, mother of seven children, petitioning the court, not for herself, "for I know I must die . . . but if it be possible, that no more innocent blood be shed, which cannot be avoided in the way . . . you go in";⁹⁴ George Jacobs being testified against by his

⁹¹Drake, loc. cit. During her trial the performing witnesses professed to feel themselves pinched when her hands were not held, and "when said Martha bit her lip severall of them were bitten" (Woodward, Records, I, 55-59).

⁹²Drake, loc. cit. At her trial her husband said that she "either was a witch or would be one very quickly." His reason for this statement was "her bad carriage to him." Witnesses declared that they had seen her with "a thing all over hairy," "riding abroad," "signing the book," etc. (Woodward, Records, I, 17-24.) She was hanged on the nineteenth of July.

⁹³Drake, loc. cit. Calef, More Wonders, p. 369.

⁹⁴Drake, loc. cit.

granddaughter, who too late acknowledged herself a liar;⁹⁵ Rebecca Nurse being found innocent by the jury (after a conference of ministers, made uneasy by the use of spectral evidence, recommended "exquisite caution" in the proceedings), the court refusing the verdict, and the jury finally bringing in the desired judgment of guilty;⁹⁶ Bridget Bishop dying protesting her innocence (as they all did)⁹⁷ and her accuser confessing his falsehood on his deathbed years later;⁹⁸ John Wil-

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid. The conference (held on June 15) concluded that the devil may "assume the shape of an innocent." It also decided that "touching" (of the sufferers by the accused, a procedure that invariably produced fresh paroxysms) was no infallible evidence. Its stand was equivocal, however, praising the efforts of the court and recommending speedy and vigorous prosecution. When the court convened again on June 28 there was no question, particularly in the mind of Chief Justice Stoughton, of how the court should proceed, and its proceedings were the old story. The recommendation of "exquisite caution" was meaningless when, as Cotton Mather had said and as all right thinking persons knew, "there was little occasion to prove the witchcraft, this being evident and notorious to all believers." (See Marion L. Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts [New York, 1949], pp. 154-155.)

⁹⁷ The alternatives were confession or death. "Sept. 21 [1692]. A petition is sent to Town in behalf of Dorcas Hoar, who now confesses: accordingly an order is sent to the Sheriff to forbear her Execution, notwithstanding her being in the Warrant to die to morrow. This is the first condemned person who has confess'd." (Diary, I, 162.) The eight hanged on September 22 were the last.

⁹⁸ Drake, loc. cit. John Louder, with whom she had "had differences for some yeares" claimed that he "saw a black thing . . . like a Munkey only the feete were like a Cock's feete." It jumped out of the window, and when he looked out, there, sure enough, was Bridget Bishop in the orchard. William Stacey testified that he passed her on the road and that afterwards "the cart fell downe." Besides this, he said, he had met with "severall other of her Pranks." (Woodward, Records, I, 161.)

lard, a deputy of the court in making arrests, becoming convinced of the innocence of the accused and being, therefore, immediately "cried out upon" himself, arrested, tried, condemned, and hanged.⁹⁹

Enough has been said to show, if that be necessary, that the story of the Salem witchcraft is a compelling one. It has often been told and cannot be entered upon again in any large way here. Surprisingly enough, it is impossible to establish Sevall's connection with the affair in any great detail. The diary provides no "secret history." It is almost as if its author were bemused by what was going on. When he does write of it, he does so with the dryness and impersonality of one whose emotional faculties have gone numb, or of one who does not allow himself to see and feel. On the twentieth of July, for example, the day after five witches had been hanged, in a letter to Edward Hull, his London agent, he wrote: "Wells [Maine] beat off the Enemy [French and Indians]. His Excellency [Phips] is going in person to beat up their Quarters. Are perplexed by witchcrafts; six persons have already been condemned and executed at Salem. Tis a very dry time."¹⁰⁰ On August 4 he notes being at Salem but says nothing of the fact that his friend and Harvard schoolfellow, the Reverend George Burroughs, was to go on trial next day under charge of "a confederacy with the

⁹⁹Drake, loc. cit.

¹⁰⁰Letter-Book, I, 32.

devil.¹⁰¹ What he writes about instead is "news of the desolation at Jamaica" caused by an earthquake.¹⁰²

Because the case of this George Burroughs is one with which Sewall had some rather close associations, it merits our particular attention. As already stated, the two men were friends and schoolfellows. Burroughs had graduated with the Harvard class of 1670, one year before Sewall.¹⁰³ In 1680 he accepted a call to the church at Salem but left two years later because of quarreling and division in the parish, an inheritance from the minister who had preceded him.¹⁰⁴ From Salem he went to Casco (Portland), Maine, and from there to Wells.¹⁰⁵ It was thus, presumably, as a respected visiting clergyman that he stopped for dinner with the Sewalls on November 18, 1685,¹⁰⁶ and that, again, five years later, he was invited to address the Wednesday night meeting of the South Church Society, where Sewall heard him speak on the Beatitudes.¹⁰⁷ On March 14, 1692, Sewall performed a banker's

¹⁰¹Salem Papers, I, n.p., entry for April 30, 1692. Also in Nevins, Witchcraft in Salem Village, p. 137.

¹⁰²Diary, I, 362. Nor does he emerge in any definite way from the general body of the witchcraft records. All that we can learn from them is that, his name being occasionally given as among the members of the court, he was present during some of the proceedings. Drake's comprehensive Annals, for example, contains not a single mention of Sewall's name.

¹⁰³Magnalia, II, 31.

¹⁰⁴Nevins, Witchcraft in Salem Village, pp. 131-134.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Diary, I, 106.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 340, entry for January 21, 1690/1.

function for him, giving him twenty-six pounds in exchange for a note on his brother, William Burroughs, in London.¹⁰⁸ Little more than a month later, on April 30, complaint against him was made by "Captain Jonathan Walcott and Sergeant Thomas Putnam of Salem Villabe . . . for themselves, and also for severall of their Neighbours. . . ." Immediately John Partridge, "field Marshal," was ordered to apprehend him and "convey him with all speed to Salem before the Magistrates there, to be Examened, he being suspected for a Confederacy with the devil. . . ." Partridge "delivered him to the Authority" at salem four days later, and on May 9 he was was examined by a panel of four judges: William Stoughton, Chief Justice and one of God's angrier men at the trials; John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin, Salem magistrates active in all the preliminary examinations; and Samuel Sewall.¹⁰⁹ In Sewall's diary there is silence.

The details of Burrough's examination provide an amazing illustration of the character of what was taking place at Salem. Among other things, he found it necessary to deny "that his house . . . was haunted." He had to admit, on the other hand that "there were toads."¹¹⁰ He denied "that he made his wife swear," but admitted that none of his children, save the eldest,

¹⁰⁸Account Book, entry for this date.

¹⁰⁹Salem Papers, I, n.p., entries for dates named. Also in Woodward, Records, II, 109.

¹¹⁰These and the details of the examination which follow are all taken from the first volume of Salem Papers, under entry of May 9, 1692. Also in Woodward, Records, II, 109-125.

was baptized, and that though he was "in full comunion at Roxbury" he hadn't partaken of the Lord's Supper since he could remember.¹¹¹ At one point his body was ordered examined for the tell-tale "teats" (whereat Satan's imps might feed), but the examiners found "nothing . . . but what is natural."¹¹² Thus far the examination had been in private, "none of the Bewitched being present." When he was brought into the room where they were, immediately "many (if not all the Bewitched) were grievously tortured," some of them to the point where, at last, "Authority ordered them to be taken away." When, at one point, he turned to look around, the malevolent power of his gaze "knockt down all (or most), of the afflicted which stood behind him." When some of the female sufferers were called upon to testify "they all fell into fits." Asked what he thought of all this, he replied that "it was an amazing and humbling Providence, but he understood nothing of it."

The testimony presented was in fitting correspondence to the antics of the afflicted. Two of Burroughs' wives having died, Susan Sheldon, one of those who "fell into fits," testified that they had appeared to her "in their winding sheets, and said that man killed them." Susan Sheldon and Ann Putnam

¹¹¹A curious point for one in the ministry and one which I am unable to explain. Cotton Mather proclaimed at Burroughs' execution that he was "no ordained Minister" (Calef, p. 361), which doubtless suggests the answer; but since, so far as I am aware, the Puritans did not permit unordained ministers in their pulpits, just what that answer is I do not know.

¹¹²The procedure was standard. See Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts, pp. 37-38.

said that he "brought the Book and would have them write."¹¹³ Sarah Bibber testified that he had "hurt her, tho she had not seen him personally before as she knew." Ann Putnam declared that she "saw the Apperishtion of a minister . . . and then presently he tould me that his name was George Burroughs," that he had "bewitched two wives to death," several children, and "a grate many souldiers," and that he was "above a witch he was a conjurer." She also saw the two wives, looking "as pail as a white wall." Mercy Lewis testified: "[He] . . . carried me to an exceeding high mountain and shewed me all the Kingdoms of the earth and tould me that he would give them all to me if I would writ in his book, and if I would not he would thro me down and brake my neck."

A particular feature of the testimony in the case concerned Burroughs' feats of strength, which, as Cotton Mather pointed out, the "learned divine," John Gaule (Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts [London, 1646]), had designated as one of the "more certain signs" of devilish confederacy, in the category of "Prodigious Pranks or Feats."¹¹⁴ Samuel Webber said he had been present when Burroughs "put his fingers into the Bun of a Barrell of Molases and lifted it up, and Carryed it Round." Simon Willard tes-

¹¹³ Referring, of course, to the Devil's Book. Sir Robert Filmer, a noted lawyer of the day, held the opinion that "the Devil could not be lawfully summoned" to bring in his Book (Drake, pp. 207-208, cited).

¹¹⁴ Wonders, p. 219.

tified that he had seen him "hold out [a] . . . gun with one hand" which he, Simon Willard, couldn't sight with two. John Brown "testified about a bbl Cyder," and several others "about his great Strength and the Gun."

A final example of the kind of evidence given in the hearings is the deposition of Benjamin Hutchinson. Because of what it so clearly and sadly suggests about the kind of world in which Sewall lived, it deserves quoting at length. "Benjamin hushension," it reads,

said that one [i.e., "on"] the 21st aprell 92. abegeral wiluams said that there was a lettell black menester that Lived at Casko bay he told me so and said that he had kild 3 wifes two for himself and one for mister Losen and that he had made nine Weches in this place and said that he could hold out the hevest gun that is in Casko bay with one hand which no man can .[?]. hold out with both hands that this is about a ll a clock an I ask her where about this lettell man stood said she Just where the Cart wheell went along I had a 3 graned irne fork in my hand and I thru it where she said he stud and she presently fell in a letel feet ["fit"] and when it was over Said she you have toren his coot for I herd it tare wher abouts said I one ["on"] won side said she, then we come into the house. [?] . Ingersall and I went into the great roome and abigle come in and said ther he stands I said wher wher and presently draed my rapyer but he emmedetly was gon as she said then said she

ther is a gray catt then I said wher abouts doth she stand ther said she thar then I struck with my ranyer than she fell in a fitt and when it was over she said you kild hur and immedatly Sary good com and carried hur away, this was about 12 a clock. The same day after lecttor ["lecture"] in the said Ingersalls chamber abigail williams mary walcat said that goody hobs of topsell bitt mary walcot by the foot then both falling into a fit as soone as it was over the said william hobs and his wife goe both of them a longe the table the said hucheson tooke his rapier stabeld gooddy hobs one the side as abigaill williams and mary walcot said the said abigaill and mar[y] said the roome was full of them then the said hucheson & Ely putnam stabeld with their raperres at a ventor ["venture"] then said mary and abigell you have killed a greet black woman of Stonintown and an Indian that come with her for the flore is all covered with blood then the said mary and abigaill looked out of dorees and said the[y] saw a greet company of them one a hill & there was threé of them lay dead the black woman and the indian and one more that the[y] knew not. This being about. 4. a clock in the afternoon.

It was on the basis of such evidence that Cotton Mather, symbol of clerical interest and authority at the trials, was moved to express the wish that he "had never known the name of this man." ¹¹⁵ Convinced that Burroughs "had the promise of

¹¹⁵Wonders, p. 215. Mather terms him "Head Actor at some of their Hellish Rendezvouzes."

being a King in Satans Kingdom, now going to be Erected,"¹¹⁶ the testimony of a man like Benjamin Hutchinson was as a gun in his hands. But it was a gun with an unexpected power of recoil, for when, as soon happened, it became apparent that falsehood and delusion rather than toads and little black men were the active agents in the affair, and that the only real sufferers had been the presumed "witches," both clerical authority and the invisible world for which it stood were thrown in doubt. The ignorance and credulity of Salem were, by their very excess, an encouragement to the more rational spirit of the next century.¹¹⁷

Burroughs with five others came up for formal trial on the fifth of August, but as in the earlier trials, the guilt of the parties was assumed to have been established by what had been shown in the preliminary examinations. A review of the evidence, with the addition of anything new that might have turned up since the earlier hearing, and deliberation by the jury were formalities quickly gotten through. Five of the six were condemned, Elizabeth Proctor, wife of John Proctor, one of the five, being let off on a plea of pregnancy.¹¹⁸ Sewall, who was on the bench, wrote in his diary entry for the day, as we have already noted, about the destruc-

¹¹⁶Ibid., Burr's note, citing a letter written by Mather on the day of Burroughs' trial.

¹¹⁷See the comment in Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, pp. 289, 291.

¹¹⁸Calef, More Wonders, p. 360.

tion caused by an earthquake at Jamaica; not a word of the man he had known so long, now about to hang.

Calef's description of Burroughs' execution reads as follows:

Mr. Burroughs was carried in a Cart with the others, through the streets of Salem to Execution; when he was upon the Ladder, he made a Speech for the clearing of his Innocency, with such Solemn and Serious Expressions, as were to the Admiration of all present; his Prayer (which he concluded by repeating the Lord's Prayer [a supposedly difficult thing for a witch to do]) was so well worded, and uttered with such composedness, and such (at least seeming) fervency of Spirit as was very affecting, and drew Tears from many (so that it seemed to some, that the Spectators would hinder the Execution). The accusers said the black Man stood and dictated to him; as soon as he was turned off, Mr. Cotton Mather, being mounted upon a Horse, addressed himself to the People, partly to possess the People of his guilt; saying that the Devil has often been transformed into an Angel of Light; and this did somewhat appease the People, and the Execution went on; when he was cut down, he was dragged by the Halter to a Hole, or Grave, between the Rocks, about two foot deep, his Shirt and Breeches being pulled off, and an old pair of Trousers of One Executed put on his lower parts, he was so put in, together with Willard

Diary Pages during the Witchcraft

1692.
177

Sept. 14th 1692. This day the Gent. Genl
Major Phillips, Mr. Nichol, Capt. Lynde
& my self went to Woburn. Advers
ye Inhabitants at ye Town Meeting to select
a Minister, and if could not otherwise
agree, should first have a Town Meeting
to decide where ye Meetinghouse should
be set: many say Whitneys Hill
would be a convenient place.

Dec. full. This day George Burroughs, John
Willard, Mr. Procter, Nathl Carrier &
Witchcraft. George Jacobs were executed at Salem
a very great number of Spectators be-
ing present. Mr. Cotton Mather was
there, Mr. Sims, Hale, Noyes, Chivers
&c. All of y^e said they were innocent
Carrier & all. Mr. Mather says they all
died by a Righteous Sentence. Mr. Bur-
roughs by his speech, Prayer & protesta-
-tion of his Innocence, did much move un-
-thinking persons, with occasions of speaking
hardly concerning his being executed.

Aug²⁵. Fast at ye old Church respecting
ye Witchcraft, Drought &c.

Simon
Gates mo.
Dies at
muddy River

Aug²⁷. At 4 p^m Col^l. Infienden
comes in & tells ye sad News of Simon
Gates being dead of ye ~~old~~ ~~Witchcraft~~ fever
died yesterday & is buried to day. I
heard not a word of it, & so neither
saw him sick; nor was at his Buriall.

ye good grant ye ye body & her
children may be also ready.

Thursday, Sept^r 1. 1692. Major John
Richard marries M^{rs}. Anne Winthrop
fore W^m Stoughton Esq^r ye Gent^l Co
at ye House of Indiam^{er} W^mher.

Sept^r 4th. Major Richard accompanies his B^r
to our Meeting, morning, & Evening -
Mr. Randolph came to town last Friday.

Monday; Sept^r 19. 1692. At Salem
Giles Corey was pressed to death, for standing out
much pain was used with him two days, one of
another by ye Court & Capt Gardner of Nantuck
who had been of his acquaintance: but all in
vain. On 20. Now I hear from Salem that a
18 new s^{er}ge, he was suspected to have stampt
and pressed a man to death, but was cleared.
not remembered the Anne Putnam was tod of
by A Corey's s^{er}ge of Sabbath-day night
before ye Execution.

Sept^r 20. 1692. The Susan brings in a
French Prize, of abt 300. Tuns. Laden wth
Claret, wth wine, Brandy, Salt, Green
Paper &c.

Sept^r 21. A petition is sent to Town in
half of Dorcas Hoar, who now confesses: at
doubtly an order is sent to ye Sheriff to forward
her Execution, notwithstanding her being
ye warrant to die so narrow. This is of his
N. Condemned person who has confessed.

Sept^r 21. Mr^r ye Sister St. Sewall came
to us.

and Carryer, one of his Hands and his Chin, and a Foot of one [of] them being left uncovered.¹¹⁹

Sewall, probably because he did not feel Calef's indignation, reports the event less vividly: "This day George Burrough, John Willard, John Procter, Martha Carrier and George Jacobs were executed at Salem, a very great number of Spectators being present. Mr. Cotton Mather was there, Mr. Sims, Hale, Noyes, Chiever, &c. All of them said they were innocent, Carrier and all. Mr. Mather says they all died by a Righteous Sentence. Mr. Burrough by his Speech, Prayer, protestation of his Innocence, did much move unthinking persons, which occasions their speaking hardly concerning his being executed."¹²⁰ In the margin of this diary entry are the words "Dolefull Witchcraft," entered at a time when Sewall had become sadly aware that "unthinking" was a term less appropriate for those who had been moved by Burroughs' protestations than it was for such as Cotton Mather and himself.

That the deaths of Burroughs and his fellow victims had indeed been a doleful thing was a conclusion that all but the most obdurate soon felt obliged to accept. As the number of accusations grew to include more and more persons of good reputation and upright life, even to the wife of the governor himself, it became apparent even to Cotton Mather that "many unsearchable cheats were interwoven into the . . .

¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 360-361.

¹²⁰Diary, I, 363, entry for August 19, 1692.

business" and that, while there were undoubtedly witches, "a good name, obtained by a good life, should not be lost by meer spectral accusations."¹²¹ The Special Court of Oyer and Terminer was disbanded in October,¹²² and when the new, regularly constituted Superior Court met at Salem on January 3, "they cleared the accused as fast as they tried them," as Cotton Mather remarked, ". . . and the land had peace restored unto it."¹²³ When some of the jury asked what account should be taken of spectral evidence, the answer they received from the court was, "As much as Chips in Wort," or of less than no worth.¹²⁴

But peace to the land was not peace to the minds of all its people; for innocent men had hanged, and even after the passage of years a conscientious judge like Sewall would find himself, as Whittier said, remembering

When he sat on the bench of the witchcraft courts,
With the laws of Moses and Hale's Reports,
And spake, in the name of both, the word
That gave the witch's neck to the cord. . . .

¹²¹Magnalia, I, 212.

¹²²Diary, I, 367., entry for October 26, 1692.

¹²³Magnalia, loc. cit.

¹²⁴Calef, More Wonders, p. 382.

¹²⁵"The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall," Works, I, 210-211. Sewall's annual fast, of which Whittier writes in this poem, and which Parrington, p. 96, records as fact, is a myth. He kept numerous fasts, in some of which the witchcraft undoubtedly figured, but there was no annual day. Duff, pp. 27, 29-30, not only accepts this particular myth, he embellishes it with

One may imagine the good man's unhappiness and discomfort when, on August 12, 1696, Mr. Melyen, "upon a slight occasion," as Sewall says, "spoke to me very smartly about the Salem Witchcraft: in discourse he said, if a man should take Beacon hill on's back, carry it away; and then bring it and set it in its place again, he should not make any thing of that,"¹²⁶ referring, of course, to evidence used in the trial of George Burroughs. A month later, at a "day of prayer in the East end of the Town-House," the Governor, his Council, and members of the Assembly attending, Mr. Morton preached and "Spake smartly at last about the Salem Witchcrafts, and that no order had been suffer'd to come forth by Authority to ask Gods pardon."¹²⁷ If his conscience had slept before, the words of Mr. Morton evidently brought it awake, for when, shortly after, he had his son Sam recite for him some verses from the twelfth chapter of Matthew, the seventh verse ("If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless") "did awfully bring to mind the Salem Tragedie."¹²⁸ And when the government, in response, no doubt,

his own astonishing fabrications. He pictures Sewall as driven by his conscience "into the seclusion of an anchorite," choosing "to sacrifice everything . . . and withdraw in penitence from the society of his fellows." He doesn't know how long this period of seclusion lasted, but "we are told," he says, that "when he emerged . . . his countenance . . . had so changed that his best friends could hardly recognise him."

¹²⁶Diary, I, 431, entry for August 12, 1696.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 433, entry for September 16, 1696.

¹²⁸Ibid., entry for December 24, 1696.

to proddings such as that of Mr. Morton, proclaimed January 14, 1696/7, as a day of solemn fasting and prayer for what might have been done amiss "in the late tragedy, raised among us by Satan and his instruments, through the awful judgment of God," Sewall determined to bring before the afternoon congregation at the South Church a statement confessing his guilt and asking their prayers. As Mr. Willard, the pastor, passed by where he was sitting, Sewall handed the note to him, "standing up at the reading of it, and bowing when finished." The statement read as follows:

Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the Guilt contracted upon the opening of the late Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order for this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and shame of it, Asking pardon of men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that sin and all other his sins; personal and Relative: And according to his infinite Benignity, and Sovereignty, Not Visit the sin of him, or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land: But that He would powerfully defend him against all Temptations to Sin, for the future; and vouchsafe him the efficacious, saving Conduct of his Word and Spirit.

¹²⁹Diary, I, 445. The statement appears with the entry for January 15. See also the accompanying editors' note. Duff,

Much has been made of this act of Sewall's. G. E. Ellis, for example, asks: "Did ever a judge in Christendom, even the wisest and best of them, ever do that, before or since?";¹³⁰ and Professor Kittredge finds "no action like[it] . . . in the witch records of the world."¹³¹ It should be remembered, however, that though Sewall was alone among the judges in what he did, the Salem jurors asked public forgiveness in the same year, saying they feared they had been "sadly deluded and mistaken";¹³² and several of the ministers involved, including the notorious Mr. Paris of Salem, also publicly recanted.¹³³ Furthermore, the practice of "putting up a bill"

p. 31, provides, as usual, an imaginative variation of the episode, saying: ". . . he had written and brought with him a formal confession and prayer which he attempted several times to recite aloud in the face of the assembled congregation but, his emotion overmastering him as we are told, he was obliged to hand the paper up to the presiding clergyman who thereupon read it from the pulpit." He then adds the statement, completely without foundation of fact, that Sewall intended at this time "to resign his judicial office, of which, in consequence of what had happened, he now felt himself to be unworthy, and though in the end he was induced to forego that decision he never appeared in public again save in so far as his duties required."

¹³⁰An Address on the Life and Character of Chief-Justice Samuel Sewall (Boston, 1885), p. 12.

¹³¹Witchcraft in Old and New England (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), pp. 365-366.

¹³²Calef, More Workers, pp. 337-338.

¹³³Clifford K. Shipton, "The New England Clergy of the Glacial Age," Col. Soc. of Mass., Pubs., XXXII (December, 1933), p. 45. It may be noted that the individual recantations were ultimately followed (on October 11, 1711) by a public "act to reverse the attainders of George Burroughs and others for Witchcraft," and some measure of financial restitution to the families of the victims. The amount voted was 578 pounds and 12 shillings, the survivors of Burroughs being allowed fifty

was very common. Sewall had done it dozens of times on occasions of particular joy or sorrow. When he put up his bill for the witchcraft, moreover, it was on a day which, by public proclamation, was one of humiliation for the entire colony. This is not to say that what he did was insignificant. If it was not the unique and noble thing it has generally been made out to be, it was still an act deserving honor and respect; for it was done in honesty and simplicity of spirit, without either false humility or morbid self-abasement. If his original acquiescence in the events at Salem speaks poorly of the intellectual character of the man, this later act just as surely speaks well of the moral. In the superstitious credulity of Salem he was of his age; in the South Church confession of guilt he was himself, and the merit of it is his own.

If history shows anything, it is that men act under force of events and within the limits of what they know. The Puritan "knew" that the Bible was a literal, word for word, revelation of divine truth and, therefore, a sufficient lamp for men's feet. The Bible said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."¹³⁴ True, it didn't say exactly what a witch was, but God's desire for their elimination was very plain, and everybody "knew" they were somewhere around in busy pursuit

pounds. (Salem Papers, III, n.p., entry for October 11, 1711; Woodward, Records, II, 216, 221.) This was the amount asked for in a letter addressed to the General Court by Burroughs' children, in which they declared: ". . . we were left a parcell of small Children of us helpless & a mother in law with one Small Child of her owne. . . . Our fathers small Estate was most of it lost and Expended and we Scattered. . . ." (Salem Papers, III, n.p., n.d.)

¹³⁴Exodus, 22: 18.

of the devil's business. Those who didn't "know" this were, as Cotton Mather said, "sensual Sadducees" willing "to credit nothing but what they see and feel," a mental habit which, as he quite rightly observed, "does much to settle men in Atheism."¹³⁵ What was a man like Sewall to do? To no man was the "froward spirit of Sadducism" more repellent or strange. Faced with the stories of demon possession which, to quote his friend Mather once more, "hundreds of the most sober people in [the]

¹³⁵Memorable Providences, p. 95. John Wesley made the same observation, and Blackstone, writing three quarters of a century after Salem, said: "To deny the possibility--nay, the actual existence--of witchcraft and sorcery is at once flatly to contradict the revealed Word of God in various passages in both the Old and New Testaments" (Ellis, Puritan Age, p. 32, cited). Belief in witchcraft is, of course, by no means dead. Nor is such belief to be casually equated with illiteracy and ignorance. In an astonishing book by Montagu Summers, for example, called The Geography of Witchcraft (New York, 1927), a study which is quite as elaborate in its learning and scholarly apparatus as that of Professor Kittredge, we read of the Salem affair as follows: "There can be no doubt that at Salem the traditional rites of the hideous black worship were precisely observed, allowing, of course, that it was a Protestant communion and not Holy Mass which was the model of their hellish liturgy. These practices must have been carefully handed down and taught to the New England representatives of the witch society." Mr. Summers feels that the various witnesses could not possibly have invented with such exactness "the details of these old occult ceremonies and the ancient cryptic rites from their own imaginations. They had obviously been present more than once at the witch sacrament, and assisted at the Sabbat orgy. That a coven of witches did exist in Salem is proved beyond all question, and it is, I think, equally certain that George Burroughs was the grand-master. . . ." (Page 343.) He believes that it is equally plain, however, that the majority of those executed were innocent. In the introduction to his work he anticipates and destroys all rebuttal by remarking that his attitude is "doubtless open to criticism, as indeed are all points of view."

country . . . know . . . to be true,"¹³⁶ his course of action was fixed before he ever entered the Salem court.

One thing he never did do, it should be noted, was to abandon belief in witches. What troubled him most, with the rest of the court and the colony generally, was the problem of spotting them. The Bible didn't say how to do it, and the guidance of the best authorities, such as Sir Thomas Hale, Joseph Glanville, and Michael Dalton,¹³⁷ had delivered justice, as was all too painfully clear, into the hands of "unsearchable cheats."¹³⁸ The situation was a baffling one, "raised," as the fast day order said, ". . . by Satan and his instruments, through the awful judgment of God." The attempted pursuit of a righteous end, in other words, had been used by God to give victory to the devil. The feeling called forth has been described as tragic,¹³⁹ but in a strict sense

¹³⁶ Magnalia, I, 207.

¹³⁷ Particularly the last. His Country Justice, says Nevins, Witchcraft, xviii, note, "gave the method of procedure in detail, and with clearness, and it had the approval of all the great legal minds of England." At Salem, he says, "the instructions were followed with scrupulous exactness." (See also, Kittredge, p. 364, and Starkey, p. 37.) The same outrages in court procedure that astonish us at Salem are to be seen in the report of trials in 1665 before the noted Justice Hale in England (see Nevins, appendix D). Glanville, in his Considerations About Witchcraft (1681), invited the most extreme credulity by stating that "the more absurd and unaccountable the actions seem, the greater confirmation are they" (Nevins, xx-xxi, cited).

¹³⁸ Magnalia, I, 212.

¹³⁹ William E. Rowley, "The Puritan's Tragic Vision," New England Quarterly, XVII (September, 1944), 415, remarks: "Their error, conceived conscientiously, and now ironically shown, by God, to be fanatical, confused them in its subtlety, so that at once they thought of it as a tragedy and bore it as a cross."

the word does not apply. For the Puritan knew that all things were in the hands of God and that somehow, however inscrutably, they were being shaped to his glorious ends.¹⁴⁰ The feeling was less one of tragedy than of confusion and dismay: confusion because they found themselves obviously betrayed in what they had supposed was a righteous cause, and dismay that God should have chosen to express his displeasure by this "awful judgment." Because their belief both in God's providence and Satan's invisible world remained unshaken, the most significant immediate result of Salem was a practical one. It had provided a rude but effective lesson in the uses of evidence. The error it seemed to point to was, so to speak, procedural rather than basic. After it there were no more examinations for "Devil's marks," no more "touch tests" or "spectre evidence"; though the invisible world remained intact, the attempt to give demonstration of it in court would not again be attempted in Massachusetts.

and were able to gain from the experience both the dignity and wisdom which purgation produces and the strength which Christian discipline creates through humiliation."

¹⁴⁰ See Miller, New England Mind, pp. 38-42, for his discussion of the Puritan's "cosmic optimism." In a passage peculiarly appropriate to the Salem ordeal, he says:

The indestructible optimism contained within the grim Puritan creed is apparent in the theoretical explanation of affliction. Seeming contradictions between the creator's goodness and the creation's visible evils necessitated no denial of either; they merely reinforced the distinction between God's revealed and secret wills. Providence was the expression of His inner determination, and though the lesson of some "divine providences" could be read with ease, the teaching of others remained obscure. God frequently causes things to fall out contrary to what seems to us fitting and proper, contrary even to His own uttered word.

It is tempting and easy to sit in judgment on the mistakes of history, holding up those who made them to the damaging light of knowledge they did not possess. The Puritans, of course, are a most attractive target for our wisdom and abuse, and especially those who played leading parts in the witchcraft delusion. James Savage, for example, may be right in saying that the judges "served, if they did not worship the Devil, and took him to be their God, whether they signed his Book or not," and that had his Book been brought into court, the names of more than one of them "would have flared in the sapphire blaze."¹⁴¹ But aside from whatever relief or satisfaction one derives from voicing judgments of this kind, it would scarcely seem to be a rewarding exercise. More potentially profitable is the realization that every generation has its Salems, every generation its search for witches, whether of the theological or political variety--our own with the rest. The fact that Sewall and his colleagues proceeded wrongly and that innocent men died therefor is a fact of no particular significance by itself. What is worth noting is that the motivations and procedures of Salem (with, of course, certain technical variations) are quite as alive and destructive today as they were in the summer of 1692.

Sewall's attitude concerning the abortive expedition against the French at Port Royal in May, 1707, is illustrative. "Twas," he said, "a burden God in his providence had laid on us. . . ." (Diary, II, 205, entry for December 6, 1707.)

¹⁴¹Drake, Annals, pp. 207-208, cited.

IV

The colony was not inclined to reprobate individual judges of the Salem affair, considering rather that they had but shared in the general delusion. The chief justice, for example, intransigent William Stoughton, retained his post in the newly constituted Superior Court of the province and was later Lieutenant Governor for many years, in which capacity he was for considerable periods (1694-97, 1701-2) acting head of the government. Sewall himself, one of the twenty-eight original councillors named in the Province Charter,¹⁴² was re-elected with unbroken regularity over a period of thirty-three years, declining at last to serve after his re-election in 1725.¹⁴³ One of the five original justices of the Superior

¹⁴²Acts and Resolves, I, 10-12, where the charter is given. Though the number of councillors was thus quite large, seven with the Governor constituted a quorum, and the Council Records, II-VIII (1692-1727), show about half the full number generally in attendance at meetings. The original council was named in the charter, but re-election of old members and election of new ones lay with the General Court, which was made up of the Governor, Council, and Deputies.

¹⁴³Diary, III, 357, entry for May 27, 1725. Council Records, VIII, show May 15, 1725, as the last meeting he attended. The Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts (Boston, 1919-50) show his annual election from 1715 (the year in which this record was begun) to the time of his retirement ten years later: I, 78, entry for May 30, 1716; I, 179, entry for May 29, 1717; II, 2-3, entry for May 26, 1718; II, 111-112, entry for May 27, 1719; II, 229-230, entry for May 25, 1720; III, 5, entry for May 31, 1721; IV, 2, entry for May 30, 1722; V, 5, entry for May 29, 1723; VI, 5, entry for May 27, 1724; VI, 217, entry for May 26, 1725, when he was re-elected and declined to serve.

The diary has frequent references to the results of these elections: e.g., Vol. I, 427, entry for May 27, 1696 (he is well toward the top of the balloting but is concerned that he has "fallen 7 since last year"); II, 256, entry for May 25,

Court of the Province appointed and approved on December 7, 1692 (the Court of Cyer and Terminer having been dissolved not quite two months before),¹⁴⁴ his commission to act in this office was renewed by a succession of five different royal governors over a period of thirty-six years, at the end of which time (1728) he was granted "a Dismission" from his judicial duties so that he might, as he says, "prepare for the entertainments of another world."¹⁴⁵ During the last

1709 (he receives the most votes); II, 312, entry for May 30, 1711 ("Election as last year, save that Col. Noyes is put in the room of Col. Foster, deceased." The tradition of continuity in office was strong from the first days of the colony. As Washburn, Sketches, p. 16, says: "The last incumbent . . . was always the first to be nominated, and the elections consequently, generally, resulted in continuing the former offices from year to year."); II, 385, entry for May 27, 1713 (one of the more attractive entries of this kind, it reads: "102 Voters at first: Mr. Addington had all but his own, 101. Col. Hutchinson and I had 97. each. But tis to be lamented that Major General Winthrop had but 46. and was left out. . . . Thus Mr. Winthrop is sent into Shade and Retirem't while I am left in the Whirling Dust, and Scorching Sun.

So Falls that stately Cedar! whilst it stood
It was the truest Glory of the Wood."

Sewall's epitaph was premature, for as the Diary, II, 392, shows, on August 6 Winthrop was returned to the council after the death of Col. Hunt.)

¹⁴⁴Diary, I, 370-371, entry for December 6, 1692. Council Records, II, 206, entry for December 7, 1692. For the first time the executive and judicial branches of the government were separated; but only in theory, for members of the council frequently served as judges also. Since the new charter provided that judges should be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Council, Sewall, as the record shows, was present at the meeting of the Council which approved his nomination as judge. He received his formal commission on December 22 (Council Records, II, 212).

¹⁴⁵Letter-Book, II, 247, letter to Governor Burnet dated July 29, 1728. He had attempted to resign two years before, but the then acting Governor William Dummer desired he "woul

ten years of this time he served as Chief Justice, the Lord having appointed him with these "fresh oyls" on April 16, 1718.¹⁴⁶ For thirteen years (1715-23), also, he served as Judge of Probate for Suffolk County (Boston and vicinity).¹⁴⁷

It is impossible to form as complete a judgment as one might like of Sewall's character as a judge during these years because the court records for the Province, like those for the Colony, give only verdicts, nothing of opinions or of the kind of reasoning employed.¹⁴⁸ The recorded hearings of the witchcraft court are a notable exception. What Sewall's qualifications were for the role of judge we already have some idea. How much he improved those qualifications

hold" until word of a new governor came from England.

The tradition of continuity in office which applied to the office of Councillor applied even more definitely to that of judge. Washburn, p. 138, says: "The tenure of the office of Judge was not fixed by the charter, but it practically became durante bene placito. . . ."

¹⁴⁶Diary, III, 183, entry for April 25, 1718. He took his oath on this day, but the appointment had been made by Governor Shute nine days before (Council Records, V, 551, entry for April 16, 1718; Diary, III, 181, same date).

¹⁴⁷For his appointment on December 9, 1715, see Council Records, V, 596.

¹⁴⁸See Benjamin F. Wright, American Interpretations of Natural Law (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), p. 124. No regular series of judicial opinions appeared, according to Mr. Wright, until 1789. He relates this absence of established opinion to reliance by the judges "upon their interpretation of the law of nature, or, as it was more often called in England, the law of reason," which must of necessity have followed. Mathews, "The Results of the Prejudice against Lawyers," p. 76, dealing with the same point, remarks that because of the absence of recorded opinion "no law was created . . . down to the time of the American Revolution." Lechford, Plaine Dealing, p. 85, made the early comment: "Seldom is there any matter of record, Saving the verdict. . . ."

through legal study is a question. Washburn states confidently that he had followed "a very respectable course of study" and that "so far as we may judge from the few records that are left . . . was altogether better read in the principles of the common law than any other judge upon the bench."¹⁴⁹

The trouble with this statement is that the evidence is hardly such as to warrant its being either so favorable or so definite. It is true that on several occasions (the writer has noted three)¹⁵⁰ he mentions having ordered or received various legal works, sufficient in number to warrant his being credited with an attempt to build up a law library.¹⁵¹ The extent, however, to which he became master as well as possessor of these materials is a more dubious question. If he had indeed "followed a respectable course of study," it is remarkable that in the extensive records he kept during the more than forty years that he sat in the highest courts of both Colony and Province he should have made as few references

¹⁴⁹Sketches, p. 60.

¹⁵⁰ During his visit to England he bought "Shephard's Abridgment of the Laws" (Diary, I, 285, entry for July 26, 1689); and on September 29, 1716, he received "the Statutes at large in Eight Volumes" (Diary, III, 105). More impressive is the order he placed with Thomas Newton, bound for London in 1705 (Letter-Book, I, 310, letter dated March 10, 1704/5). It reads as follows: "When you come there, Buy for me all the statutes at large made since Mr. Keeble's Edition [Keeble's Statutes] 1684 . . . the Register [Registrum de Cancellaria], Crompton [Jurisdiction of divers Courts], Bracton, Britton, Fleta, Mirror [Horn's miroir des Justices]; as many of them as you can get in Latin or English; Heath's Pleadings, Sir Edward Coke's Reports." (Material in brackets is the editors'.)

¹⁵¹ Wright, Literary Culture, p. 174. Wright's conclusion is accepted by Morris, Studies, p. 174.

as he did which would indicate a knowledge of legal authorities.¹⁵² It is probably not without significance that when he went to visit his judicial colleague, Mr. Danforth, at his home in Cambridge, Danforth bade him look on top of the cupboard and tell what he saw. "I told him," says Sewall, "I saw there a Law-book, Wingate on the Common Law. He said he would lend it me. . . . Again when took leave after prayer, He said he lent me that Book not to wrap up but to read. . . ."¹⁵³ Perhaps it is unfair to infer from this that his reputation as a legal student was a trifle shaky. The incident is not alone, however, in suggesting that he remained of the old Charter mentality, content for the most part with the belief that the Holy Scriptures supplemented by his own "right reason" provided a sufficient guide for the determination of right.¹⁵⁴

To say this is not so much to belittle Sewall the judge as it is to characterize him. It is true that the consequen-

¹⁵² I have noted only two. Once he cites Dalton on the question of "when an officer might break open a House" (Diary, II, 125, entry for March 3, 1704/5); another time, when carters Thomas Trowbridge and John Winchester gave offence to Governor Dudley by their refusal to get off the road and let his chariot pass, Sewall plead their case and cited "Coke's pleas of the Crown" (ibid., p. 149, entry for December 14, 1705).

¹⁵³ Diary, I, 419, entry for January 13, 1695/6.

¹⁵⁴ This is the conclusion of Ellis, An Address, p. 17, who says, after duly noting his importing of law books: "It may be said of him that, 'simple truth was his utmost skill.' He had an awful sense of the supreme law of righteousness, as set forth in the two great commandments. The Scriptures furnished a sufficient code to one whose heart was pure and whose eye was single. He followed the methods of natural

ces of an approach to law based primarily on an unsophisticated respect for the word of God were sometimes unfortunate, and that Sewall's career demonstrated such consequences has already been shown. It is also true, however, that the picture which we are able to form of him as a judge is, on the whole, an attractive one. When, after thirty years on the bench he expressed the hope that "as the great Judge (for whose sake I was named) said, I may say, Whose Ox have I taken?--and that Partiality or Bribery, cannot be laid to my Charge,"¹⁵⁵ he was expressing that for which his career had given simple and admirable illustration. Combined with unquestioned honesty of intent were qualities of kindness ("the Word" permitting) and even, occasionally, of liberality. References to judicial positions taken by him are few, but those few are revealing. His life-long concern for the welfare of the Indian and the Negro expressed itself in a note to his fellow judge, Addington Davenport, who was on his way to the trial of Samuel Smith of Sandwich for killing his Negro: "The poorest Boys and Girls within this Province," he writes, "such as are of the lowest condition; whether they be English, or Indians, or Ethiopians, They have the same Right to Religion and Life, that the Richest Heirs have." Those who would deprive them of this right "attempt the bom-

equity, trying to bring simple common sense to bear. . . . He seems to have acted on the conviction that it is not for men . . . 'to make,' but to discover what are the laws already put in force by the Divine Legislator, and to give them recognition."

¹⁵⁵Letter-Book, II, 90, letter to Governor Shute dated February 11, 1717/18.

barding of HEAVEN; and the Shells they throw, will fall down upon their own heads."¹⁵⁶ On another occasion he expressed his opposition to the law of primogeniture as "contrary to . . . the Law of Nature and the Law of God."¹⁵⁷ When Governor Dudley found his passage along Boston neck blocked by the carts of Thomas Trowbridge and John Winchester, the latter telling him "I am as good flesh and blood as you; I will not give way; you may goe out of the way," and set upon them with his sword calling them "divells" and "dirty dogs," Sewall defended the carters, got their bail lowered, saw to their writ of Habeas Corpus, and finally sat in the session of court which set the men free.¹⁵⁸ Again, when Mr. Taylor, a Justice of the Peace, struck an offender with his sword and was praised by Dudley for doing so, Sewall argued from the word of God (specifically, Titus 1:7) that "of all men, twas most inconvenient [a favorite word] for a Justice of Peace to be a Striker."¹⁵⁹

In the sermon he preached on the occasion of Sewall's death, the Reverend Thomas Prince spoke of him as "solemn,

¹⁵⁶Letter-Book, II, 101, entry dated July 20, 1719. See the following chapter for a discussion of Sewall's humanitarian writings.

¹⁵⁷Diary, III, 65, entry for November 9, 1715. Governor Saltonstall of Connecticut had sued for sole inheritance of his father's estate.

¹⁵⁸Diary, II, 143-149, entries for December 7 to 14, and editors' notes. After arranging bail Sewall wrote: "I am glad that I have been instrumental to Open the Prison to these two young men, that they might repair to their wives and children and Occasions. . . ."

¹⁵⁹Diary, II, 152, entry for January 12, 1705/6.

March, 28th 1716. ~~Barth~~ Foreman
Study a^t Jerkyn
at Sittab, Appeal-
Abatement.

lark ver? Winflow Sabe of a
enter of of Sloop Dabhabd
or Clark. Bill of Sale not
factual without Delivery.

March, 29. 1716. In the case of
their attorney to the Wicket
indict is for Rapinist con-
viction & Costs.

March, 29. 1716. Joseph Otis's
con Indictment for forging a
turn of 8. Acres of Land in
Luate, and causing it to be Re-
corded in the Town-Booke

James Barnaby Foreman
Mr. Vallentine & Col. Otis his
rather allowed to help Joseph
is in his Defence.

Not Guilty!
v. Otis, God in his Providence
I brought you off, I hope it may
alt your heart: for what you
we done is notoriously Criminal.

Mary Kelly of Yarmouth
indicted for Adultery.
Not Guilty

He that told ye woman of Pa-
mania all ye ever sh^d did; know
what you have done, consider
it and Repent of what you have
done amiss; Repent, & amend.

Knows attorney to Foreman
other ver? Balong Action
fell by Foreman's death in the
interim. No Costs were Order

patient, grave and fixed in his Attachment to the Laws of
God: a Terror to the Children of Belial."¹⁶⁰ That he was
a "terror" to many we may doubt, but as God's magisterial
spokesman he may well have aroused a certain amount of awe
in someone like Mary Okelly of Yarmouth, for example, when,
indicted for adultery, she stood before him and heard him
speak about "the woman of Samaria," ending his admonition
with a grave "Repent and amend";¹⁶¹ and Esther Rogers, judged
guilty of the murder of her two bastard children, doubtless
felt her wickedness more keenly as she heard herself, "a
great destroyer," compared with Esther of old, "a great sav-
iour."¹⁶²

It is when the Puritan judge thus turns from the deter-
mination of right to the enforcement of righteousness that
he begins to lose whatever may be attractive in his judicial
character and becomes, instead, the grim and often ridiculous
figure that his detractors have made so familiar.¹⁶³ A sinner

¹⁶⁰A Sermon . . . , p. 34.

¹⁶¹Journal of Journey to Martha's Vineyard and Circuit
Court Journal, entry for March 29, 1716. He evidently dif-
fered with the judgment of the court, which declared her not
guilty.

¹⁶²Diary, II, 39, entry for July 15, 1701.

¹⁶³The association of law with righteousness is so inherent
a part of our Puritan heritage that it is difficult for us to
realize that the two are not synonymous. Morris, Studies, p.
37, says: "The acceptance of the law of God as fundamental law
is in part accountable for the identification by Calvinist
jurists in America of law with morality, sin with crime. . . .
The vigorous arm of the state was . . . raised to enforce the
moral dictates of the church. In New England, because of the
close affiliation of church and court and of the homogeneous

like Esther Rogers might (as happened in the case of Elizabeth Negro, who also destroyed her bastard child)¹⁶⁴ be recommended by Sewall to Cotton Mather for his prayers and then brought to the weekly lecture at South Church (as was Sarah Threeneedle, another murderer of her bastard child)¹⁶⁵ as a means of "improving" that occasion, there to hear the eloquent Cotton Mather preach in the following way:

Be astonish'd, O congregation of God! Stand astonished at the horrible spectacle that is now before you. . . . Behold a young woman, but an old sinner, going this day to die before her time, for being wicked overmuch! Behold one just nineteen years old, and yet found ripe for the vengeance of a capital execution. Ah, miserable soul, with what a swift progress of sin and folly, hast thou made haste unto the congregation of the dead! Behold a person, whose unchaste conversation appear'd by one base born child many months ago! God then gave her a space to repent, and she repented not; She repeated her whoredoms, and by an infatuation from God upon her, she so managed the matter of

character of the community, it was possible to make practically every breach of the moral code a crime punishable by law."

¹⁶⁴Letter-Book, II, 3, letter to Cotton Mather dated May 6, 1712; Diary, II, 340, entry for March 26, 1712. Yet another case of the murder of children by their mothers is noted in the Diary, I, 379, entry for June 8, 1693.

¹⁶⁵Diary, I, 486, entry for November 17, 1698. Sewall was present and set the tune for the fifty-first psalm.

her next base born, that she is found guilty of its murder. Thus the God whose eyes are like a flame of fire, is now casting her into a burning bed of tribulation. . . .

Behold, O young people, what it is to vex the Holy Spirit of God, by rebelling against him. This, this 'tis to be "given over of God!" And yet, after all this hard-hearted wickedness, is it not possible for the grace of Heaven to be triumphantly victorious in converting and pardoning so unparallel'd a criminal? Be astonish'd, miserable Sarah, and let it now break that stony heart of thine to hear: it is possible! it is possible!¹⁶⁶

There would be "a very vast Assembly" of those seeking edification and the streets outside would be filled with "such as could not get in."¹⁶⁷ After Lecture she would be led to the place of execution and there prayed with again before being "turned off," as the saying was, "to general satisfaction."¹⁶⁸ A critical member of Cotton Mather's audience might have recalled that a few years before he had found one of his servant girls to be with child and "turn'd her out of's house,"¹⁶⁹ reserving to God, presumably, the powers of forgiveness and pardon which he so much admired.

¹⁶⁶Magnalia, II, 420-422.

¹⁶⁷Diary, loc. cit.

¹⁶⁸See Diary, II, 396, entry for August 26, 1713.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., I, 126, entry for May 11, 1686.

The war against sin in Massachusetts was a war against the devil, just as real as the border wars against the Indians and considerably more discouraging. The Indians were declining in strength, while sin and wickedness grew apace. John Dunton, in his Letters from New England (written during his visit in 1686, not published until the nineteenth century), observed that though many walked "in the steps of their pious fathers," others, outwardly pious, were "the most profligate and debauched wretches in the world."¹⁷⁰ By far the most active source of trouble was what Ned Ward in his Trip to New England (1699) described as "the sweet sin of Procreation."¹⁷¹ It needs only a very brief glance into some of the lower court records for the period to realize that moral legislation did not, as Ward observed, result in a citizenry very different from that to be found anywhere else. Indeed, something like the records of the Boston General Sessions of the Peace make a modern tabloid seem deficient in tang and vigor.¹⁷² One

¹⁷⁰Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 170, cited. Professor Wertenbaker's conclusion is that "before the first half century had passed there was a decided weakening in the moral standards."

¹⁷¹Page 3. Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," New England Quarterly, XV (December, 1942), 595-596, says that fornication and adultery are "by far the most numerous class of criminal cases in the record." The Puritans, he says, "became inured to sexual offenses, because there were so many. The impression one gets from reading the records of seventeenth century New England courts is that illicit sexual intercourse was fairly common."

For factual summaries concerning the crimes of fornication, burglary, drinking, etc., see Henry B. Parker, "Morals and Law Enforcement in Colonial New England," New England Quarterly, V (July, 1932), 431-452.

¹⁷²I saw only the volume for 1702-12. This court was the

emerges from examining them, as Charles Francis Adams said of confidential interviews with country lawyers and doctors, "in a more or less dishevelled condition."¹⁷³

As his diary frequently shows,¹⁷⁴ Sewall was no stranger to sexual offenses. But as a judge they were for the most part outside his province. Except for cases involving murder, and occasionally adultery, they did not reach him in Superior Court; and as a Justice of the Peace, a post which he continued to hold under the Provincial Government,¹⁷⁵ they were

so-called Quarter Sessions Court and was composed of Justices of the Peace (see Washburn, p. 151). Though Sewall was a Justice of the Peace he makes no reference to sitting on such a court, and his name does not appear among the judges.

The kind of material found in this volume is fairly illustrated by a meeting, chosen at random (p. 32), at which six cases were up for judgment. Three brought fines (two, three, and four pounds) for fornication, and three brought punishment for bastard children (ten stripes apiece--to the mothers).

¹⁷³ "Some Phases of Sexual Morality and Church Discipline in Colonial New England," Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, VI (June, 1891), 513. The cool honesty of this essay might well serve as a model for writers on the subject of early New England. "The habits of those days were," he says (p. 477), "simpler than those of the present; they were also essentially grosser." One minister, he says (p. 494), refused to baptize children born on the Sabbath day, the idea being that they were conceived on that day. When he had twins born to him on the Sabbath he reversed his stand.

¹⁷⁴ E.g., Diary, I, 78, entry for May 28, 1685 ("bestiality"); ibid., II, 333, entry for January 29, 1711/12 ("forcible Buggery").

A curious Puritan custom, of which A.W. Calhoun, A Social History of the American Family (Cleveland, 1917), I, 132, gives several examples was the confession in meeting of pre-marital sexual intercourse, sometimes long after the parties had been married. Sewall notes hearing such a confession when he stopped over at Rehoboth and attended the afternoon service on September 9, 1716 (Diary, III, 102).

¹⁷⁵ This was a usual thing for members of the Council, as it had been for the members of the Court of Assistants. Sewall

outside his jurisdiction. In this latter capacity his war against wickedness was of a more prosaic kind. "Lying," "galloping in the street," "striking," "travelling on the Lord's day," "swearing more than once," "breaking glass-windows," "drunkenness" (both men and women), "going disguised in the night & making a shout scaring folks," "carrying [a] box along the street" on the Sabbath--such are the offences which appear in great number in ledger entries which he made between the years 1694 and 1727, with the amount of the fine (generally from five to seven shillings) carefully noted down for payment to the town treasurer.¹⁷⁶

Some of the embarrassments he suffered in the conscientious performance of the duties of Justice of the Peace gave him as much pain as they now afford amusement to the reader of his diary. On a Saturday evening, in February, 1714, for example (Sabbath observance having begun at sundown), his neighbor, a Mr. Colson, knocked at his door to tell him that there were "disorders" at a nearby tavern run by John Wallis, and to ask that he accompany Constable Havell and Mr. Bromfield, another magistrate, thither. Sewall took Aeneas Salter, a servant, with him and set out. Arriving at the tavern--

Found much Company. They refus'd to go away. Said
were there to drink the Queen's Health, and they had many

notes, for example, that on July 25, 1699, after the arrival of Governor Bellomont, ". . . all of the Council present were sworn as Justices of the Peace; Only Mr. Eliakim Hutchinson declined taking his Oath."

¹⁷⁶There are at least ninety-five such entries, appearing as lists on foll. 48, 86, 113, and 146.

other Healths to drink. Call'd for more Drink: drank to me, I took notice of the Affront to them. Said must and would stay upon that Solemn occasion. Mr. John Netmaker drank the Queen's Health to me. I told him I drank none; upon that he ceas'd. Mr. Brinley put on his Hat to affront me. I made him take it off. I threaten'd to send some of them to prison; that did not move them. They said they could but pay their Fine, and doing that they might stay. I told them if they had not a care, they would be guilty of a Riot. Mr. Bromfield spake of raising a number of Men to Quell them, and was in some heat, ready to run into Street. But I did not like that. Not having Pen and Ink, I went to take their Names with my Pensil, and not knowing how to Spell their Names, they themselves of their own Accord writ them. Mr. Netmaker, reproaching the Province, said they had not made one good Law.

At last I address'd my self to Mr. Banister. I told him he had been longest an Inhabitant and Freeholder, I expected he should set a good Example in departing thence. Upon this he invited them to his own House, and away they went; and we, after them, went away. The Clock in the room struck a pretty while before they departed. I went directly home, and found it 25. Minutes past Ten at Night when I entred my own House.¹⁷⁷

On the following Monday morning:

Mr. Bromfield comes to me, and we give the Names of the Offenders at John Wallis's Tavern last Satterday night

¹⁷⁷Diary, II, 419-420, entry for February 6, 1713/14.

to Henry Howell, Constable, with Direction to take the Fines of as many as would pay; and warn them that refus'd to pay, to appear before us at 3. p.m. that day. Many of them pay'd. The rest appear'd; and Andrew Simpson, Ensign, Alexander Gordon, Chirurgeon, Francis Brinley, Gent. and John Netmaker, Gent., were sentenc'd to pay a Fine of 5^s each of them, for their Breach of the Law Entituled, An Act for the better Observation, and Keeping the Lord's Day. They all Appeal'd, and Mr. Thomas Banister was bound with each of them in a Bond of 20^s upon Condition that they should prosecute their Appeal to effect.

Capt. John Bromsal, and Mr. Thomas Clark were dismiss'd without being Fined. The first was Master of a Ship just ready to sail, Mr. Clark a stranger of New York, who had carried it very civilly, Mr. Jekyl's Brother-in-Law.

John Netmaker was fin'd 5^s for profane cursing; saying to _____ Colson, the Constable's Assistant, God damn ye; because the said Colson refus'd to drink the Queen's Health. This he said presently. Then Mr. Fromfield and I demanded of the said Netmaker to become bound in a Bond of Twenty pounds, with two Sureties in Ten pounds a-piece to Answer at the next General Session of the Peace for Suffolk, his Contempt of Her Majesties Government of this Province and vilifying the same at the house of John Wallis, Innholder in Boston, last Satterday night. Mr. Banis-

ter declin'd being bound; and none else offer'd (To
imbarrass the Affair as I conceiv'd). Upon this Mr.
Netmaker was dismiss'd, giving his Word to Appear on
Tuesday, at 10. m. that he might have Time to provide
Sureties.¹⁷⁸

Next day:

Mr. Bromfield and I waited till past 11. and dis-
miss'd the Constables Howell and Fenno, supposing No body
would come. Constable met Mr. Netmaker at the door, and
came back again with him: He came all alone. Mr. Brom-
field and I spent much time with him to bring him to some
Acknowledgment of his Error, but all in vain. Offer'd
not so much as his own Bond: which constrain'd us to
Write a Mittimus, and send him to Prison. Angry words
had pass'd between him and Const. Howell; he Threatn'd
Const. Howell what he would do to him; or his Servants
for him. For this reason I dismiss'd Constable Howell;
sent for Mr. John Winchcomb, and gave him the Mittimus,
out of respect to Mr. Netmaker; and he took it kindly.
This about $\frac{1}{4}$ past 12. at Noon by my Clock. Went into
Town; Mr. William Pain spake with me near the Townhouse;
express'd himself concern'd that Mr. Netmaker was in
prison; he would pay his Fine that he might be releas'd.
I told him there was no Fine.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 421-422.

After a Council meeting on this same day, when it was "late and Duskish" and the persons present were sitting "round a little Fire," Sewall happened to sit next to General Nicholson, lately arrived from England.

He apply'd himself to me and Mr. Bromfield, ask'd whether did not know that he was here with the Broad Seal of England? I answer'd, Yes! Ask'd whether did not know that Mr. Netmaker was his Secretary? I answer'd, 'Tis generally so receiv'd. Then with a Roaring Noise the General said, I demand JUSTICE against Mr. Sewall and Bromfield for sending my Secretary to prison without acquainting me with it! And hastily rose up, and went down and walk'd the Exchange, where he was so furiously Loud, that the Noise was plainly heard in the Council-Chamber, the door being shut.

Governor Dudley urged the discharge of Netmaker and finally, after the "mittimus" was sent for and "read by Candle-Light," accomplished it on the grounds that the order was too general in its wording, the Council reluctantly voting its approval.¹⁷⁹

It was a hard thing for a man who knew from of old what the place of the magistrate in society was intended of God to be, and who remembered the unquestioned authority and respect that had once accompanied him along the streets of Boston, to feel that now (without ever really admitting it

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 422-424.

to himself or realizing exactly why it was that the change had occurred) he was somehow being made ridiculous. Sometimes it was a local person in whom he met with "refractory Carriage,"¹⁸⁰ but more generally it was a "stranger" like Mr. Netmaker. Visiting at Newbury on the Sabbath, for example, he "had an inkling that two Merchants came from Ipswich,"¹⁸¹ thereby violating the law against travelling on that day. It turned out that the offenders were a Peter La Blond and a Richard Gerrish, which was embarrassing because Gerrish "had a smell of Relation." Moreover, "they were young, Mr. La Blond's Mother my Neighbour, [and] . . . both of them of another Province." Feeling himself "in a strait," he prayed God to direct and decided that if the two culprits would sign a statement acknowledging their transgression and promising not to offend in a like manner again, he would let the matter drop. This offer, however, "they rejected with Disdain." Mr. La Blond paid the two pounds fine, and they went on their way.

Even more distressing was the trouble given by his own Pastor, Ebenezer Pemberton, when he, Sewall, fined John Banister and Aaron Suckey for publishing what he considered "villanous Libels" against the Mathers. Being at Sewall's

¹⁸⁰E.g., Diary, III, 276, entry for November 12, 1720. Breach of the Sabbath by Thomas Wheeler, at his trade of "Sot-Work Coopering." Ibid., I, 498, entry for June 21, 1699: "A Pack of Cards are found strawed over my fore-yard, which 'tis supposed, some might throw there to mock me, in spite of what I did at the Exchange Tavern last Satterday night." What he had done at the tavern he does not say.

¹⁸¹Diary, III, 81-83, May 13 and 14, 1716.

for dinner, Mr. Pemberton,

with extraordinary Vehemency said, (capering with his feet) If the Mathers order'd it, I would shoot him thorow. I told him he was in a passion. He said he was not in a Passion. I said, it was so much the worse. He said the Fire from the Altar was equal impartial. Upbraiding me, very plainly, as I understood it, with Partiality. . . . I was surpris'd to see my self insulted with such extraordinary Fierceness, by my Pastor, just when I had been vindicating two worthy Embassadors of Christ (his own usual Phrase). . . .

After dinner, walking in company with several others to the Council chamber, he was again upbraided by the testy pastor. Sewall was "griev'd" at this, and said,

What in the Street! He answer'd, No body hears. But Mr. Sergeant heard so much that he turn'd back to still us. Mr. Pemberton told me that Capt. Martin . . . had abus'd him, yet I took no notice of it: I answer'd, you never laid it before me. He said, You knew it. I said, I knew it not. (For every Rumor is not ground sufficient for a Justice of ease to proceed upon; and Mr. Pemberton never spake word of it to me before). He said Capt. Martin call'd him Rascal in the Street. . . .

So the painful episode continued, Sewall protesting and explaining, the angry minister refusing to be mollified and coming out at last with what was apparently the root of the

matter, that Capt. Martin had been invited in his place to a dinner with the Superior Court. "These things," Sewall concludes, "made me pray Earnestly . . . that God would vouchsafe to be my Shepherd, and perform for me what is mention'd in the 23. Psalm, that He would not leave me behind in my Stragglings; but bring me safely to his Heavenly Fold."¹⁸²

The Reverend Mr. Pemberton was not yet done. In the afternoon service of the next Lord's day, he asked the congregation to join in singing the first five verses of the fifty-eighth psalm, which, if Tate and Brady were the version used, ran as follows:

Speak, O ye Judges of the Earth

if just your Sentence be:

Or must not Innocence appeal

to Heav'n from your Decree?

Your wicked Hearts and Judgments are

alike by Malice sway'd;

Your griping Hands, by weighty Bribes,

to Violence betrayed.

To Virtue, strangers from the Womb

their Infant Steps went wrong:

They prattled Slander, and in Lyes

employ'd their lisp'ing Tongue.

¹⁸²Diary, II, 291-293, entry for November 28, 1710.

No Serpent of Parch'd Afric's Breed
doth ranker Poison bear;
The drowsy Adder will as soon
unlock his sullen Ear.

Unmov'd by good Advice, and deaf
as Adders they remain;
From whom the skilful Charmer's Voice
can no attention gain.

"I think," wrote the patient Sewall, "if I had been in his place and had been kindly and tenderly affectioned, I should not have done it. . . . Another Psalm might have suited his Subject as well as . . . this. 'Tis certain, one may make Libels of David's Psalms; and if a person be abused, there is no Remedy: I desire to leave it to God who can and will Judge Righteously."¹⁸³

Despite its tribulations, however, Sewall loved the judicial role and was pleased and grateful when a new governor renewed his commission.¹⁸⁴ He even sought additional offices. On December 9, 1715, he became Judge of Probate for Suffolk County, a comfortable and lucrative post¹⁸⁵ to which

¹⁸³Diary, II, 294, entry for December 3, 1710, and editors' note. If the Bay Psalm Book was used, the sting was not quite so sharp.

¹⁸⁴E.g., Letter-Book, II, 67, letter to Governor Shute dated February 19, 1716/17.

¹⁸⁵Council Records, V, 396. In his first year in the post he received approximately thirty pounds in fees for not many more pieces of routine business--proving wills and granting letters of administration (Probate Journal, entry for February 29, 1716/17). In the last years his fees averaged around fifteen pounds a quarter (Ledger, fol. 144).



*Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in
New-England ; December, 12. 1715.*

S *Amuel Sewall* Esq; Judge for the
Probate of Wills, and Granting
Letters of Administration, within
the County of *Suffolk* ; Purposes,
GOD willing, to wait upon that Busi-
ness, at his dwelling house in *Boston*,
every Second day of the Week, at Ten
in the Morning : Excepting the Weeks
of the Circuit of *Plimouth, Kettering,*
Ipswich, Springfield, Bristol, and Salem.

Joseph Marion Register.



he devoted his Tuesday mornings when not on the Circuit, and one which, like the funerals he loved to attend, repeatedly reminded him of man's mortality. "May I be ready to follow!" he would write in his probate accounts after proving a will; "Fit me for my change!"¹⁸⁶ Also, in 1718 he wrote Governor Shute saying that if his Excellency could find it "convenient" to nominate him for the post of Chief Justice of the Superior he would be very "sensible" of his Excellency's favour and his own "further Obligations to Gratitude."¹⁸⁷ The Governor complied, and he was sworn into this office on April 25, 1718.¹⁸⁸

It is not difficult to understand why Sewall relished the role of Superior Court Justice. It was a worthy occupa-

¹⁸⁶See the Diary, III, 132-133, entry for June 19, 1717, in which he tells how he waited on the new Governor, Samuel Shute, and "pray'd his Favour as to the Judge of Probate's office." He obtained Shute's promise of it and was grateful.

Several years earlier he had been critical of Mr. Cooke's being a Judge of Probate as well as a Superior Court Justice. He thought it "inconvenient" that so much authority should rest in one man. (Diary, II, 39-40, entry for August 1, 1701.)

The diary entries concerning his probate work are surprisingly few considering that it covered a period of thirteen years, in which time he took care of about four hundred pieces of business.

¹⁸⁷Letter-Book, II, 88-89, letter to Governor Shute dated February 11, 1717/18. He points out that he is "the last of the Justices left standing in the Superiour Court . . . that were of it from the Beginning, which was in the year 1692." Also, he "frequently presided" lately because of the inability of the former Chief Justice, Wait Winthrop, to ride the circuits. And see the Diary, III, 168, entry for February 11, 1717/18.

¹⁸⁸Diary, III, 183. For his appointment, see Council Records, V, 551, entry for April 16, 1718, and the Diary, III, 181, entry for the same date.

tion, the nearest thing in his life to a "calling." It represented status, the rather meager pay (later in the century Governor Hutchinson wrote that it did not pay travelling expenses)¹⁸⁹ being compensated for by the honor and circumstance which attended the progress of the judges on the circuits. "Augt. 16. [1698; Winthrop, Cooke, and Sewall on the way to Springfield] To Quaboag with a guard of 20 Men under Cornet Brown. Between Worcester and Quaboag we were greatly wet with Rain; wet to the skin. Got thither before twas dark. A guard of 20 from Springfield met us there, and saluted us with their trumpets as we alighted."¹⁹⁰ Another time, at Plymouth, there was a volley by soldiers and "Huzzas, at [their] entrance into Town."¹⁹¹ Once on the way from Newbury to Portsmouth there was "a Guard of Six men from Newbury, [which was] met with 12 from New Hampshire."¹⁹² Again, approaching Bristol they were met by the sheriff and judges

¹⁸⁹Washburn, p. 162, citing a letter to Lord Hillsboro. The pay was then 120 pounds. During the period of Sewall's service it varied. In 1692 the Chief Justice received 100 pounds and the associates 50 pounds (Council Records, II, 210, entry for December 16, 1692); in 1697 all five judges received 40 pounds apiece (*ibid.*, p. 439, entry for January 21, 1696/7); in 1712 it was 200 pounds, "to be proportion'd according to . . . Attendance" (*Diary*, II, 351, entry for June 14); in 1715 it was 300 pounds, to be distributed on the same basis (Council Records, V, 368). For an instance when Sewall was dissatisfied with the distribution, see the *Diary*, III, 259, entries for July 30 and August 3, 1720. The treasurer, writes Sewall, "said 'twas Just; I said 'twas unjust. . . . He look'd upon me, and said he was sorry to see me so mov'd, said twas a Trifle."

The ledger (fol. 144) shows his salary from 1712 to 1726 to have been from sixty to ninety-five pounds.

¹⁹⁰*Diary*, I, 482-483, entry for August 15, 1698.

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*, II, 75, entry for March 29, 1703.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, I, 405, entry for May 15, 1695.

of the court of common pleas.¹⁹³ Then too, there was much agreeable dining--at the Black Horse and the Peacock on the way to Bristol, the Three Cranes in Charlestown, and the "Blew Bell" at Salem, to name but a few of the "baiting places."¹⁹⁴ It was pleasant to be the distributor of sermons that you carried in your saddle bags, and to give an occasional penny or shilling to the child of your host,¹⁹⁵ to hear the "Swallows proclaim the Spring,"¹⁹⁶ and to engage your fellow judges in theological argument. As an example of the last, there was the discussion one Friday evening at Thomas's during Plymouth court, when Sewall and the Attorney of the Province, Paul Dudley, "had Discourse about the Body."

Mr. Dudley maintained the Belly should not be raised, because he knew no use of it. I maintained the Contrary, because Christ saw no Corruption: Saints shall be conformed to Him. The Creator in his infinite Wisdom will

¹⁹³Ibid., III, 102, entry for September 10, 1716. See similarly, ibid., 264, entry for September 26, 1709, and ibid., III, 56, entry for September 12, 1715.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., I, 453, entry for May 24, 1691; ibid., III, 192, entry for September 5, 1718; ibid., p. 261, entry for September 17, 1720; ibid., p. 348, entry for January 30, 1724/5. More often the stop-overs were at private homes or at hostels for which he gives the owners' names.

¹⁹⁵E.g., Diary, III, 56, entry for September 12, 1715; ibid., p. 57, entry for September 19, 1715; ibid., p. 76, entry for March 26, 1716. On the last date, at Plymouth, he "Gave the Sheriff and his Attendants a Duz. of Dr. Incr. Mather's Sermons concerning Christ the Great Saviour."

¹⁹⁶E.g., Diary, III, 181, entry for April 14, 1718. There are dozens of such entries. He was an early Boston bird-watcher.

know what use to make of them. D. What use of Tasting, Smelling? S. 'Tis possible the bodies of the Saints may have a Fragrancy attending them. D. Voice is laborious. S. As much Labour as you please, the more the better, so it be without Toil, as in Heaven it will be. I dare not part with my Belly. Christ has redeemed it, and there is danger of your breaking in further upon me, and cutting off my Hand or foot. Wee'l continue this Action to the next term. This morning it comes to my mind I cant believe the blessed Womb which bore our Saviour, will always be buried.¹⁹⁷

Back in court the next Monday there were the usual cases, involving on this occasion defaulted payment for "50. Barrels of Mackarell," a debt for "Shoos," charges against Samuel Hedge, an Eastham innholder, for "thrust[ing] Amos Simpson backward over a Threshold upon rough Stones all his Length whereby his Skull was broken," several cases of "trespass and ejectment" (i.e., disputes over land boundaries, which appear in the records by the hundreds), and one against Joshua Handing "for Increasing and Altering Province Bills."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷This material is from one of the small circuit journals which Sewall carried with him and which bears on its cover the words "MAGUNKAQUOG. October 11, 1715." It is in part reprinted in the Diary, II, 425-440. The entry here cited is for April 2, 1714.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., foll. 12-19, material not reprinted by the editors of the diary. The reason for the triviality of many of the cases was that appeal was very freely used. The number of cases heard was enormous. Between April 1724 and February 1725, for example, the court was in session around forty days.

Examining volume after stout volume of the records of the Superior Court for the period in which Sewall was a member, one is finally amazed at the sheer physical stamina of a man

and tried over three hundred cases (Superior Court Records, V, 170-252). As Mathews, "The Results of the Prejudice against Lawyers," p. 76, remarks, ". . . it is not too much to say that in the seventeenth century [and the same may be said of the eighteenth], in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, sooner or later every inhabitant of every town was brought into court, either as plaintiff, witness or defendant. Our ancestors were a litigious people."

The laws and penalties in the early years of the Province remained about the same as they had been in the Colony (see Noble, "Notes on the Trial and Punishment of Crimes," p. 35). As remarked earlier, the court records ordinarily give only the charges, the parties, and the decision. In the Superior Court Records civil cases predominate, with disputes over land being by far the most common. Criminal cases are not infrequent, however, and, as usual, are of considerable interest. Hannah Nowell and Lambert Despar, "being found in bed . . . at his house in Brantree, "were given fifteen and twenty-five strokes respectively, "upon the naked back." In addition, he, "the next Thursday immediately after lecture "was to "stand upon the pillory for the space of one hour with Adultry in capitall letters written upon his breast." (Vol. I, 127, date of October 30, 1694.) Samuel White, found guilty of robbery, was ordered "to be branded in the fore head [with] the Letter B" and pay treble the theft to the injured party. (*ibid.*, p. 73, date of October 21, 1693). Francis Dormer, for "scandalous words" about Governor Bellomont, was to stand in the stocks for an hour at high noon "with a paper signifying his crime" (*ibid.*, II, 202, date of October [no day], 1693). "Indyans" are frequently in difficulty for killing and stealing, and cases of infanticide are fairly common.

The tax assessments made necessary by the many campaigns against the French and Indians resulted in one case which gives an interesting pre-view of the spirit which some years later would find expression in other "embattled farmers." Henry Head of Little Compton and Daniel Wilcocks of Nomquid were indicted for heading a group which with "Sords, Staves, Clubbs, and Gunns . . . did assemble themselves together with intent to . . . hinder the collecting . . . [of] the Arreares of the publique assessments." In speeches (excerpts from which being given as part of the charges) they had said: ". . . the Government of the province [has] taken the very linnen from of[f] the Hedges and . . . Soe farr were oppressors that the poore people were faine to Sift their meal to pay their Rates and eat their bran for bread. . . . We will rise whilst we have something. . . ." (*Ibid.*, I, 66, date of August 29, 1693.) Head and Wilcocks were fined 150 pounds each.

who for almost forty years, to the age of seventy-six (three years before he died), travelled the province, county town to county town--Salem, Charlestown, Plymouth, Kittery, Ipswich, Cambridge, Bristol, and Boston--¹⁹⁹winter and summer, generally by horseback, sometimes by water, often in the last years by calash and coach, never missing a meeting of court "for more than Twenty years together."²⁰⁰ Very little is known about travel in early America,²⁰¹ but we do know that except for a very few miles around Boston travelling was done almost entirely on horseback, except when it was possible (as, for example, between Boston and Newbury) to go by boat. We know

¹⁹⁹The colony had been divided into four "shires" in 1643: Essex (Salem, Lynn, Wenham, Ipswich, Rowley, Newbury, Gloucester, and Andover), Middlesex (Charlestown, Cambridge, Watertown, Sudbury, Concord, Woburn, Medford, Reading), Suffolk (Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Dedham, Braintree, Weymouth, Hingham, Hull), Norfolk (Salisbury, Hampton, Haverhill, Exeter, Dover, Portsmouth). (See Davis, Bench and Bar, I, 44.) This remained the approximate structure except that Provincial Massachusetts was expanded, necessitating journeys by the circuit judges to such places as Plymouth and Kittery.

²⁰⁰Letter-Book, II, 90, letter to Governor Shute dated February 11, 1717/18. He mentions only Bristol Circuit in this letter, but the Superior Court Records show that it applies to the other circuits as well. In the twenty-five years that preceded his appointment to Chief Justice he did not miss a sitting of the court. In later years he began occasionally to be absent, but never often and never for a long period.

²⁰¹Alice M. Earle has gathered available material, which isn't much, for her Stage-Coach and Tavern Days (New York, 1915), especially the chapter "From Path to Turnpike." The scarcity of evidence is commented on by Seymour Dunbar in his extensive A History of Travel in America (Indianapolis, 1915), I, 15, and his first chapter is an illustration of the fact. Something like Madam Knight's journal gives us as good a sense of the matter as we can get.

also that the settled portions of the continent consisted of a very narrow coastal strip, and that immediately bordering lay the forest, trackless save for Indian trails, silent, and illimitable. Even a fairly well-travelled path, like that to Plymouth, could be lost when the snow fell, as Sewall knew after going that way for more than twenty years:

March, 27. [1710.] Am much disheartened by the Snow on the ground, and that which was falling, there being a dismal face of Winter. Yet the Sun breaking out, I stood along about 10. [a.] m. Everything look'd so wild with Snow on the Ground and Trees; that was in pain lest I should Wander: But it pleas'd God graciously to direct, so that I got well to D. Jacobs, and then call'd his Tenant Riply to guid us over the Rocky Swamps to Curtis's. Din'd at Bairstow's; from thence had the under-Sheriff Brient. At Cook's the Sheriff met me. Mr. J. Cotton, Otis and others with him. Got to Rickard's about Sun-set.²⁰²

Frequently he travelled with what he calls "my pilot," some person of the locality who knew the path,²⁰³ and in later years he was generally accompanied by a servant, such as the faithful Scipio, a Negro.²⁰⁴ If meal time found them on the

²⁰²Diary, II, 276.

²⁰³E.g., on September 9, 1704, travelling to Bristol in company with Hathorne: "A Taunton man, Mason, overtakes us and becomes a very good Pilot to us through the wilderness" (Diary, II, 115-116). Generally the arrangements were less casual.

²⁰⁴Ibid., III, 260, entry for September 10, 1720. On this

road, he and his companions might stop to eat in the woods;²⁰⁵
thirsty, they would fill a bottle from a stream and drink.²⁰⁶
On numerous occasions he was thrown from his horse,²⁰⁷ a fact
which led him to write to his Aunt Alice Dummer: "I that am
a Traveller, ought the more to sympathize with you in the
bruise you have had. . . ." ²⁰⁸ On no occasion, however, did
he suffer serious injury, for each time "through the goodness
of God," as he says, he "had no harm."

Lest we overemphasize the hazards and difficulties that
he faced as a traveller of the circuits we should note that
more often than not, as was his engaging way, he pronounced
his journeys "very comfortable." It is appropriate, there-
fore, that we leave our consideration of the subject think-
ing of him coming home "very pleasantly per amica silentia
Lunae."²⁰⁹

Off the circuit, Sewall's most important function as
a servant of the province was as a member of the Governor's

trip, to Bristol, he and Scipio got lost and had to stay
over night "at Ensign Blake's 3 miles short." See also,
ibid., p. 219, entry for April 25, 1719; ibid., p. 220, entry
for May 11, 1719; ibid., p. 183, entry for April 28, 1718; ibid.,
p. 376, entry for April 30, 1726; ibid., p. 355, entry for May
14, 1725; ibid., p. 101, entry for September 6, 1716; ibid.,
p. 100, entry for August 27, 1716.

²⁰⁵ibid., p. 197, entry for September 23, 1718.

²⁰⁶ibid., p. 101, entry for September 6, 1716.

²⁰⁷S. C., ibid., I, 472-473, entry for March 10, 1697/8; ibid.,
II, 139-140, entry for October 1, 1705; ibid., pp. 310-311,
entry for May 14, 1711.

²⁰⁸Letter-Book, I, 364, letter dated March 15, 1707/8.

²⁰⁹Diary, III, 163, entry for January 29, 1717/18.

Council. Here again we find the constant attender to duty ("the most constant," in fact, as he confided to his diary when Governor Dudley once chided him for being late to a meeting).²¹⁰ Here also we find mention of various dignities of office which he must have found attractive: "Splendid Treat[s]" by the Governors;²¹¹ dining at the Exchange Tavern, the Crown Coffee House, the Dolphin, and the Green Dragon;²¹² standing with the Governor and other members of the Council in "the Gallery" of the Townhouse, "many Auditors below" and the "Serjeants in red Cloaths with Horlberts [i.e., Halberts]," to hear an act of Parliament published "by Beat of Drum, and Sound of Trumpet";²¹³ and calling for pipes when the business of the Council was over.²¹⁴

²¹⁰Diary, II, 254-255, entry for May 2, 1709. The record of his attendance may be seen in the Council Records, II-VIII. He was, as he says, "the most constant attender." Over a period of thirty-three years (1692-1725), figuring the number of meetings as about seventy-five a year (the approximate average for four years chosen at random: 1702, 1707, 1711, and 1720), he must have attended almost twenty-five hundred meetings. This, to extend the rough arithmetic one step further, meant an income from the office (pay being figured, according to the ledger, fol. 144, at five shillings for each meeting attended) of around six hundred pounds.

²¹¹E.g., Diary, I, 396, entries for November 17 and December 4, 1694; ibid., III, 67, entry for November 23, 1715.

²¹²See, for example, ibid., I, 495, entry for April 13, 1699; ibid., III, 110, entry for November 8, 1716; ibid., p. 186, entry for June 12, 1718; ibid., entry for June 13, 1718; ibid., p. 357, entry for May 26, 1725.

²¹³A composite of details from the Diary, I, 496, entry for April 27, 1699; ibid., III, 67, entry for November 23, 1716; ibid., p. 287, entry for April 6, 1721; and the Letter-Book, I, 378, letter to Thomas Cockerill dated January 10, 1708/9.

²¹⁴Diary, II, 372, entry for February 27, 1712/13.

Sewall's politics in this job are interesting to watch. His philosophy was expressed in words he uttered at a time when William Dummer, Massachusetts' agent in England, was being attacked by his Boston critics: "I was for upholding the Government," declared Sewall, "whether in or out of it."²¹⁵ Given his choice, he would wish to be in it, but in or out his desire was for stability. His first affection was for things as they were in the days of the fathers, but lacking that he would wish to maintain the status quo. His relations with the various Royal Governors in whose Councils he sat was expressed, without exception, in terms of congratulation and an obedient desire to serve. Governor Phips had known John Hull and was invited over by Sewall to drink a glass of brandy and talk over the old days.²¹⁶ The next Governor, the Earl of Bellomont, he pronounced "very satisfactory."²¹⁷ On the arrival of Governor Dudley he declared to him that his being sent was "a very fair First-Fruit" of the goodness of God in placing Queen Anne on the throne of England.²¹⁸ Dudley quarreled with almost everyone, and Sewall found him a trial more than once, but never did he allow a breach to form in their relationship. When, after thirteen years (1702-15), Dudley was relieved of his

²¹⁵Diary, III, 94, entry for May 23, 1710.

²¹⁶Ibid., I, 369, entry for November 19, 1692.

²¹⁷Letter-Book, I, 212, letter to John Ive dated June 27, 1699.

²¹⁸Diary, II, 57-58, entry for June 11, 1702. Learning of Dudley's arrival from his son Sam he hurriedly got ready and went with Captain Crofts in his pinnace "to meet the Governour and Congratulat his Arrival."

post, Sewall called on him, drank to him, and presented his "humble service."²¹⁹ So it went. When news came that Samuel Shute was to be Governor (Lt. Governor Tailer having been acting Governor during the absentee government of Governor Burgess, follower of Dudley), he heard it with "great Joy,"²²⁰ wanted Shute to "make haste in coming," and considered that his "Qualifications commend him to the Embraces of all that are of his acquaintance."²²¹ When Shute returned to England and William Dummer took over as acting Governor, Sewall arose at the ceremony of his installation and spoke as follows:

If your Honour and this honourable Board please to give me leave, I would speak a Word or two upon this solemn Occasion. --Altho the unerring Providence of God has brought you to the Chair of Government in a cloudy and Tempestuous Time [actually, relatively peaceful]; yet you have this for your Encouragement, that the People you Have to do with, are a part of the Israel of God, and you may expect to have of the Prudence and Patience of Moses communicated to you for your Conduct. It is evident that our Almighty Saviour Counsell'd the First Planters to remove hither, and Settle here; and they dutifully followed his Advice; and therefore He will

²¹⁹Diary, III, 66, entry for November 15, 1715.

²²⁰Ibid., p. 85, entry for June 5, 1716.

²²¹Letter-Book, II, 55, letter to Jonathan Belcher dated July 28, 1716. And see ibid., p. 56, letter to Sir William Ashurst dated August 8, 1716; ibid., p. 73, congratulatory letter to Shute dated October 17, 1717.

never leave nor forsake them, nor theirs: so that your Honour must needs be happy in sincerely seeking their Interest and Welfare; which your Birth and Education will incline you to do. Difficilia quae pulchra! I promise my self that they that sit at this Board, will yield their Faithfull Advice to your Honour, according to the Duty of their Place.

Everyone there, Sewall notes, "express'd a handsom Acceptance of what I said. Laus Deo."²²² When "Infirmities of Age" prevented him from greeting in person Governor Burnet, the last under whom he served, he wrote a little note expressing hope for his safe and speedy arrival and sent it to meet the Governor on his way up from Bristol.²²³

If a part of this kind of thing obviously derives from the politician's impulse to watch his fences, another part just as truly derives from simple good nature, a nature which made his human relationships generally, not just the political ones, notably pleasant and serene. Neither of these things, however, resulted with him in a policy of careless acquiescence or unprincipled expediency. We have already noted how, as a Judge, he stood against Dudley in the episode of the carters and the Governor's coach. So again as a Councillor, when

²²²Diary, III, 317-318, entry for January 2, 1722/23. The editors note that the quotation is from Erasmus' Adagia. When Dummer again took over in 1729, Sewall then being out of all offices, Sewall wrote congratulating him "and this Province" (Letter-Book, II, 275, letter dated September 11, 1729).

²²³Letter-Book, II, 244-245, letter dated July 10, 1728.

Dudley stood charged with "Trading, or allowin^g Trade with Her Majesty's Enemies, the French, and Indians in their Interest" ²²⁴ and badgered his Council into passing a vote of vindication, Sewall, who at first went along in expression of the belief that the charges were "Scandalous and Wicked," ²²⁵ investigated the matter, decided that all was not, as Dudley had told the Council, "as white as Chalk, as clear as the Driven snow," ²²⁶ and publicly reversed himself in a broadside statement giving the reasons for his action. Though this action of Sewall's was characteristically honorable, ²²⁷ it was also characteristically free of the wish to antagonize. That he was anxious that the matter should not result in his alienation from Dudley is shown in the fact that he was at dinner with him on the day after he published his statement, "drank to his Excellency, and presented [his] duty to him."

²²⁴The pamphlets which this and other charges against the Dudley administration brought forth have been reprinted in the Diary, II, #31-#131. A Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of New England (London, 1707) was apparently written up by Cotton Mather, who was disappointed in his hopes of his father's becoming President of Harvard. It was answered by the pro-Dudley faction in A Modest Enquiry into the Grounds and Occasions of a Late Pamphlet (London, 1707), which was in turn answered by The Deplorable State of New-England by Reason of a Covetous and Treacherous Governour, and Pusillanimous Counsellors (London, 1708), in which Sewall's broadside, "The Reasons of my With-drawing my Vote . . .," is reprinted. The charge against Dudley cited above is in the last of these pamphlets, p. 110.

²²⁵The Deplorable State of New-England, loc. cit.

²²⁶Diary, II, 203, entry for November 25, 1707.

²²⁷In introducing Sewall's broadside statement, the writers of The Deplorable State of New-England characterize him as "a Person of Unspotted Integrity [whose] . . . Relation as a

He was definite in the stand he had taken, however, saying "pleasantly" to Col. Townsend, who suggested that he withdraw the paper and put it in his pocket, "I could as easily put [you] in my Pocket."²²⁸

Except for his conservative vote in favor of a bill passed in 1693 restricting representation from towns in the House of Deputies to "freeholders and residents within such towns" (the bill, of what might seem to be a popular character, was aimed at Boston influence in the government),²²⁹ the balance sheet of his known positions on controversial questions is surprisingly liberal and humane.²³⁰ He opposed Dudley's attempt to disallow the election of Speaker by the House;²³¹ regarded a bill "against fornication, or Marriage of White men with Negroes or Indians" as "an Oppression provoking to God" and "got the Indians out of the Bill, and some

Brother-in-Law to the Governour [his son Sam being married to Dudley's daughter], did not get the Upper-Hand of his Conscience. . . ."

²²⁸Diary, II, 203-204, entry for November 26, 1707. On December 20 he received a letter from his brother Stephen at Salem saying that "the generality of thoughtfull people there approve of my Mount Etna Eruption: That's his expression" (ibid., p. 208).

For other controversies with Dudley on the score of honesty, see ibid., pp. 213-214, entry for February 2, 1707/8 (on the English practice of buying commissions in the army, which Dudley spoke of "in a favourable, diminutive way"), and ibid., p. 228, entry for May 3, 1708 (on the padding of muster rolls, which the Governor said "must be allow'd except would pull his Teeth out").

²²⁹Diary, I, 386, entry for November 23, 1693, and editors' note.

²³⁰See James Truslow Adams' statement in D.A.B., XVI, 611.

²³¹Diary, II, 131, entry for May 30, 1705.

mitigation for them [the Negroes] left in it";²³² "essay'd . . . to prevent Indians and Negroes being Rated with Horses and Hogs; but could not prevail";²³³ and spoke, again without success, in opposition to a bill for making counterfeiting a capital crime, saying that it were best to go slow in passing "a sanguinary Law" of this kind.²³⁴

A question which provoked controversy through many years of his service on the Council was that of paper money, issued for the purpose of paying the expenses of the province in its expeditions against the Indians and the French. Parrington seizes on the matter to show that in "the usual class alignment" which attended the controversy, "the wealthy opposing the issues, and the poor generally favoring them," Sewall's position was clear-- "He vigorously opposed every issue. . . ." ²³⁵ It is far from being this simple, however; and the statement that Sewall opposed every issue is quite definitely false. "I was," he says, "at

²³² Diary, II, 143, entry for December 1, 1705. The mitigation Sewall obtained for Negroes is stated thus: "And no master shall unreasonably deny marriage to his negro with one of the same nation, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding" (editors' note).

²³³ Diary, III, 27, entry for June 22, 1716. Coffin gives examples of such ratings in his History of Newbury, p. 188.

²³⁴ Diary, III, 276-277, entry for November 15, 1720. One of the things that made such a law especially "sanguinary" was the fact that there were so many counterfeiters. On September 5, 1724, Sewall wrote to Governor Saltonstall of Connecticut: "The Truth is, so many Bills of Credit are Counterfeited; and it is so difficult to convict the Malefactors; that the Ruine of all the Colonies is threatened thereby" (Letter-Book, II, 175).

²³⁵ Colonial Mind, p. 92.

making of the first Bills of Credit in the year 1690 . . . ,"²³⁶
and when an issue of fifty thousand pounds was proposed in 1714,
he wrote in his diary: "Chief-Justice [Wait Winthrop] said twas
contrary to the Statute of Mortmain [i.e., of inalienable ow-
nership]. I answer'd, twas quite on the other side, for this
was all for the Publick benefit";²³⁷ and on the following Feb-
ruary 1 he was "busy in signing Bills,"²³⁸ a job performed as
a member of the committee appointed to see to their manufacture.²³⁹
If is true that in 1712 he opposed a bill "for forcing the
Bills of Credit to be accepted in all payments for the future"
as containing in it the possibility that the government might
"make a vast Quantity . . . and leave them with us in Exchange
for our Estates." They had such a bill in Barbados, and men
there were "ready to knock one another in the head." He felt
that a "better expedient" than this (he does not say a desir-
able one) would be "to oblige Creditors to take Wheat, Indian
Corn, Salt, Iron, Wool at a moderat valuation, as twas of old:
Then there would be Quid pro Quo. . . ."²⁴⁰ It is also true

²³⁶ Diary, II, 366, entry for November 4, 1712.

²³⁷ Ibid., III, 23-24, entry for October 30, 1714.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

²³⁹ For performing this job he was paid ninety-three pounds,
nine shillings (Ledger, fol. 144). The job took him five
months. On July 1, 1715, he wrote: "I finish my work on the
Bills of Credit . . . and carry the two last Bundles to Col
Checkley. . . ." (Diary, III, 48). He had signed an earlier
batch in 1714, for which he was paid not quite seventy pounds
(Ledger, loc. cit.).

²⁴⁰ Diary, II, 365-366, entries for November 3 and 4, 1712.
Parrington, loc. cit., says that he even went "so far as to
prefer barter to bills." It would be fairer to say that he

that when an issue of five thousand pounds was proposed in 1716, he again stood opposed, this time because the General Court refused to levy taxes in the amount originally agreed on "for drawing them into the Treasury again." Feeling that such a refusal would "tend . . . greatly to weaken the publick Credit," and finding himself alone in his opposition (where, one might ask, was "the usual class alignment" at this point?), resolved "to Sign no more Bills."²⁴¹ When a thirty thousand pound issue was proposed in 1724, Sewall again stood with those in favor of drawing it in again at a hard rather than an easy rate, giving as his reason the fact that inflation (or, as he said, "diminution of the Value of the Bills of Publick Credit") "is the Cause of much Oppression in the Province: And I dare not have a Hand in adding to the heavy Weight of this Oppression. . . ." God is sympathetic toward the oppressed; "He bottles the[ir] Tears . . . and enters them fairly in his Book of Records. Let us imitate our Maker, in shewing our Sympathy with them, and our sincere and just desire to help them. Many of the Oppressed are the Pastors of our Congregations."²⁴²

preferred barter to a policy of confiscatory inflation.

²⁴¹Diary, III, 87-88, entry for June 22, 1716. His resignation was accepted by the Deputies on the following day (Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts [Boston, 1919-50], I, 116).

²⁴²Diary, III, -345, entry for December 7, 1724. On the twenty-third of the same month he was appointed to a committee to consider what should be done to help the ministers in the difficulties they were experiencing "by reason of the Low Value

Was this simply dissimulation, a pious veil for an expression of reactionary class interest? If it is liberalism to favor cheap money because it will help the debtor, what is it to desire, as Sewall did, a tax program that will ease the effects of that cheap money (i.e., inflation) on the man of small, relatively fixed income? At what point along the inflationary path does a man cease to be a liberal because he desires inflation and becomes one, instead, because, like Sewall, he desires a tax program that will bring inflation under control? Answers to these questions would probably suggest that Professor Parrington's rather casual equating of the politics of reaction with Sewall's opposition (when it was that) to a printing press fiscal policy is a thing that wants some examination. That he was, generally speaking, profoundly conservative is true enough, as these pages have frequently made plain; but it is just as true that, like most men, he resists the sharp dichotomies that characterize history written with a bias.

V

In our discussion thus far we have considered, for the most part, only the more important aspects of Sewall's career in public affairs. The number of lesser assignments to which he devoted himself was very large and provides additional proof, if that be necessary, that his life as a

of the Bills of Credit" (Journals of the House of Representatives, VI, 208).

public servant was indeed a career. During but the last ten years of his service as a member of the Council, for example,²⁴³ besides serving on various committees having to do with the issuance of the bills of credit,²⁴⁴ he served on a committee to study an excise tax on wines and liquors;²⁴⁵ a committee to consider "Settlement of the Eastern Parts" (i.e., Maine);²⁴⁶ a committee to study "Complaints against this government mentioned in Mr. Agent Dummer's Letter";²⁴⁷ a committee to report on student accommodations at Harvard;²⁴⁸ a committee "to treat with the Reverend Mr. Baxter" about going "to the Eastward" as a missionary to the Indians";²⁴⁹ a committee "to take care that the Indians have Justice done them" in a purchase of lands by Elisha Johnson and take deposit of the purchase money "for the use of the said Indians";²⁵⁰ a committee to

²⁴³The Journals of the House of Representatives, from which this information is drawn, did not begin as a separate record until 1715.

²⁴⁴After he resigned in 1716 from the committee charged with the duty of making them, he was assigned to committees in 1717, 1718, 1720, and 1724 having to do with the problems they presented (Journals of the House of Representatives, I, 208; II, 9-10, 372; IV, 208).

²⁴⁵Ibid., I, 101, entry for June 14, 1716.

²⁴⁶Ibid., p. 9, entry for May 31, 1715.

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 188, entry for June 1, 1717.

²⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 262-263, entry for February 6, 1717. They found a need for "some further Building." See also, ibid., II, 81 entry for November 13, 1718.

²⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 58, 85, entries for July 4 and November 15, 1718.

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 67, entry for November 3, 1718. Similarly, ibid. IV, 126, entry for November 30, 1722.

confer on the town of Billingsgate's changing its name to Pool;²⁵¹ a committee for determining what is "Just and Reasonable with Respect to the [Indian] Boundaries . . . to the Eastward";²⁵² a committee to supervise the leasing of public lands;²⁵³ a committee to draw up a letter of warning to the Governor of Canada concerning his assistance to the Indians "in their late appearance at Arrowsick";²⁵⁴ a committee to go to Martha's Vineyard and check on complaints made from there (probably concerning the Indian reservation there of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel);²⁵⁵ a committee to consider what to do concerning the "many passages in which the Holy Scriptures are perverted" in the New England Courant;²⁵⁶ a committee to consider what to do about "Abuses and Indignities to the Delegates of Eight Nations, by casting Stones among them, and otherwise evilly entreating them";²⁵⁷ and a committee to "draw up a Humble Address to His Majesty" on the "present State of the Publick Affairs."²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ Ibid., II, 73, entry for November 7, 1718.

²⁵² Ibid., pp. 256-257, entry for July 21, 1720.

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 207, 209, 212, in 1719.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., III, 176, entry for March 15, 1721.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., IV, 121, entry for November 26, 1722.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 205, entry for January 14, 1722.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., V, 170, entry for September 7, 1723.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 224, entry for November 5, 1723.

As a citizen of Boston, besides his watch keeping (which, as earlier noted, he performed in the various roles of Constable, Justice of the Peace, militia captain, and Overseer of the Poor), he served in other capacities. He was several times chosen Moderator of the Town Meeting,²⁵⁹ a most high and honorable post, one occupied in later years by such men as Thomas Hutchinson, James Otis, John Adams, and John Hancock.²⁶⁰ He was also one of the town's first School Inspectors, a group of five which performed as a kind of school board, its duties being to visit the free grammar school "from time to time . . . as they shall think fit to Inform themselves of the methods used in teaching of the Scollars and to Inquire of their Proficiency, and be present at the performance of Some of their Exercises, the Master being before Notified of their Coming, And with him to consult and Advise of further Methods for the Advancement of Learning and the Good Government of the Schoole."²⁶¹ On their first visit they found things satisfac-

²⁵⁹Boston Records, VIII, 25, meeting of June 3, 1702; ibid., p. 26, meeting of February 16, 1702/3; ibid., pp. 28-29, meeting of June 1, 1703; ibid., pp. 35-37, meeting of March 11, 1705/6; ibid., pp. 38-39, meeting of March 14, 1706; ibid., pp. 61-62, meetings of April 29, 1709; ibid., pp. 64-69, meeting of March 13, 1709/10; ibid., pp. 83-84, meeting of August 3, 1711; ibid., p. 115, meeting of December 7, 1715; ibid., p. 147, meeting of September 28, 1720. See references in the Diary, II, 253, entry for April 29, 1709; ibid., p. 275, entry for March 13, 1709/10.

My guide in the matter of his town offices has been Robert F. Seybolt, The Town Officials of Colonial Boston: 1634-1775 (Cambridge, 1939).

²⁶⁰Cook, "Boston: the Eighteenth Century Town," in Comm. Hist., II, 244.

²⁶¹Boston Records, VIII, 64-69, meeting for March 13, 1709/10. For other times that he was chosen, see ibid., pp. 74-76, meeting

tory and recommended an increase in pay for Mr. Williams, the master, "that he may Support his family."²⁶² They also suggested that some ministers go along on the visits to "pray with the Schollars, and Entertain 'em with Some Instructions of Piety."²⁶³ This did not satisfy Increase Mather, who felt that the fact that no ministers had been appointed to the original group showed "a great disrespect, and Contempt." He would go preach a sermon to the children all right, but not in the company of any Inspectors. ". . . I shall," he said, "conceal the day of my doing that Service from every-body, untill the work is over."²⁶⁴

In Sewall's role as Justice of the Peace he frequently met with the town's Selectmen to consider various community problems, the most persistent being those of the "ward on the Neck at the Line of Defence between Boston & Roxbury"---hours

of March 12, 1710/11; ibid., pp. 94-96, meeting of March 10, 1712/13; ibid., pp. 134-136, meeting of March 9, 1718/19.

²⁶²Cook, p. 246, cited. Sewall felt that the schoolmaster's situation was a fairly acceptable one. There was "a very good fair new Schoolhouse . . . and a very good Dwellinghouse for the Master. Our late excellent Master, Mr. Ezekiel Chiever went to his heavenly Mansion, from a very pleasant Earthly Situation. At the last Anniversary Meeting the Town augmented the Master's Salary to One Hundred pounds per annum. What with that, and some small perquisits, a humble Christian Man that loves Work more than Wages, needs not be discouraged; considering likewise the Allowance of an Usher with a Salary of Forty pounds." (Letter-Book, I, 391, letter to Increase Mather dated April 25, 1719.)

²⁶³Cook, loc. cit., cited.

²⁶⁴Letter-Book, I, 394, letter to Sewall dated April 24, 1710. Ten years later, on March 1, 1719/20, Cotton Mather was invited to accompany the visitors (Letter-Book, II, 11), and the visit took place a few days later (Diary, III, 245, entry for March 11).

for keeping the gate shut, number to be on watch, hours of the watch, etc.--and, similarly, the placing and handling of the watches throughout the town.²⁶⁵ His opinion on these matters was undoubtedly sought for and respected, not so much as a Justice of the Peace (though he was officially present in that capacity) as one who from his first years in the town had entered into the activities of its train bands and had risen to leadership of both the South Company and the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. The title which he most commonly bore with his fellow townsmen was not that of Judge or Councillor; to them he was first of all "Capt. Sewall."

The Puritan of early New England was quite literally a soldier of the Lord. The enemy was the devil, and the battle was hard. The Indians were his active agents, who in their "pagan Powaws . . . raise[d] their masters, in the shapes of Bears and Snakes and Fires."²⁶⁶ So were the French with, as Sewall said, their "pawdy bloody Cross."²⁶⁷ The militant spirit of the first years of the Massachusetts enterprise

²⁶⁵Boston Records, XI, 18, meeting of March 16, 1702; ibid., p. 151, meeting of December 10, 1711; ibid., p. 154, meeting of February 1, 1711; ibid., p. 156, meeting of February 11, 1711; ibid., p. 162, meeting of May 9, 1712; ibid., p. 164, meeting of August 4, 1712; ibid., p. 171, meeting of September 5, 1712; ibid., p. 191, meeting of August 14, 1713; ibid., XIII, 58, meeting of August 4, 1719; ibid., p. 72, meeting of August 2, 1720; ibid., p. 103, meeting of September 6, 1722; ibid., p. 141, meeting of August 4, 1725; ibid., p. 155, meeting of August 4, 1726.

²⁶⁶Cotton Mather, Memorable Providences, p. 99. Neal, in his History of New England, published in 1720, says: ". . . the chief Object of their Devotions was the Devil. . . ."

²⁶⁷Diary, II, 143, entry for November 25, 1705.

was voiced by Edward Johnson, who, in his Wonder Working Providence (1654), reminded the colony that

. . . the time is at hand wherein Anti Christ will muster up all his Forces, and make war with the People of God.

. . . See then you store your selves with all sorts of weapons for war, furbrish up your Swords . . . encourage every Souldier-like Spirit among you, for the Lord Christ intends to atchieve greater matters by this little handfull then the World is aware of; wherefore you shall seeke and set up men of valour to lead and direct every Soudier among you, and with all diligence to instruct them from time to time.

Again:

As the worthy encouragement of a Souldiers labour, let Military discipline be had in high esteeme among you.

. . . seeing you are called to fight the Battails of your Lord Christ; who must raigne till hee hath put all his enemies under his Feet[;] his glorious Victories over Anti-christ are at hand[;] never yet did any Souldier rejoyce in dividin; the spoyle after Victory, as all the Souldiers of Christ shall, to see his judgement executed upon the great Whore, and withall the Lambs bride prepared for him, who come Skipping over & trampling down the great Mountaines of the Earth. . . . 268

This was not mere rhetorical extravagance. The Boston of 1660 described by Samuel Maverick was notable in its facilities to do three things: worship God, do business, and make war. It is, he says,

. . . the Metropolis of New England lying pleasantly on a plaine and the ascending of a High Mount which lyes about the middle of the plaine. The wholl Towne is an island except two Hundred paces of land at one place on the Sout[h] side. . . . It hath two handsome Churches in it, a handsome market place, and in the midst of it a Statehouse. In the Towne are fouer full companys of foote and a Troope of horse[.] On the Southeast side of the Towne on a little Hill there is a Fort, and under it a Batterie[,] both having a dozen of Gunns or more in them, and on the Northeast side of the Towne there is a Battery of 6 Gunns commanding the Rode and the entrance of Charles River. and on the tope of the Hill above the Towne and in the strats are severall good Gunns, The Towne is full of good shopps well furnished with all kind of Merchandize and many Artificers, and Trad'smen of all sorts.²⁶⁹

The basis of the town's military organization was the "train-band," after the pattern of those which had existed in London since the days of Henry VIII. In 1537 Henry issued a charter to one of these companies as a "Guyilde of

²⁶⁹ A Briefe Description, pp. 237-238.

Artillery of Longbowes, Crosbowes and Handepomes" and a special ground was set apart for its exercises, which became known as "the Artillery Garden."²⁷⁰ Some of the members of the first Boston train band being of this Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, as it was called, they applied to the General Court for a charter in 1637 which would permit the Boston company an existence and character like the company in London. The charter was granted in the following year along with one thousand acres of land "to be improved . . . for providing necessaries."²⁷¹ In 1644 a colony-wide organization of militia was instituted (of which Sewall's South Company, for example, was a part) which required eight training days a year from all but "timerous persons"²⁷² (five shil-

²⁷⁰Facts concerning the English background are in Oliver A. Roberts, History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts (Boston, 1895-1901), I, 2.

²⁷¹Zachariah G. Whitman, Historical Sketch of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company (Boston, 1820), p. 1. Governor Winthrop's reaction to the application, cited by Whitman (ibid.), is very interesting: ". . . the council considering from the example of the Praetorian band among the Romans, and Templars in Europe, how dangerous it might be to erect a standing authority of military men, which might easily in time overthrow the civil power, thought fit to stop it betimes; yet they were allowed to be a company, but subordinate to all authority."

Originally the company was to train on the first Monday of each month. Later the number of training days was reduced to five a year. The big training day was on the first Monday in May, election day. The sermons given on this day (the so-called Artillery Sermons), and "feasts" of the officers were both part of the English tradition. (See Roberts, p. 3, and Whitman, pp. 38, 48.)

Whitman, p. 24, points out that in dress as in method of selecting officers the military companies long remained very democratic. Up until the time of the Revolution, for example, different colors of ribbon were the only distinguishing marks of office.

²⁷²The Anabaptists and Quakers were regarded as dangerous

lines fine for each neglect of a day's duty). Officers were to be chosen by a vote of the soldiers in the respective companies; a Sergeant Major for each county was to be chosen by vote of the officers; and a Major General, in charge of the four counties, was to be chosen annually by a vote of the General Court. This system remained in effect until the arrival of Andros in 1686.²⁷³ Under it the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company retained its earlier, separate identity, so that it was possible for a man like Sewall to be active both in it and in his own regular militia company.

One of the more common distortions of history is that by which some periods come to be known as "unexciting." The years between the "exciting" time of the first settlements in New England and the later time, also "exciting," of the Revolution constitute such a period. More than any other time in our history, it is regarded as a kind of historical doldrum. Such phrases as "old Colony days" and "Provincial New England" are wrapped in a sleepy haze. They are phrases which suggest pipes, and quilts, and dull sermons on dead issues, and quaint

because of their opposition to war. See Arthur H. Buffinton, "The Puritan View of War," Col. Soc. of Mass., Pubs., XXVIII, 71; also, Mass. Records, II, 85.

²⁷³ Whitman, Historical Sketch, p. 23. In the early years the train bands had been called out as often as once a week. This was reduced to once a month, and the eight times a year noted above was later reduced to four. Training during July and August was generally avoided for the "furtherance of husbandry." (See Hutchinson, History, I, 448, and H. Telfer Mook, "Training Day in New England," New England Quarterly, XI (December, 1938), 680).

The military organization for the Colony may be seen in Colonial Laws, p. 108; that for the Province in Acts and Resolves, I, 128-135. The Province organization was much the same as that for the Colony.

porringers, and long winter nights abed, and drowsing summer afternoons--in a word, dullness and peace. Such a conception is, of course, partially justified. Compared with that which preceded it or that which followed, the period was a quiescent one. A fair question to ask the historian, nevertheless, is what he means by "exciting." Chances are that he does not mean what was exciting to the participants in the events about which he is writing so much as what is exciting to him and perhaps to his audience, generally because of what later history has shown to be the dramatic significance of those events. If, from the standpoint of the participants, it is presumed that bloody Indian attacks followed by equally bloody reprisals, the razing of towns, the threat of pirates on the seas, hanging, scalping, ravishments, and the fruits of organized slaughter generally--if it is presumed that such things are characteristic marks of an exciting period, the years in which Sewall lived was just such a time. In 1676, the year in which he entered on the Boston scene and presumably began drilling with the South Company, Edward Randolph wrote to the government in England that the troops of horse in the town were "all well mounted and compleatly armed with back, breast, headpiece, buffe coat, sword, carbine and pistols, each troop distinguished by their coats." The foot soldiers, he noted, were "also very well furnished with swords, muskets, and bandaliers. . . . The late wars have hardened their infantry, made them good fireman, and taught

them the ready use of armes. ²⁷⁴ The "late wars" to which he refers were, of course, the long and decimating struggle against the Indians under King Phillip. From this time on, indeed beginning with news of engagements in this war against Phillip, notices of bloody events run like a red through the pages of Sewall's diary and letters. To illustrate--

Sept. 13. [1675.] Saturday, was that lamentable fight, when Capt. Latrop with sixty-four killed. ²⁷⁵

Decem. 19. [1675.] Sabbath day, that formidable engagement at Narraganset, 54 English put in one pit. . . . ²⁷⁶
.

June 22. [1676.] Two Indians, Capt. Tom and another, executed after Lecture. . . . Last week two killed by Taunton Scouts, as they were in the river, fishing. . . . ²⁷⁷

Saturday, July 1, 1676. Mr. Hezekiah Willet slain by Narragansets, a little more than Gun-shot off from his house, his head taken off, body stript. Jethro, his Neger, was then taken: retaken by Capt. Bradford the Thursday following. He saw the English and ran to them. He related Phillip to be sound and well, about a 1000 Indians (all sorts) with him, but sickly: three died while he was there. Related that the Mount Hope Indians that

²⁷⁴The "Narrative" of 1676, in Hutchinson, Papers, p. 485. See the discussion by Harold L. Peterson, "The Military Equipment of the Plymouth and Bay Colonies, 1620-1690," New England Quarterly, XX (June, 1947), 197-208.

²⁷⁵Diary, I, 11.

²⁷⁶Ibid.

²⁷⁷Ibid.

knew Mr. Willet, were sorry for his death, mourned, kombed his head, and hung peas in his hair.²⁷⁸

.....

Saturday, July 15, [1676.] Quaker marcht through the town, crying, "Repent, &c." After, heard of an hundred twenty one Indians killed and taken. Note. One Englishman lost in the woods taken and tortured to death.²⁷⁹

.....

Sept. 15. [1676.] The after part of the day very rainy. Note, there were eight Indians shot to death on the Common, upon Wind-mill hill.²⁸⁰

.....

April 11 [1677.] . . . We heard . . . of the Slaught- ter of some persons at York by the Indians, among whom was Isaac Smith, who went thether about boards.²⁸¹

[diary gap from March 1677 to February 1685]

.....

Thursday, June 18. [1685.] . . . Noyes this day of a French Pirat on the Coast, of 36 Guns.²⁸²

.....

[July 7, 1685.] General Court sits in the Afternoon. Time is spent in ordering a Drum to beat up for Volunteers about 30. Samson Waters, Capt., to go with Mr. Patteshal's

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 41.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 83.

Brigenteen to fetch in two Privateers thrt this morn are
said to be in the Bay. . . . 283

[September 9, 1685.] . . . heard of a Body of In-
dians near Chelmsford, 3 or 400. The Rumors and Fears
Concerning them do much increase. 284

Sept. 14, 1685. Co to Cambridge, and there hear Mr.
Wigglesworth preach excellently from those words, Fight
the good Fight of Faith. . . . Coming home, hear of
Meadfield Mill being burnt, and their confusion at Mal-
borough last Saturday night. 285

Thursday September 17. [1685.] . . . all Persons
are furnisht with Arms and Amunition according to Law be-
cause of Indians. . . . 286

[August 19, 1688.] There is a press in Boston, of
32 Men, four out of a Company, to goe to the Eastward, by
reason of the fears and dispersions people there are un-
der. 287

[September 25, 1688.] A Press in Boston of 16 men
to send Eastward; several being kill'd by the Indians,

283 Ibid., p. 86.

284 Ibid., p. 95.

285 Ibid., pp. 95-96.

286 Ibid., p. 96.

287 Ibid., p. 225.

which news was at Newbury on Monday morn.²⁸⁸

.....

[October 3, 1688.] People are much alarm'd and in many places dwell in garrison'd houses. . . .²⁸⁹

.....

Wednes. Sept 18. [1689.] In coming up [from London to Plymouth, during his voyage to England] a Privateer fell foul of us, took off our Ancient-Staff, much discompos'd our wooden Guns. . . .²⁹⁰

.....

Oct. 11. [1689.] Pleasant wether [at sea, Sewall having set sail for home on the preceding day]. Two Rogues to windward of us, which the Man of War keeps off but can't come up with them. . . .²⁹¹

.....

[February 8 and 9, 1689/90.] Schenectady, a village 20 miles above Albany, destroy'd by the French. 60 Men, Women and Children murder'd. Women with Child ripp'd up, Children had their brains dash'd out.²⁹²

.....

[July 7, 1690.] Brother Stephen Sewall [of Salem] goes out with Sixty or Seventy Dragoons, and several other to the number of 150. . . . The Lord God of Hosts goe along with them.²⁹³

²⁸⁸Ibid., p. 227.

²⁹⁰Ibid., p. 274.

²⁹¹Ibid., p. 278.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 324.

²⁸⁹Ibid., p. 229, editors' note giving letter to Increase Mather, of this date.

²⁹²Ibid., p. 310.

.....
Augt. 29, 1690. I watch at night with about 30.
men. Word was Stenectady.²⁹⁴

.....
[September 14, 1690.] I watch, Word was Salmon-Falls,
had a very comfortable night; only between 3. and 4. were
disquieted by Guns fired at Charlestown, and Drum beat:
But I did not observe a continual Beat of the Drum, so
caus'd not an Alarm; and about day a Messenger was sent
over who told us the occasion was some Indians seen in
their back fields. Run-away Servants they appear to be;
by which means the Town was generally rais'd: But throw
God's goodness Trouble at Boston prevented.²⁹⁵

.....
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 1691/2. . . . This day . . . news
was brought of an Attack made by the Indians on York.²⁹⁶
. . . was in a great measure destroy'd [.] about fifte
persons kill'd and near ninty captivated.²⁹⁷

.....
Wednesday, July 18, 1694. Oyster River is surpris'd
and 90 odd persons kill'd and captivated, 3 badly wounded.
About 9. night, Mr. Lodowick comes to Boston. Between 10.
and 11. there is an Alarm through the Town kept up till near

²⁹⁴Ibid., p. 329.

²⁹⁵Ibid., p. 350.

²⁹⁶Ibid., p. 356.

²⁹⁷Letter-Book, I, 129, letter to John Ive of this date.

daybreak.²⁹⁸

.....

[May 1, 1695.] We are grievously oppressed by our French and pagan Enemies, by Land and Sea; our Blood and Estates are running out apace. As several Captives escaped inform us, Our heads are set at a certain Rate by the Governor of Quebeck, as foreskins of the Philistins were of old.²⁹⁹

.....

Sept. 17, 1695. . . . ten men shot at Pemmaquid, out of 24. going to get wood. . . . Hugh March, George's Son, was killed at the first shot.³⁰⁰

.....

[July 31, 1696.] Four persons were killd the last Lords day, as were going from the Worship of God at Dover which lies up Pascataway River about 1½ dayes journey from hence. . . . We hear of nothing but Rumors of War and Slaughter against us both by sea and Land. . . . The newport Galley was lately taken by two French men of War.³⁰¹

.....

[August 15, 1696.] Mrs. Hatch and her children in Tears for the death of her husband, which was brought to

²⁹⁸Diary, I, 391.

²⁹⁹Letter-Book, I, 155, letter to a Mr. Burbank of this date.

³⁰⁰Diary, I, 413.

³⁰¹Letter-Book, I, 165, letter to John Storke of this date.

her about an hour by Sun. We are in pain for Saco [Portland] Port. Guns were heard thrice on fifth day all day long. One Peters and Hoyt scalp'd at Andover this week; were not shot, but knock'd on the head.³⁰²

.....

[September 28, 1696.] Our Enemies press upon us hard. Twenty persons have been lately killed and carried away in several places by surprizals.³⁰³

.....

April 29. [1697.] . . . [the] day is signalised by the Achievment of Hannah Dustin, Mary Neff, and Samuel Lennerson; who kill'd Two men, their Masters [i.e., their Indian captors], and two women and 6. others, and have brought in Ten Scalps.³⁰⁴

.....

Sabbath; September 12, 1697. We hear of the slaughter made at Lancaster yesterday.³⁰⁵

September 13. [1697.] At Roxbury Mr. Danforth tells me that Mr. Whiting, the Minister, was dead and buried: Indians shot and scalped him about noon.³⁰⁶

³⁰²Diary, I, 431-432.

³⁰³Letter-Book, I, 171, letter to Bridget Usher of this date.

³⁰⁴Diary, I, 452. One of the Indians had shown Lennerson "how he used to knock Englishmen on the head and take off their Scalps; little thinking that the Captives would make some of their first experiment upon himself" (ibid., p. 453, entry for May 1).

³⁰⁵Ibid., p. 459.

³⁰⁶Ibid.

.....
Febr. 24. [1697/8.] . . . Febr. 22. at break of
day, Andover is surpris'd. Lt. Col. Bradstreet's house rif-
led, his kinsman Wade slain: Capt. Chub. and his wife
slain and three more.³⁰⁷

.....
August 7. 1703. . . . From the Eastward,, Fear of the
French and Indians, some being seen.³⁰⁸

.....
August 11. [1703.] News comes of the Onset of the
Enemy. . . . Fires kindled by the Indians in several
places. . . .³⁰⁹

August 12. [1703.] at night, News comes from Wells
that have buried 15. durst not go to their [o]uttermost:
Lost as they fear 60. Enemy numerous.³¹⁰

.....
January 19. 1703/4 Four men kill'd at Casco-Bay.
. . . Indians had their canoes, and lay . . . in wait.³¹¹

.....
January 31. 1703/4.] George Pierce brings the News,
of a Girl being kill'd at Nichawannuck [Berwick, Me.]; 30
Indians assaulted a Garrison there. . . .³¹²

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 471.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 89.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., II, 84.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid., p. 93.

.....
[February 8, 1703/4.] A Garrison-house is surpris'd
at Haverhill. . . . 313

.....
March 5. [1703/4.] The dismal News of the Slaughter
made at Deerfield is certainly and generally known. . . . 314

.....
[March 6, 1703/4.] . . . Fifty-Seven persons were
Kill'd, and Ninety Captivated out of the little Town of
Deerfield. The very worthy Minister Mr. John Williams,
and his wife are among the Captives. How they will be
able to travel to Cannada in the very deep Snow, and ter-
rible Cold since Tuesday Night last, when they were Taken;
would make a hard heart bleed to think of. 315

.....
[October 15, 1706.] A great number of Indians surpris'd
[Dunstable] in the Night: but God helped the English to
beat them out; though with the loss of several brave Men;
five or Six. 316

.....
Lords-day, August 29. 1708. about 4 p. m. An Express
brings the News, the dolefull News, of the Surprise of Haver-

313 Ibid., p. 95.

314 Ibid., p. 96.

315 Letter-Book, I, 288-299, letter to Henry Newman of this
date.

316 Ibid., p. 335, addendum to letter of this date to "Cousin
Storke."

hill by 150. French and Indians. Mr. Wolf and his wife and family slain. About Break of Day, These Words run much in my mind, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep shall be scattered: What a dreadful scattering is here of poor Havarill Flock. . . .³¹⁷

The Peace of Utrecht in 1713, which ended for the time being the struggle between the French and English, brought temporary relief from the Indian troubles. There were still pirates prowling the coast, however;³¹⁸ and in 1724 war with the Indians began again.

Satterday, August 22. The Sheerness comes up, and Capt Harman with his Neridgwack Scalps at which there is great Shouting and Triumph. The Lord help us to rejoice with Trembling.³¹⁹

.....

[February 26, 1724/5.] Cousin William Gerrish just now comes in, and tells me that Capt. Lovell of Dunstable came up with Ten Indian Men last Satterday night (that stormy night) and kill'd them all. Took Ten Guns, Twenty pair of Snow-Shoes, and some Bever.³²⁰

Citations have been made purposely numerous on this matter (and they might have been much more so) in the hope that

³¹⁷ Diary, II, 234.

³¹⁸ Ibid., III, 129, entry for April 29, 1717, and ibid., p. 333, entry for April 14, 1724.

³¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 342-343.

³²⁰ Letter-Book, II, 182-183, postscript of this date to a letter to Timothy Woodbridge.

the reader may get from them, in a way that he could not from a simple assertion of fact, a realization that the cloud of war, very real and bloody, hung over New England during most of Sewall's adult life. In the light of it we can, perhaps, appreciate the fervency of his feeling when, after viewing some of the town's fortifications, he exclaimed, "The Lord keep the City!"³²¹ We can understand how it was that a man whose customary interest was more in saving Indians' souls than it was in obtaining their scalps, could write after the defeat of Philip: "As to our enemies, God hath, in a great measure, given us to see our desire on them. Most Ring leaders in the late Massacre have themselves had blood to drink, ending their lives by Bullets and Halters"³²² or how, in 1690, a year that brought reports of women being "ripp'd up" and children having "their Brains dash'd out,"³²³ he could be so far removed from ordinary feeling as to send to friends in England "4 Ind. Scalps in Barrals marked with ink S.S."³²⁴

The picture was not, however, one of unrelieved grimness. Boston's position was relatively safe, and despite the "pres-

³²¹Diary, III, 157, entry for August 30, 1717.

³²²Ibid., I, 25, copy of a letter to Edward Hull dated October 23, 1676.


³²³Ibid., p. 310, entry for February 8 and 9.

³²⁴Letter-Book, I, 113-114, memorandum of letter to Edward Hull dated December 2, 1690. This suggests a scientific and festive day Sewall spent on September 22, 1676: "Spent the day from 9 in the M. with Mr. [Dr.] Brakenbury, Mr. Thomson, Butler, Hooper, Cragg, Pemberton, dissecting the middlemost

ses" of men to go out against the enemy and frequent news of disasters at one or another of the frontier settlements, its training days mixed pleasure and duty in pleasant proportion. In the year of the Deerfield massacre (1704), for example, Sarah Knight wrote this description of training day in Boston: ". . . on training dayes The Youth divert themselves by Shooting at the Target . . . [and] hee that hits nearest the white has some yards of Red Ribbin presented him, which being tied to his hatt band, the two ends streaming down his back, he is Led away in Triumph, with great applause, as the winners of the Olympiack Games."³²⁵

An intimate view of the institution of training day is provided by Sewall himself, particularly in the unpublished "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," a part of which is devoted to a record of his activities with the South Company. The interest and humor of this military journal may be seen in the following excerpt. The training it describes was on September 18, 1682, the fourth and last of that year.

The South-Company Trains: upon a little krest on the side of the Gate-House[.] Lieut. Frary commanding in

of the Indian executed the day before. . . . [Hooper] taking the  in his hand, affirmed it to be the stomach. I spent 18s., 6d, in Ale, 6d in Madera Wine, and 6d I gave to the maid." (Diary, I, 21.)

³²⁵Journal, pp. 52-53. See H. Telfer Mook, "Training Day in New England," New England Quarterly, XI (December, 1938), 675-697, for a description of the institution through its colorful heyday and decline in the first half of the nineteenth century. Particularly after 1820 it became almost entirely a holiday. The training aspect had become a farce, and the institution was abolished a few years before the Civil War.

the absence of Capt. John Hull] goes to Prayer, calls over the Roll, & . . . Muddy-River Soldiers join us; then past into Roxbury. Two Companies from Boston, Volunteers under the command of Capt. Hutchinson, & Capt. Townsend, follow us and are opposed by Capt. Brattle with his Troop, then by South Company [;] then by Roxbury [;] so the white, red Cross'd colours [and] pass toward Dorchester by the burying place, & come round on the other side & gain Capt. Brattle to the Party. Capt. Thaxter & his Troop joins with us [;] fire stoutly one upon another, & so to Dinner. Mr. Pyncheon . . . I invite to Dinner . . . under the Trees. After Dinner the white Colours goe first [,] South Company & Roxbury drawing the Pikes in the Rear of the Musketeers [who] fire on them all the way smartly till come to large Pasture on the left Hand as goe to Dorchester. . . . Capt. Brattle Set a Watch. Officers stood in a Ring to receive the Word which was Shibboleth but before it came to me, 'twas Sinbele, & so it had pass'd a great part of the Ring (Tradition is so treacherous) therefore given over again. Capt. Thaxter beats up the out-guard. So Skirmish. At last Mr. Bowles Prayes, after singing part of the 46. Ps. So Lead out of the field . . . against Mr. Eliot's . . . muddy-River Men, and then make up our Files & goe to Mr. Bowles's & Drink Cider, He having Invited us: and so home very well blessed be God. . . . My Father Hull went not

out. Twas extream dusty, which was the chief discomfort.³²⁶
Besides their training duties, the military companies were called upon to appear at various public functions, and they often turned out for the funeral of some Boston worthy. Here, for example, is Sewall's description of their exercises at the funeral of Major Clark.

Monday, March 19. [1682/3.] The morning is serene, & still; but very cold for the time of year, & an hard frost. So that the Snow is much upon the ground yet. But we pick out a small plot void of Snow where to draw up, & go to Prayer. Then all are drawn up by Succession, Dorchester tho^o a very ancient Company, was here in the last place, because of the order to make Boston a Regiment by it self. There were three Troops of Horse, which Capt. Prentice Led. . . . Capt Townsend led the Foot: Capt. Henchman Commander in Chief: Marcht 3. & 3. The Troopers, I think, or at least the Trumpeters were somewhat discontented that they were not placed with the Drummer, so just as the Herse came to Red-Lion Lane, Sam. Bligh turned up there, & sounded a brisk Levy, to the great trouble of many. . . . All the Captains had Scarves, & Commission officers & Sarjeants, gloves.³²⁷

An Ensign in the South Company in 1681,³²⁸ Sewall was evidently elected to be its Captain in 1685 following the

³²⁶Fol. 33.

³²⁷Ibid.

³²⁸Ibid., fol. 31. He lists its officers for this year. Hull was Captain and Theophilus Frary was Lieutenant.

death of its previous commander, John Hull; for in that year the General Court, "Upon complaint of Lieutenant Frary, that [the] . . . company is under much discouragement, by reason of the removing of Mr. Sewall . . . to command another company," judged that "Samuel Seawall" should be "captaine of that company as formerly."³²⁹ He remained in the post until shortly before the arrival of Andros, when the proposal to put the red cross back into the colors of the military companies caused him to resign his commission. The practice of some of the companies in carrying it had long been distressing to him, and when he faced the prospect of putting it into those of the South Company, he was, as he says, "in great exercise" about the matter, "and afraid if I should have a hand in't whether it may not hinder my Entrance into the Holy Land."³³⁰ Cotton Mather assured him that the sin would not be his, but Sewall could not help feeling that if he remained Captain he must share the blame of it, especially since he had so often and so vigorously spoken against the practice since the time when Capt. Walley had first introduced the cross into the colors of his company in April, 1821.³³¹

³²⁹ Mass. Records, V, 426, entry for December 5, 1683; Mass. Archives, LXX, 105-106.

³³⁰ Diary, I, 147, entry for August 20, 1686.

³³¹ Ibid., entry for August 22, 1686. Sewall's reaction was apparently the popular one. The first training day described in the military journal was the one at which Capt. Walley "had a red Cross in his colours but vailed; yet so as it might be seen through the . . . vail" (fol. 27). Various of

At the training on August 30, 1686, therefore, Sewall appeared only to take leave of his company, giving each soldier a copy of John Cotton's Gods Promise to His Plantation (1650) and twenty shillings to the company as a whole "for a Treat."³³² On November 11, on his way home from delivering up his commission to the Council, he was asked to the home of Capt. Hill, where he "unexpect[ed]ly . . . found a good Supper. Capt. Hutchinson, Townsend, Savage, Wing and sundry others to the number of 14 or 15, were there. After Supper sung the 46.th Ps."³³³

This surprise party by some of his fellow officers and the South Company's expressed unhappiness at the loss of him

the leaders got together before the July training of the same year and agreed that "it was not convenient" to introduce the cross "at this time" and thought the matter was closed. But on July 11 Capt. Walley, says Sewall, "instead of having no cross at all (as I supposed) had it unveiled; which occasioned several Firings. Capt. Hutchinson & Townsend obstructed his coming into common at Noon." In later trainings Walley persisted, however, and Sewall repeatedly notes the fact.

It was fifty years before this (1654) that Endecott had torn the cross from the colors at Salem. The matter was embarrassing to the colony authorities because it was obviously a gesture of defiance against England. A compromise arrangement had been reached whereby the military companies kept it out while the flag at the fort on Castle Island in the harbor kept it in. When its reintroduction was proposed, therefore, in 1686, Sewall was able to write: ". . . to introduce it into Boston at this time was much, seeing it had been kept out more than my Life-time" (Diary, I, 147, entry for August 22, 1686).

³³²Ibid., p. 150.

³³³Ibid., p. 156. At the time of the first training of the following spring, he notes: ". . . Serjeant Bull warns the South-Company now under the Command of Capt. William White: those the words. . ." (ibid., p. 173, entry for April 19, 1687).

as its commander in 1683 are but two instances which seem to attest to Sewall's popularity as a military commander. There are others. On the first training day after his return from England, he went into the field with the South Company, exercised them in "a few Distances, Facings, Doublings," and "thanked them," as he says, "for their Respect in mentioning me when in England, warning the Company in my Name; and told them the place I was in required more Time and Strength than I had, so took leave of them."³³⁴ Despite this and other such protests,³³⁵ it was not until 1693 that he was able to note concerning orders for the South Company to train: ". . . words run, late under the Command of Capt. Samuel Sewall."³³⁶ He remained in the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, however, and in 1701 was elected Captain of that organization.³³⁷ The reason for the popularity he thus apparently

The training was set for the twenty-third, when he noted: "Many persons: some officers have red paper Crosses fastened to their Hats" (ibid., entry for April 23).

³³⁴Ibid., p. 316, entry for March 24, 1689/90. Andros had now been overthrown and the old Charter forms were back into effect. Since there is no mention made of the cross in the colors, it presumably was out again.

³³⁵See Letter-Book, I, 123, letter to Elisha Hutchinson dated October 17, 1691, and Diary, I, 350, entry for October 16, 1691.

³³⁶Diary, I, 384, entry for October 5, 1693. Roberts, History of the Military Company, I, 258, says he was Major of the regiment in 1695-96, but I find no proof of this. Sibley, II, 347, makes him Major of a regiment in 1675-76. I find no proof of this either, and the date makes the statement quite implausible.

³³⁷Here again he was following in the footsteps of John Hull, who had been an Ensign of the company in 1663, Lieutenant in

enjoyed in both the companies is suggested in the fact that after being elected to head the Artillery Company he gave a modest speech in which he expressed his surprise "to see they had mistaken a sorry pruning Hook for a Military Spear," promised to do his dutiful best, and asked the company over to his house for "bread, Beer, wine[, and] Sillibub,"³³⁸ as he had previously treated the South Company and given out money for drinks all around.³³⁹ It is suggested, also, in his giving a silver cup at one training "to him who made the best Shott," saying with self-deprecating good humor that since at a previous training he had called on them to shoot and had not himself "hit the Butt," he gave it "in Token of the value [he] had for that virtue in others, which I my self could not attain to."³⁴⁰ It is suggested, too, in the fact that, unlike other of the officers,³⁴¹ he apparently never found it necessary to employ any of the prescribed punish-

1664, and Captain in 1671 and 1678 (Roberts, I, 193). Sewall joined in 1679, was first sergeant in 1680, Ensign in 1683, and Captain in 1701 (Roberts, I, 251-252, 259; Whitman, pp. 44, 162).

³³⁸Diary, II, 35-36, entry for June 2, 1701. Sillabub is a dish made of cream or milk and wine, cider, or the like.

³³⁹Ibid., I, 360, entry for April 25, 1693; ibid., p. 150, entry for August 30, 1686.

³⁴⁰Ibid., II, 54-55, entry for May 4, 1702. After dinner on this occasion, they sang four stanzas of the sixty-eighth psalm. When some objected to their singing so much, Sewall, who loved his psalms, answered, "Twas but Four Deep."

³⁴¹See "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 37, training for April 19, 1686, and fol. 27, training for July 11, 1681, for examples of soldiers being "laid Neck & Heels," a punishment known as "the Manacles."

ments for refractory soldiers, namely fining, "riding the wooden horse," and "laying neck and heels."³⁴²

It was probably this same unwillingness to inflict personal injury which, despite all his years as a soldier, kept him from the field of actual battle. It is true, in a sense, that as a judge he shared responsibility for all sorts of legalized mayhem. But in his personal life he was the most peaceable of men. The single time that he notes having done bodily harm to anyone was when his four year old son Joseph hit his sister Betty on the head with a brass door knob, making it bleed. For this, "and for his playing at Prayer-time, and eating when Return Thanks," Sewall "whipped him pretty smartly."³⁴³ He was the kind of man who would much prefer to "have discourse" with an antagonist than lay hands on him. As a magistrate he was never what he called "a striker" and disliked such as were. Twice he was among those "pressed in His Majesties name to appear at the Town-house compleat in Arms," once in November of 1688 just before he left for England and a win in the summer of 1690, and each time he took the acceptable but unheroic course of hiring others to serve in his stead.³⁴⁴ The closest he ever got

³⁴²Acts and Resolves, I, 129.

³⁴³Diary, I, 369, entry for November 6, 1692.

³⁴⁴On November 3, 1688, he was ordered to report (ibid., p. 235) and tried to get Robert Grundy to go in his place, telling him that he would probably be pressed before long in any case and outlining conditions that would be more desirable for him than simply "the King's Pay" that he would otherwise

to the scene of actual conflict was when he and two others were ordered by Governor Dudley to "search for and seize" some pirates at Marblehead. They set out for Salem, where they enlisted the services of Sewall's more warlike brother, Stephen, who, with the help of forty-two volunteers and "the Singular all-powerfull gracious Providence of God," effected the capture, Samuel having returned in the meantime to Boston, where he witnessed the execution several weeks later. The description he gives of this event is noteworthy: "After Dinner," he writes,

about 3. p.m. I went to see the Execution. . . . Many were the people that saw upon Broughton's Hill. But when I came to see how the River was cover'd with People, I was amazed: Some say there were 100 Boats. 150 Boats and Canoes, saith Cousin Moody of York. He told them. Mr. Cotton Mather came with Capt. Quelch [the pirate chief] and six other for Execution from the Prison to Scarlet's Wharf, and from thence in the Boat to the place of Execution about the midway between Hanson's point and Broughton's Warehouse [on the Charles River flats]. Mr. Bridge was there also. When the scaffold was hoisted to a due height, the seven Malefactors went up; Mr. Mather pray'd for them standing upon the Boat. Ropes were all fasten'd

wise receive (Letter-Book, I, 91). Robert Grundy apparently failed to respond, and he secured Jonathan Wales for five pounds (Diary, loc. cit.). In June of 1690 he got John Bradshaw Miles to go in his place for nine pounds immediate payment and seven pounds fifteen shillings more in the fall (Ledger, fol. 19).

to the Gallows (save King, who was Reprieved). When the Scaffold was let to sink, there was such a Screech of the Women that my wife heard it sitting in our Entry next the Orchard, and was much surprised at it; yet the wind was sou-west. Our house is a full mile from the place.³⁴⁵

It was characteristic of Sewall that, rather than go out and fight pirates, he should interest himself instead, as he did for many years, in making collections of money and arranging for the ransom of various "poor Captives in Alger or Sally."³⁴⁶ When, in 1690, the French and Indians destroyed Schenectady and ravaged town after town in New Hampshire and in Maine, Sewall, instead of joining those who went out to fight, joined William Stoughton in a journey to New York, there to meet with representatives of the other colonies concerned "to treat advise and conclude of proper methods to be taken for the . . . subduing of the Comon Enemy. . . ."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ For this entire episode, see the Diary, II, 103-111, entries for June 7 to July 2, 1704.

³⁴⁶ Letter-Book, I, 200, letter to John Ive dated June 10, 1698. For his work in ransoming "honest Joshua Gee," see the Letter-Book, I, 38, 45, 49, 77, all letters to his London agent, John Ives, and dated September 4, 1686, March 30, 1687, July 9, 1687, March 31, 1688. For another, Benjamin Halawell, see ibid., p. 77, letter to John Ive dated March 31, 1688, and Account Book, entries for February 24, 1690/1, and February 8, 1691/2. For another, Anthony Heywood, see the Letter-Book, I, 156, 157, letters to Edward Hull dated July 22 and October 30, 1695. There are numerous other references which might be cited.

Sallée was a principal port of Morocco, about two hundred miles southwest of Gibraltar.

³⁴⁷ Mass. Archives, XXXVI, 8, 9, a copy of their commission. For his account of the journey, see the Diary, I, 317-319,

Back home again, he accepted a commission from Connecticut to act as its agent in the handling of moneys raised for the relief of New Hampshire and Maine, laying it out in salt, rye, Indian corn, pork, nails, etc. for shipment to the stricken towns.³⁴⁸ In 1697 he undertook the same job again, declaring himself "gratified and honoured" to be chosen in so worthy a design and finding in Connecticut's show of brotherly love a confirmation of his belief that the New England provinces were "Caucen German to the Citizens of the New Jerusalem."³⁴⁹

It is appropriate to conclude this discussion of Sewall's military activities with his description of an Artillery training on October 6, 1701, the year in which he was elected Captain of the company:

Very pleasant fair Wether; Artillery trains in the Afternoon. March with the Company to the Elms; Go to prayer, March down and Shoot at a Park. Mr. Cushing I think was the first that hit it, Mr. Gerrish twice, Mr. Fitch, Chaun-

entries for April 21 to May 9, 1690. Plans were made for an attack on Montreal by forces of Connecticut and New York, for a campaign against the eastern Indians, and a naval expedition against Quebec. All three projects were failures and Massachusetts' expenses caused her to make her first issue of paper money.

³⁴⁸Letter-Book, I, 5-8, an account sheet and a letter to John Allyn, Secretary to the Governor of Connecticut, dated December 3, 1692.

³⁴⁹Ibid., p. 191. letter to Eleazer Kimberly dated October 5, 1697; ibid., p. 182, letter to an unidentified addressee dated March 30, 1697. Between these two are a series of letters having to do with the job he had undertaken.

cy, and the Ensign of the Officers. By far the most missed, as I did for the first. Were much contented with the exercise. Led them to the Trees again, perform'd some facings and Doublings. Drew them together. . . . I inform'd the Company I was told the Company's Halberds &c. were borrowed; I understood the Leading staff was so, and therefore ask'd their Acceptance of a Half-Pike, which they very kindly did; I deliver'd it to Mr. Gibbs for their Use.

They would needs give me a Volley, in token of their Respect on this occasion. The Pike will, I suppose, stand me in forty shillings, being headed and shod with Silver.

. . . 350

The silver ferrule of this pike still exists, bearing the inscription:

Agmen Massachusetts
est in tutelam Sponsae
AGNI Uxoris.
1701
Ex dono Honorabilis
SAMUELIS SEWALL Armigeri

Which is to say: "The Massachusetts Company is for the protection of the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. 1701. By gift of the Honorable Samuel Sewall, Esquire." The motto sentence, with its joining of Mars, Christ, and the Church, was most apt for a Puritan military organization.

Chapter Five

WRITER

Today Samuel Sewall is known primarily as the writer of a diary, a unique recorder of New England life of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. To the men of his own time, however, he was important not as a writer but as a public official and as one who occupied a high social and economic position in the community. Insofar as he was thought of as a writer, it was as the author of certain prophetic and humanitarian tracts, and as a poet. Like his prophetic writings, his verses have mainly a curious and historical interest. More memorable are his utterances on the subjects of the Negro and the Indian, in which we are introduced to the problem of minority groups in the Puritan community and, by relation, to the questions of liberty and equality in Puritan political theory, the significance of which found illustration in the revolutionary movement in New England during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Next to his diary, the work by which Sewall best deserves to be remembered is his Selling of Joseph, an anti-slavery tract published in 1700 and termed by him "a Sheet in defence of Liberty."¹ He describes the occasion of his writing this in the following diary entry:

¹Letter-Book, I, 326, letter to Rev. John Higginson dated April 13, 1706.

The Selling
OF
JOSEPH
A Memorial.

FORASMUCH as Liberty is in real value next unto Life: None ought to part with it themselves, or deprive others of it, but upon most mature Consideration.

The Numerousness of Slaves at this Day in the Province, and the Uneasiness of them under their Slavery, hath put many upon thinking whether the Foundation of it be firmly and well laid; so as to sustain the Vast Weight that is built upon it. It is most certain that all Men, as they are the Sons of Adam, are Coheirs; and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all other outward Comforts of Life. GOD hath given the Earth [with all its Commodities] unto the Sons of Adam, Psal 115. 16. And hath made of One Blood, all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined the Times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: That they should seek the Lord. Forasmuch then as we are the Offspring of GOD &c. Act 17. 26, 27, 29. Now although the Title given by the last ADAM, doth infinitely better Mens Estates, respecting GOD and themselves; and grants them a most beneficial and inviolable Lease under the Broad Seal of Heaven, who were before only Tenants at Will: Yet through the Indulgence of GOD to our First Parents after the Fall, the outward Estate of all and every of their Children, remains the same, as to one another. So that Originally, and Naturally, there is no such thing as Slavery. Joseph was rightfully no more a Slave to his Brethren than they were to him: and they had no more Authority to Sell him, than they had to Slay him. And if they had nothing to do to Sell him, the Ishmaelites bargaining with them, and paying down Twenty pieces of Silver, could not make a Title. Neither could Potiphar have any better Interest in him than the Ishmaelites had. Gen. 37. 20, 27, 28. For he that shall in this case plead Alteration of Property, seems to have forfeited a great part of his own claim to Humanity. There is no proportion between Twenty Pieces of Silver, and LIBERTY. The Commodity it self is the Claimer. If Arabian Gold be imported in any quantities, most are strait to meddle with it, though they might have it at easy rates; lest it should have been wrongfully taken from the Owners, it should kindle a fire to the Consumption of their whole Estate. 'Tis pity there should be more Caution used in buying a Horse, or a little lifeless dust; than there is in purchasing Men and Women: Whereas they are the Offspring of GOD, and their Liberty is,

Auro pretiosior Omni.

And seeing GOD hath said, He that Stealeth a Man and Selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to Death. Exod. 21. 16. This Law being of Everlasting Equity, wherein Man Stealing is ranked amongst the most atrocious of Capital Crimes: What louder Cry can there be made of that Celebrated Warning,

Caveat Emptor!

And

Fourth-day, June, 19. 1700. . . . Having been long and much dissatisfied with the Trade of fetching Negroes from Guinea; at last I had a strong Inclination to Write something about it; but it wore off. At last reading Bayne, Ephes. [Paul Baynes, Commentary on the First Chapter of the Ephesians (1618)] about servants, who mentions Blackamoors; I began to be uneasy that I had so long neglected doing any thing. When I was thus thinking, in came Brother Belknap to shew me a Petition he intended to present to the General Court for the freeing a Negro and his wife, who were unjustly held in Bondage. And there is a Motion by a Boston Committee to get a Law that all Importers of Negroes shall pay 40^s per head, to discourage the bringing of them.² And Mr. C. Mather resolves to publish a sheet to exhort Masters to labour their Conversion. Which makes me hope that I was call'd of God to Write this Apology for them; Let his Blessing accompany the same.³

"Drawn up in haste," as Sewall later said,⁴ for presentation to the Council and General Court, The Selling of Joseph speaks yet today with a force that is little diminished by the passage of more than two hundred and fifty years. If ever its author was touched by greatness it was here, and no

²Boston Records, IX, 5, date of May 26, 1701.

³Diary, II, 16.

⁴Letter-Book, I, 245, memorandum of letter to Paul Dudley dated November 20, 1700.

estimate either of the man or of the Puritan heritage which he represents can fairly omit a consideration of its pages.

"Forasmuch as Liberty, " it begins,

is in real value next unto Life: None ought to part with it, or deprive others of it. . . . It is most certain that all Men, as they are the Sons of Adam, are Coheirs; and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all other outward Comforts of Life. GOD hath . . . made of One Blood, all Nations of Men. . . . So that Originally, and Naturally, there is no such thing as Slavery. Joseph was rightfully no more a Slave to his Brethren, than they were to him: and they had no more Authority to Sell him, than they had to Slay him. And if they had nothing to do to Sell him; the Ishmaelites bargaining with them, and paying down Twenty pieces of Silver, could not make a Title. . . . For he that shall in this case plead Alteration of Property, seems to have forfeited a great part of his own claim to Humanity. There is no proportion between Twenty Pieces of Silver, and LIBERTY. . . .

And seeing GOD hath said, He that Stealeth a Man and Selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to Death . . . What louder Cry can there be made of that Celebrated Warning,

Caveat Emptor!⁵

⁵Page 1.

Touching briefly on the practical and immediate objections to the institution of slavery, he notes that because "there is such a disparity in their Conditions, Colour & Hair . . . they can never Embody with us . . . to the Peopling of the Land." Furthermore, since Negroes, like Indians, were exempt from military duty,⁶ "as many Negro men as there are among us, so many empty places there are in our Train Bands." These matters are slight, however, compared with the moral objections. ". . . it is too well known what Temptations Masters are under, to connive at the Fornication of their Slaves; lest they should be obliged to find them Wives. . . . It is likewise most lamentable to think, how in taking Negroes out of Africa, and Selling of them here, That which GOD has joynd together men do boldly rend asunder; Men from their Country, Husbands from their Wives, Parents from their Children. How horrible is the Uncleaness . . . if not Murder, that the Ships are guilty of that bring great Crowds of these Miserable Men, and women."⁷

Answering the old argument that "These Blackamoors are of the Posterity of Cham, and therefore are under the Curse of Slavery," he says: "Of all Offices, one would not begg this: viz. Uncall'd for, to be an Executioner of the Vindictive Wrath of God; the extent and duration of which is to us uncertain. If this ever was a Commission; How do we

⁶G. H. Moore, Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts (New York, 1886), p. 244.

⁷Page 2.

know but that it is long since out of Date? Many have found it to their Cost, that a Prophetical Denunciation of Judgment against a Person or People, would not warrant them to inflict that evil.⁸ This departure from a literal interpretation of the Scriptures in the name of simple humanity is noteworthy. Employed by Sewall as a means of demanding the abolition of slavery, it would be used by men of later generations in Massachusetts as a means of challenging every other element of Scripture which they found repugnant to humane sensibilities.

To the argument that "the Nigers are brought out of a Pagan Country, into places where the Gospel is Preached," Sewall replies: "Evil must not be done, that good may come of it. The extraordinary and comprehensive Benefit accruing to the Church of God, and to Joseph personally, did not rectify his brethrens Sale of him."⁹

A law of the Colony passed in 1641 declared: ". . . there shall never be any Bondslavery . . . amongst us, unless it be lawful Captives taken in just Wars, [or such] as willingly sell themselves . . . to us. . . ."¹⁰ Answering those who would object that such slaves as there might be in Massachusetts were but "lawful Captives" taken in wars that "the Africans have . . . one with another," he says: "Every War is

⁸Ibid.

⁹Pages 2-3.

¹⁰Colonial Laws, p. 10.

upon one side Unjust. An Unlawful War can't make lawful Captives. . . . I am sure, if some Gentlemen should go down to the Brewsters to take the Air, and Fish: And a stronger party from Hull should surprise them, and Sell them for Slaves to a Ship outward bound: they would think themselves unjustly dealt with; both by Sellers and Buyers. . . . whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. . . . ^{ll}

The last objection with which he deals is that "Abraham had Servants brought with his Money, and born in his House." His answer is that

Until the Circumstances of Abraham's purchase be recorded, no Argument can be drawn from it. In the mean time, Charity obliges us to conclude, that He knew it was lawful and good. It is Observable that the Israelites were strictly forbidden the buying, or selling one another for Slaves. . . . GOD expects that Christians should be of a more Ingenuous and benign frame of spirit. Christians should carry it to all the World, as the Israelites were to carry it one towards another. And, for men obstinately to persist in holding their Neighbours and Brethren under the Rigor of perpetual Bondage, seems to be no proper way of gaining Assurance that God has given them Spiritual Freedom. Our Blessed Saviour has altered the Measures of the ancient Love Song, and set it to a most Excellent New Tune,

which all ought to be ambitious of Learning. . . . These Ethiopians, as black as they are; seeing they are the Sons and Daughters of the First Adam, the Brethren and Sisters of the Last ADAM, and the Offspring of GOD; They ought to be treated with a Respect agreeable.¹²

It was The Selling of Joseph which Whittier had in mind when he wrote of Sewall:

Honor and priase to the Puritan
Who the halting steps of his age outran,
And, seeing the infinite worth of man
In the priceless gift the Father gave,
In the infinite love that stooped to save,
Dared not brand his brother a slave.¹³

Unlike most of Whittier's lines on Sewall, these would seem to be a reasonably accurate statement of the fact. Such, at least, is the feeling of G. H. Moore, historian of slavery in Massachusetts, who cites Sewall's tract as evidence that he was "far in advance of his day and generation" in his views on the subject.¹⁴ Moses Coit Tyler declares it to be "illuminated by lofty ethical intuitions . . . an acute, compact, powerful statement of the Case against American slavery," one which left "almost nothing new to be said a century and a half afterward, when the sad thing came up for final adjust-

¹²Ibid.

¹³From "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall," Works, I, 211-212.

¹⁴Notes, p. 88.

ment.¹⁵ Weeden says of it that "a century and a half of Old and New England culture, with the French Revolution by the way, added little to this powerful rendering of the rights of man."¹⁶

The Selling of Joseph stands in comparative isolation in the history of the American anti-slavery movement. There had been scattered protests ever since the institution of slavery was first established in the New World, notably by groups of Mennonites and Quakers in Pennsylvania,¹⁷ but Sewall's was the first such tract to appear in Puritan Massachusetts and a third of a century passed before another comparable to it appeared in "A Testimony against that Anti-

¹⁵A History of American Literature, II, 100.

¹⁶Economic and Social History of New England, I, 429.

¹⁷Mary S. Locke, Anti-Slavery in America . . . , 1619-1808 (Boston, 1901), pp. 9-17. William Usselinx had opposed the importation of slaves into the Swedish colonies as early as 1624, but only on the grounds of good business. He felt that white servants provided a better basis for profitable commerce. In 1682 the Free Society of Traders in Pennsylvania tried to provide against perpetual servitude by providing for the freeing of slaves after a service of fourteen years. Similar instances can be cited for other of the colonies during the years of their founding.

The anti-slavery movements among the Puritans and Quakers were the most important. In 1637 Roger Williams protested against slavery for the captive Pequots, and in 1652 Rhode Island provided for freedom after a period of years. At about this same time the General Court of Massachusetts declared against "the hainous and crying sinn of mann stealing," and in 1675 John Eliot objected to the sale of Indians on the grounds that they would in many cases be removed "from all meanes of grace."

In 1688 the Mennonites near Germantown published a resolution against slavery, citing the Golden Rule and concluding: "Here is liberty of conscience. . . . Here ought also to be liberty of the body." In Philadelphia in 1693 appeared George

Christian Practice of making Slaves of Men . . ." by Elihu Coleman, a Quaker of Nantucket.¹⁸ After this it was not until the years of the Revolution that the slave again found significant advocacy of his cause.¹⁹

Few men in the Puritan community were disposed to the exercise of conscience concerning slavery. From the earliest years of the colony, Indian captives had been sought after by the Winthrops and others with the same undisturbed sense of righteousness that accompanied the partitioning of any other plunder of war.²⁰ Similarly, the trade in Negroes, of little importance in the first years but rapidly developing at the turn of the century,²¹ caused little moral concern in someone like Cotton Mather, for example, who, upon being presented with a Negro by some grateful members of his congregation, announced that he "rejoiced in Heaven's Smile."²² The practice of a pious Newport elder, we are told, was to return thanks to God on Sunday for the safe arrival of a cargo of slaves during the

Keith's Exhortation . . . to Friends based on the scripture later used by Wendell Phillips: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his Master the Servant that is escaped from his Master unto thee."

¹⁸Moore, pp. 109-110.

¹⁹Ibid. "There may have been other occasional efforts," says Moore, referring to a petition in 1755 from Salem to the General Court against the importation of Negroes, ". . . but they must have been comparatively few and fruitless."

²⁰Weeden, "Early African Slave Trade," p. 106, says that "Sewall's was about the earliest and almost the only voice raised in behalf of a large humanity."

²¹Adams, Provincial Society, pp. 9, 164. Governor Dudley, in a report to the Board of Trade in 1708, gave the number in that year as four hundred, half of which had arrived in the last decade (Moore, p. 50).

²²Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 198, cited.

week, feeling grateful "that an overruling Providence had been pleased to bring to this land of freedom another cargo of benighted heathen to enjoy the blessing of a gospel dispensation."²³ For taking a stand against what he termed "this wicked practice of Slavery,"²⁴ Sewall found himself the object, as he says, of many "Frowns and hard Words."²⁵ One reaction to The Selling of Joseph took the shape of a written reply by John Saffin, his colleague on the Superior Court and himself a slave-holder. Saffin's ire had been aroused not so much by the tract itself as by the attempt of his slave Adam to gain his freedom and by Sewall's judicial support of that attempt.²⁶ This work by Saffin, entitled A Brief and Candid Answer to A late Printed Sheet, Entituled, The Selling of

²³Weeden, "Early African Slave Trade," p. 122.

²⁴Letter-Book, II, 39, memorandum of a letter to Henry Newman dated December 18, 1714.

²⁵Ibid., I, 326, letter to Reverend John Higginson dated April 13, 1706. ". . . it is no small refreshment to me," he writes, "that I have the Learned, Reverend and Aged Mr. Higginson for my Abettor. By the interposition of this Brest-work, I hope to carry on and manage this enterprise with Safety and Success."

²⁶The case is described at length by Abner C. Goodell, "John Saffin and his Slave Adam," Col. Soc. of Mass., Proc., I (1892-94), 85-112. Saffin had drawn up a deed of manumission by which Adam was to have his liberty after seven years, during which time he was to serve "cheerfully quietly and industriously." The seven years expired in 1701, when Saffin refused to carry out the bargain, saying that its terms had not been met by the slave, that instead he had been "turbulent, outrageous and insolent." The case was protracted over several years, but Adam finally gained his freedom.

Goodell states (p. 88) that "Saffin was called before Sewall, who spoke severely to him about his failure to fulfill the bargain." I do not know the source for this statement.

Joseph (1701),²⁷ is one more illustration of the climate of hypocritical piety and plain malignity of spirit in which Sewall maintained his point of view. It argues that the cases of Joseph and enslaved Negroes are not parallel, the selling of Negroes being an improvement in their state because it is to a life "among Christians"; that to argue against slavery on the grounds of our all being sons of Adam is to argue for banishing degree in society altogether, a thing which he is quite certain Sewall does not wish to do; that the fact that white servants were preferable did not make the selling of black ones unlawful; and that the laws against man-stealing did not apply to "strangers," ignoring Sewall's argument that it ought to for those of a truly Christian spirit. At the very end of the piece the author abandons his forensic footwork to let his real feelings show in these lines:

Cowardly and cruel are those Blacks Innate,
Prone to Revenge, Imp[s] of inveterate hate.
He that exasperates them, soon espies
Mischief and murder in their very eyes.
Libidinous, Deceitful, False and Rude,
The Spume Issue of Ingratitude.
The Premises consider'd, all may tell,
How near good Joseph they are parallel.

²⁷Repr. in Moore, pp. 251-256.

Had Sewall possessed the crusading zeal of the later abolitionists in the anti-slavery cause he would not have allowed the matter to stop here. But as we have already had several occasions to note, he did not possess such a spirit. Having stated his case he was inclined to let the matter rest. He "forbore," as he said, "troubling the Province with any Reply."²⁸ In the winter of 1705, however, he was again moved to action by a bill sent in by the deputies providing for what he regarded as "extraordinary penalties" for inter-racial marriages. Feeling that its passage would be "an Oppression provoking to God,"²⁹ he first caused to be printed an article on the question of slavery which he had seen in an English publication called the Athenian Oracle, and which was an approximate restatement of his own earlier arguments.³⁰ After doing this he wrote a piece which appeared in the News-Letter for June 12, 1706,³¹ wherein he put forward much the same kind of practical objections to the institution

²⁸Letter-Book, I, 326, letter to Rev. John Higginson dated April 13, 1706. Similarly, ibid., p. 322, letter to Nathaniel Byfield dated January 4, 1705/6. On June 8, 1703, he was angered by the appearance of Adam once more in court and the opposition of Saffin: "Adam is again imprison'd to be Tried at Suffolk Sessions. Trial order'd by the General Assembly.

Superanuated Squier [i.e., Saffin], wigg'd and powder'd with pretence,

Much beguiles the just Assembly by his lying impudence. None being by, his ^{bold}sworn Attorneys push it on with might and main

By which means poor simple Adam sinks to slavery again."
(Diary, II, 79.)

This outburst, as bitter as anything Sewall ever wrote, he was apparently content to express only to his diary.

²⁹Diary, II, 143, entry for December 1, 1705.

³⁰Letter-Book, I, 326, letter to Rev. John Higginson dated April 13, 1706. See Locke, Anti-Slavery in America, pp. 18-19.

³¹Johnson, American Economic Thought, pp. 20-21; Moore,

of slavery as he had earlier expressed in The Selling of Joseph.³² After this he wrote nothing more, though he continued to oppose oppressive racial legislation in Council³³ and to express privately an antipathy for the slave traffic.³⁴

The interest of The Selling of Joseph lies not so much in the work itself, considerable though that may be, as in the reason for Sewall's writing it. Why was it that he had been, as he says, "long and much dissatisfied with the Trade of fetching Negroes from Guinea"? Why was it that a man so

Notes, p. 106. The attribution cannot be proved, but it makes good circumstantial sense.

³²The nature of the article is indicated in its title: "Computation that the Importation of Negroes is not so possible as that of White Servants." Johnson, American Economic Thought, p. 109, says concerning it that ". . . Sewall was the only [American] writer who examined the economic considerations involved in slavery and servitude." He also notes (pp. 20-21) that Sewall's argument that the use of white servants in colonial manufactures would "save a considerable sum in a year to make Returns" places him in the frame of mercantilist theory.

³³See chap. 4, sec. IV.

³⁴E.g., Letter-Book, II, 182, letter to Timothy Woodbridge dated February 25, 1724/5.

It may be noted here that Lorenzo J. Greene, The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776 (New York, 1942), p. 41, makes the mistaken assertion that Sewall performed the hypocritical act of himself engaging in the slave traffic, citing the following advertisement from the Boston News-Letter for September 13, 1714: "To be disposed of by Mr. Samuel Sewall Merchant, at his warehouse near the Swing Bridge in Merchants Row Boston, several Irish Maid Servants time, most of them for Five years, one Irish Man Servant, who is a good Barber and Wiggmaker, Also Four or Five likely Negro Boys." This was not the judge but "Samuel Sewall, de Stephano," as his uncle liked to call him. See the Diary, III, 33, entry for December 31, 1714, for a visit of this son of Stephen with the elder Samuel. That he was a merchant in Boston is shown by Sewall's letter to Samuel Storke dated October 29, 1717, in which he says: "I suppose you are not unacquainted with

respectful of the status quo came to feel "uneasy that [he] had so long neglected doing any thing "and at last felt "call'd of God to Write"? Parrington is content to say that "when his native kindness was touched he spoke out. . . ." ³⁵ That his feelings betokened a kindly disposition is quite true, but to say merely this is to leave a very important aspect of the matter unexpressed, an aspect suggested by a diary entry such as this: "Lord's-day [December 16, 1711]. Four persons were taken into church. Mrs. Frances Bromfield and Marshal's Negro woman, two of them. Their Relations very acceptable." ³⁶ Or this, for November 20, 1715: "Mr. Pember-ton administers the Lord's Supper. . . . Mr. Sewall [i.e., his minister son, Joseph] baptiseth Hannah Man, and an Ethiopian Woman." ³⁷ Distinctions of color no more than of rank and power figured in the qualification for membership in the Congregation of the Saints. However much the Puritan was unwilling to admit his black brother to social equality, the equality of all men before God was something he was not disposed to question. That the Calvinistic doctrine of election was, in a sense, an aristocratic concept is a fact which was nicely illustrated at a town meeting in Milford, Connecticut,

Mr. Samuel Sewall Son of Major Sewall of Salem. He is an accomplish'd Merchant and dwells in Town" (Letter-Book, II, 75).

³⁵ Colonial Mind, p. 95.

³⁶ Diary, II, 329.

³⁷ Ibid., III, 67.

in 1640, where it was "Voted that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; voted, that the earth is given to the saints; voted, that we are the saints."³⁸ But it is also true, and historically of considerably more significance, that if membership in the elect meant equality in the sight of God, equality in the sight of men should be a fact as well. It was this implication of the great Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers that Sewall felt "call'd of God" to express.³⁹

Perry Miller concludes The New England Mind with the remark that "New England was founded as a Puritan commonwealth and was intended to be a holy and unique corner of the world, but it went into the eighteenth century well prepared in the terms of its own tradition to keep pace with the intellectual and emotional alterations of a new era. . . ."⁴⁰ Appearing at the very opening of the eighteenth century, Sewall's "Sheet in defence of Liberty" takes its place (however alarming the fact might have been to its pacific author) in the line of development that led to Lexington and Concord. The transition from an assertion of the black man's natural right to be free of his master to an assertion of the white man's nat-

³⁸ Charles T. Davis, "Some Thoughts on Early Colonial Development," Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., LXIV (May, 1932), 509.

³⁹ Parrington is, of course, aware of the force of this doctrine in the development of democratic ideas in New England (e.g., pp. 6-11). He reserves application of it, however, for discussions of his more particular libertarian heroes, such as Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams. Wright, American Interpretations of Natural Law, p. 43, makes the appropriate application in the case of Sewall, saying that he was "giving a liberal interpretation to the divine law principles of the early New Englanders."

⁴⁰page 491.

ural right to be free of his kind is a reasonable one quite capable of being traced.⁴¹

II

In order to see Sewall's prophetic writings in the proper light it is necessary to understand the state of Indian affairs in New England during the early years of the Massachusetts settlement. The reader of the diary gets an occasional saddening glimpse of the pathetic state to which the red man had been brought in the years following the defeat of

⁴¹See, for example, Charles Borgeaud, The Rise of Modern Democracy in England and New England (New York, 1894). The thesis of this fascinating work is that from the earliest writers of the Reformation to Jean Jacques Rousseau "runs a red thread, sometimes hard to distinguish . . . but which may always be found. . ." (p. 7). Alice M. Baldwin, in The New England Clergy and the American Revolution (Durham, N. C., 1928), provides a most thorough and convincing documentation of the idea that "a direct line of descent [exists] from seventeenth century philosophy to the doctrines underlying the American Revolution" (p. xii). Similarly, Morris, Studies, p. 68, concludes that "the political ideas of John Locke which formed the basis of Revolutionary political theory, were merely an expansion of the political Calvinism which molded New England thought in the seventeenth century." The same idea is demonstrated by Herbert D. Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688," Am. Hist. Rev., XXXII (April, 1927), esp. pp. 490-491. See also, Otto Von Gierke, Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500 to 1800 (Cambridge, England, 1934), I, xlvii; Grinnell, "Bench and Bar," p. 169; same author's "John Winthrop and the Constitutional Thinking of John Adams," Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., LXIII (February, 1930), p. 116; Edwin Mead, "The Meaning of Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, III (January, 1930), 25.

The priesthood of all believers, the right of free inquiry, the concept of a natural law (or the law of God) of higher validity than the acts of human legislative bodies, the covenant idea as applied to the government of men--these were the great doctrinal levers of revolution. It is worth noting that Sewall, for all his love of stability in government, declared in his Phaenomena (1697) that rulers "who will not take warning by Belshazzar, and Motezuma; and will not learn

Philip. November 27, 1685: "May an Indian, James's Squaw, was Frozen to death upon the Neck near Roxbury Gate on Thursday night . . . being fudled."⁴² December 30, 1685: "An Indian Man is found dead on the Neck with a Bottle of Rumm between his Legs."⁴³ February 13, 1685/6: "An Indian Squaw died on the Neck last night."⁴⁴ June 20, 1712: ". . . rode with my wife and Joseph in our Coach [along] Dorchester Road, almost as far as the first Brook. Brig's Indian drove us."⁴⁵ In the back country, and particularly along the borders of New Hampshire and Maine, the Indian was still an antagonist to be feared, but in the holy commonwealth of Massachusetts he was a menial and a drunkard, miserable and without hope. As Cotton Mather remarked, writing of the plague that had come among them in the years prior to the first settlement, ". . . the Woods were almost cleared of those pernicious Creatures to make Room for a Better Growth."⁴⁶

Like all colonizing charters of the time, that for Massachusetts Bay declared that to "wynn . . . the natives of the country, to the knowledg and obedience of the only true God

in all their Administrations, to glorifie . . . God . . . must expect to come to worse ends than they did" (p. 4).

⁴²Diary, I, 108.

⁴³Ibid., p. 115.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁵Ibid., II, 353-354.

⁴⁶Magnalia, bk. I, ch. 2. Elsewhere he refers to them as "rattlesnakes" and "wild beasts." John Eliot, the famous apostle to the Indians, spoke of them as "the dregs of mankind," and Daniel Gookin, also an Indian missionary, regarded them as "not many degrees above beasts" (see Samuel Eliot, "Early Relations with the Indians," in Early History of Massachusetts, Lowell Lectures [Boston, 1869], p. 310).

and Saviour of mankinde" was "the principall ende of [the] . . . plantation," and members of the Court of Assistants swore as a part of their oath of office to work for the advancement of the Gospel in the regions assigned to the colony.⁴⁷ It was not until 1646, however, that significant work began, when, on October 28 of that year, John Eliot and three others, "having sought God," as he says, "went unto the Indians inhabiting within our bounds, with desire to make known the things of their peace to them."⁴⁸ At this first service, held at an Indian village near Eliot's Roxbury pastorate in a wigwam crowded with men, women, and children (a place which seemed to Eliot a "darke and gloomy habitation of filthiness and uncleane spirits"), there was prayer, an hour and a quarter of sermon, and questions, for the purpose, says Eliot, of seeing whether it was possible "to screw, by variety of means, something or other of God into them." After three hours of this the missionaries "asked them if they were weary, and they answered, 'no.'⁴⁹ Unfortunately, not all of the Indians

⁴⁷Colonial Laws, p. 164. The Charter has been often reprinted. The lines here quoted are from the copy at the opening of the first volume of the Records of the Court of Assistants.

⁴⁸The Day-Breaking if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New England (London, 1647), in Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 3, IV (Cambridge, Mass., 1834), p. 3. As William D. Love, Samson Occam and the Christian Indians of New England (Boston, 1900), pp. 3-4, points out, the delay in missionary effort represents no special hypocrisy on the colony's part, inasmuch as the Charter mention of it was mainly a pious formality so far as the home government was concerned.

⁴⁹The Day-Breaking, p. 4 ff. See also, Samuel Eliot, "Early Relations with the Indians," pp. 316-317.

were so receptive. When Eliot attempted to preach the Gospel to King Philip, that haughty individual took hold of a button on Eliot's coat and told him that he "cared no more for his Gospel than for that Button."⁵⁰ Another Sachem told Experience Mayhew, missionary at Nantucket, to "go and make the English good first. . . ."⁵¹

Among the tribes to which the missionaries were allowed entrance, however, the work was surprisingly successful. In 1651 Eliot founded the first of the towns of the so-called "praying Indians," at Natick, about eighteen miles from Roxbury, establishing it in the theocratic forms he had praised in his Christian Commonwealth two years before. In the words of John Dunton, he "reduc'd 'em to the Jewish plan of government, and for that purpose expounded to 'em Exod. 18."⁵² Other such towns were quickly established, until by the time of the war with Philip there were no less than fourteen in the region of the Bay proper with others at Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard under the care of Experience and Thomas Mayhew and still others at Plymouth. In addition, the famous Indian Bible, a twelve-hundred page translation into Algonkian by

⁵⁰ Neal, History, I, 232-233.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 257.

⁵² Life and Errors, p. 114. The pertinent portion of the text referred to is that in which Moses is instructed by Jethro to "provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge. . . . So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he said."

the indefatigable Eliot, begun in 1650, had been printed at the Cambridge press between 1660 and 1663 and two hundred copies distributed.⁵³

Such an undertaking as the printing of the Indian Bible, not to mention the support of the various missionaries themselves, needed money far beyond what the colony was able to afford. The decade of the forties, in fact, when the Indian work was first begun, was a time of financial crisis in Massachusetts, and money for use in any cause was in desperately short supply.⁵⁴ Edward Winslow, sent to England to obtain financial aid, saw in the colony's necessity a thing whereby both God and Massachusetts might be served and proposed that a missionary society be organized to raise funds for converting the natives of New England. Thanks to a series of enthusiastic promotional pamphlets from the pens of Eliot and others describing the success of the work undertaken with the Indians, the idea caught hold, and the London Corporation, chartered in 1649 to take charge of the funds gathered, was soon in possession of investments yielding a thousand pounds

⁵³ See the chapter on Eliot in Morison's Builders of the Bay Colony for an agreeable sketch of early work among the Indians. Also, Barry, History, Vol. I, chap. 13; Love, Samson Occam, chap. 1; Hutchinson, History, I, 160-169.

⁵⁴ See Marion H. Gottfried, "The First Depression in Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, IX (December, 1936), 655-678. The unfavorable balance of trade with England had exhausted the financial reserves of the settlers, and the commerce by which the colony would soon become prosperous had not yet been established.

a year.⁵⁵ To supervise the handling of money sent to New England, the organization, which bore the name of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England and Adjacent Parts, appointed commissioners in the field who were to meet from time to time and make report to London on the state of Indian affairs. Among the most faithful of these commissioners was Samuel Sewall. Appointed in 1699,⁵⁶ he was shortly thereafter elected to succeed William Stoughton as Secretary and Treasurer,⁵⁷ a post which he held for twenty-

⁵⁵Winship, "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," p. 56; Morison, *Builders of the Bay*, pp. 298-300; J. Hammond Trumbull, "The Origin of Indian Missions in New England," *Am. Ant. Soc., Proc.*, LXI (October, 1873), 27.

⁵⁶Diary, I, 502, entry for October 14, 1699. On January 20, 1697, Increase Mather wrote Sir William Ashhurst, Governor of the Company in England, saying that "Several of those that were appointed your Commissioners here, are gone to their Rest. particularly, Governor Bradstreet, Sir William Phips, & Major Richards. Mr Morton is quite done[.] Infirmities of age have rendered him unserviceable these many moneths. It is therefore needfull that some other Commissioners should be added, their being now none Left but Mr Stoughton, Maj. General Winthorp [sic], and my selfe[.] Mr Stoughton desires that there may be added, my son Cotton Mather, & Mr Nehemiah Walker who is my son in law & succeeds Mr. Eliot in his pastoral office in Roxbury. . . . Mr Stoughton also desires that Mr Samuella Sewell & Mr Peter Serjeant may be joined with us. Give me Leave to recommend once more to you, old Mr. John Foster who is one of the Governor's Council, & a very good & discreet Gentleman." (John W. Ford ed., Some Correspondence between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company in London and the Commissioners of the United Colonies in America, the Missionaries of the Company and Others Between the Years 1675 and 1712 [London, 1896], p. 81.)

⁵⁷Letter-Book, I, 231, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated May 3, 1700.

five years,⁵⁸ calling meetings, painfully getting together his annual accounts, making journeys of inspection to reservation lands held by the society, and doling out funds and supplies to those working in the cause.⁵⁹

The amount of money involved was considerable (he notes, for example, the arrival of bills of exchange worth six hundred

⁵⁸Ibid., II, 166, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated May 9, 1724. He delivered over to Adam Winthrop, his successor, a considerable amount of "Stationary Ware," such as New Primers Indian and English, "a Psalter, with the Gospel according to John, English and Indian," etc. (ibid., p. 177. letter to Sir Robert Ashhurst dated October 6, 1724). In the Diary, III, 334, entry for April 30, 1724, he mentions turning over "the Company's Bonds and Mortgages, my Lord Lymerick's Deed for his Land at Marthas's Vinyard, Mr. Vines Ellacott's deeds for Hog-Island, alias Cousins's Island, in Casco Bay; and all the Company's Books small and great, amounting to the number of Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and thirteen Books." Ashhurst had written him on April 9, 1724, asking him to stay on, "having by long Experience found your Zeal for the great Work we are engaged in, and punctual discharge of the Trust reposed in you" (Letter-Book, II, 166). Although he gave up the job of secretary-treasurer, he remained a commissioner until his death.

In addition to the references already noted, his work with the society may be traced through the following: Letter-Book, I, 239, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated August 2, 1700; Diary, II, 29, entry for January 10, 1700/1; Letter-Book, I, 250, letter to the Earl of Bellomont dated January 21, 1700/1; ibid., p. 311, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated March 19, 1704/5; ibid., p. 338, letter to same dated October 19, 1706; Diary, II, 362-363, entry for September 23, 1712; ibid., III, 12, entry for July 26, 1714; ibid., p. 115, entry for January 2, 1716/17; ibid., p. 127, entry for April 17, 1717; ibid., p. 188, entry for July 9, 1718; ibid., p. 192, entry for August 29, 1718; ibid., p. 216, entry for March 31, 1719; ibid., p. 278, entry for January 18, 1720/1; ibid., p. 281, entry for February 16, 1720/1; Letter-Book, II, 162, letter to Rev. Solomon Stoddard dated March 14, 1723/4; ibid., p. 255, letter to Isaac Simon and others dated October 8, 1728; Diary, III, 395, entry for March 27, 1729. The whole subject is very thoroughly handled in Winship's "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company."

⁵⁹The pages of the receipt book which he kept for this particular job show, for example, that he had forty-one callers for funds in 1709, thirty-eight in 1713, and fifty-three in 1718. Curiously enough, the diary contains not a single reference to any of them.

pounds in 1701),⁶⁰ and one cannot look through the pages of the receipt book which he reserved for this job without thinking that at least the financial purpose for which the missionary effort was conceived was being well fulfilled. The money went, for the most part, to merchants for supplies, to outlying preachers for a supplement to their regular salaries, to settlers living near the Indians for keeping an eye on their affairs, and to students of the Indian language for their support and encouragement. If the glory to God was great, the benefit to the Bay was also considerable. But then, of course, the two things were synonymous.⁶¹

After the death of Eliot in 1690, work among the Indians had fallen off. Sickness had made disastrous inroads at the Vineyard, and everywhere there were examples of Christianized Indians being brutalized by the white man's rum.⁶² True, such of them as yet remained in the southern parts of the colony

⁶⁰ Letter-Book, I, 250, letter to Earl of Bellomont dated January 21, 1700/1. Morison, Builders of the Bay, p. 299, notes that "in ten years £4673 were transmitted to New England." He doesn't say which ten. Randolph, writing from Massachusetts in 1684, stated that the income was three or four hundred pounds a year and that with this the colonists "enriched themselves, yet charged it all as laid out upon the poor Indians" (Palfrey, III, 501, cited).

⁶¹ Winship, "Samuel Sewall and the New England Company," pp. 56-57, observes: "It is probably not entirely accidental that the field work of the Company is the side of its organization that was neglected, at least in the records. . . . There are more signs in London than in Boston of concern over the spiritual balance sheet, and in London the anxiety is apt to be traceable to criticism of the lack of visible returns, with its consequent threat of shrinkage in contributions."

⁶² Increase Mather, Ichabod (Boston, 1702), pp. 1-2.

PROPOSALS

Touching the Accomplishment

OF

PROPHESIES

Humbly Offered

By SAMUEL SEWALL, M. A. and sometime
Fellow of Harvard College at Cambridge
in New-England.

Ezek. xlvii. 8. *Then said he unto me, These Waters issue out
towards the East Country, and go down into the desert,
and go into the Sea: which being brought forth into the
Sea, the Waters shall be healed.*

*Quid igitur: Damnamus Veteres: Minime. Sed post
priorum studia in Domo Domini, quod possumus,
laboramus. Non tam Propheciam quam Historiam
scribimus.*

Hieron. prolog. in Pentateuchum.

MASSACHUSET;

BOSTON, Printed by Bartholomew Green. 1713.

could be considered in some degree removed from paganism, but the number of communicants "according to the most strict order of the Congregational way" remained disappointingly small.⁶³ Sewall's first mention of the Indian work, in a letter to England written while Eliot was yet alive, was an expression of disappointment with the way things were going. "As to the Design of Converting them," he says, "we in N. E. may sorrowfully sing the 127. Psalm. Except the Lord build the House, they Labour in vain that build. . . . beseech Him to put his Hand to that work, and not in a great measure as it were to stand and look on."⁶⁴

It is against this background of Indian affairs that Sewall's Phaenomena (1697) and what he termed its "appendix,"⁶⁵ the Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies (1713), should be viewed. As noted earlier, works such as these, if considered merely in their prophetic aspect, must seem merely fantastic to the modern reader, or, to use Parrington's phrase, an evidence of intellectual interest "in things either

⁶³Magnalia, bk. VI, ch. 6. Mather gives the number as "at least one hundred" for 1688, no great harvest certainly after more than four decades of effort. A letter to Ashhurst dated March 2, 1705, and written by the two Mathers and the Rev. Nehemiah Walker, summarizes the state of affairs at the end of the century. The writers quite understandably put matters in the best possible light, but they limit their report to "the Southern parts of this province," and even here they are able to say of the spiritual condition of the Indians only that "almost all that remain under the influence of the English . . . are so far Christianised as that they believe there is a God, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world." (Ford, Some Correspondence, pp. 83-85.)

⁶⁴Letter-Book, I, 22, letter to Stephen Dummer dated February 15, 1685/6.

⁶⁵Ibid., II, 23, letter to Joseph Dudley dated August 25, 1713.

occult or inconsequential."⁶⁶ The fact is, however, that, considered in their historical context, they appear as neither one of these things; for their object, beyond the prophetic one of demonstrating that America, "far from deserving the Nick names of Gog and Magog . . . stands fair for being made the Seat of the Divine Metropolis,"⁶⁷ was a program of immediate and practical action that would make this happy culmination possible. Since, as everyone knew, Christ would not come to establish his kingdom until the Gospel had been preached unto all the world, the first and most needful step was to do something about the "sorrowfull Decay and Languishing of the Work" among the Indians "and the little Faith . . . to be found in the exercise concerning it."⁶⁸ Writing under the heading of "A Plea for the Dumb Indian," Sewall asked his readers: "What say you? Do you so love Christ, as to say . . . Come Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Are you in good earnest . . .? Desire then, Pray and Labour that the Gospel may be preached in all the World; in this Indian End of it. For till then, Christ himself tells you, He will not, He cannot come. The Door is, as it were, shut against Him. . . . For Love, or Shame, Get Up! and open the Door!"⁶⁹ As to the cost, "Truth is a Kind

⁶⁶ Colonial Mind, p. 93.

⁶⁷ See the Phaenomena's dedication to Ashhurst, and similarly, the Proposals, pp. 1-2, 4.

⁶⁸ Dedication to Ashhurst.

⁶⁹ Phaenomena, p. 55.

of Gold that cannot be bought too dear. #70

There was the strong possibility, moreover, as John Eliot and others had long believed, that the Indians were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, and that the English in showing kindness to them might well be "shew[ing] Kindness to Israelites unawares, #71 a fact which leads him to declare, quoting Roger Williams:

Boast not proud English, of thy birth and blood:

Thy brother Indian is by birth as good. #72

If things come about as Sewall hopes, the Indians, "instead of being branded for Slaves with hot Irons in the Face, and arms; and driven by scores in mortal Chains . . . shall wear the Name of God in their foreheads, and . . . be delivered unto the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. #73

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷¹ Ibid., the dedication. See the Letter-Book, I, 22, letter to Stephen Dummer dated February 15, 1685/6: "Dr. Thorowgood writ a Treatise above 30. years ago, entitled Jews in America, shewing the [Indians] . . . to be Abraham's Posterity. If so, the day of their Espousals will make all the Christian World glad, and the Rich among the People will desire their favour."

⁷² Phaenomena, p. 53. The lines are from Williams' Key into the Language of America (London, 1643).

⁷³ The dedication.

Before leaving the subject of the Phaenomena, it may be noted that the reader of the diary and letters is introduced to every smallest detail of the conception, publication, and success of what he refers to in the dedication to Ashhurst as "these first fruits" of his pen. Writing to the ministers of the Scottish settlement in Darien, he notes the "Synchronisme" between his work and the time of their expedition and explains how he had come to write it. In the summer of 1696, he says, I would fain have had the following Question held at our Commencement at Cambridge; viz: Res Antichristiana in America, Est Euphrates ille Apocalypticus in quem Angelus Sextus effundit phialam suam? When this did not take, I

The modern reader, encountering speculation of America's being the "Seat of the Divine Metropolis" and of the Indians' being descendants of the Children of Israel, is understandably inclined to wonder whether he should smile or merely yawn. If

printed a pretty many Copies of the Question . . . and sent them to learned Men of my Acquaintance who gave me long and elaborat Answers by way of Opposition. To these I replied, and shewed wherein their Answer was not satisfactory to me. And at last, to ease myself of the toil of Writing, and to give a more full account of my Sentiments concerning America, I printed this little Disquisition. [Letter-Book, I, 227-228, letter dated April 8, 1700.]

March 27, 1697. I read to the Lieut-Governour [Stoughton] my Phaenomena Apocalyptica, what had written of it. He licenses the printing of it. [Diary, I, 450.]

May 1. 1697. The first Sheet of Phaenomena Apocalyptica is wrought off. [Ibid., p. 452.]

Fourth-day, May 12. . . . This day wrought off the first half-sheet of the Phaenomena; which I corrected my self. [Ibid., pp. 452-453.]

Sixth half sheet, July 17, wrought off the Letter D. of my Phaen. [Ibid., p. 457.]

[September 8, 1697.] I presented his Honour [Stoughton] with the view of a half-sheet, which begins In quatuor angulis terræ. [Ibid., p. 458.]

[November 4, 1697.] Governour, Mr. Secretary and I went to see Mr. Morton; before these works began, Had the Epistle to his Honour [a letter to Stoughton appears at the end of the work], a proof of it, in my pocket: but had no opportunity to shew it: was taken this day. [Ibid., p. 462.]

[November 9.] The Epistle to the Lieut-Governour, which is the last half-Sheet, is wro't off, and the Book is set to sale in Mr. Wilkins's shop. One is sold. . . . Mr. Flint of Norwich came in to the Printing-Room: I gave him a Book stich'd up, which is the first perfect Book I have given away. [Ibid., p. 462.]

[November 10.] L^t Governour and Council met at the Council Chamber. . . . I took that opportunity to present the L^t Governour with seven Phaenomena! [Ibid., p. 462.]

From this time on he distributed the Phaenomena, as he did all his works, with an eager hand. A copy of it went off to Harvard library "well bound in calvs Leather, with Mr. Oakes's election sermon, and Mr. Willard's Tract about Swearing. . ." (ibid., p. 475, entry for March 16, 1697/8), another went to his brother at Salem (ibid., p. 463, entry for November

he pauses to consider, however, the thought may occur to him that when we enter the realm of belief involving the super-sensible, absolute evaluation becomes impossible; that there is no such belief but what is quite literally "fantastic";

13, 1697), another to Sheriff Bradford "as went along in Boston . . . on horseback" (ibid., entry for November 16, 1697), another to Nicholas Noyes of Salem, who came to dine after lecture and who sent next day, in return, a copy of his own "Treatise against Perriwigs" (ibid., pp. 463-464, entries for November 17 and 18), five to Edward Hull in London for passing out, "especially of my cousins" (Letter-Book, I, 202, letter dated June 11-18, 1698), and so on. On one of the end-pages of the unpublished "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--" there is a list of those given out over a period of four years, to the number of something over two hundred and fifty. This did not exhaust his supply; for on November 14, 1727, he wrote to President Wadsworth of Harvard: "I have sent you three Dosen of the Phaenomena to be distributed, That have set Solstice these Thirty years, and I abide in the same Opinion still. If this handfull of Spring-Water may be any way refreshing I shall rejoice" (Letter-Book, II, 230). As evidence of his unshaken conviction, he had contracted for a second edition the preceding spring (Diary, III, 383, entry for April 15, 1727).

When he got out the supplementary Proposals in 1713, he sent one off to Cotton Mather with a letter saying: "I offer to your view a small Indian Basket of Summer Fruit. It has been long a-gathering by a weak and unskillfull hand: Tis more than Thirty years since you and I have had Conference about: I now pray your advice. To whom, when, and how to present it. Please to read from the 9th page to the End; . . . I am of Opinion . . . by it many Apocalyptical Phaenomena are well Solved." (Letter-Book, II, 22, letter dated August 4, 1713.) A week later he wrote in his diary: "Dr. Cotton Mather not having answer'd my Letter nor look'd upon me on his Lecture day last Thursday; I was in a strait to know what to do, as to the disposal of my Proposals; and let none go. Now Dr. Incr. Mather spake pleasantly to me; of his own accord thank'd me for my book, said his Son had shew'd it him; I was fond of America." This was all the encouragement he needed: "After I came home I sent him Two Duz. by Bastian about 2 a-clock" (Diary, II, 392-393, entry for August 12, 1713). Six more went off to Governor Dudley (Letter-Book, II, 23, letter dated August 25, 1713), two to the Rev. Jedediah Andros at Philadelphia (ibid., p. 34, memorandum of a letter dated August 23, 1714), six to Sir William Ashhurst in England (ibid., memorandum of letter dated August 31, 1714), and so on.

that some of the most fantastic have provided bases for dynamic cultures and historical movements; and that, finally, until man finds himself possessed of a better means of evaluation, he must be satisfied with the pragmatic one of looking to results. In the case of Sewall, his prophetic beliefs led to a positive and humane policy toward the Indians. In his capacity as a public official, as earlier noted,⁷⁴ he opposed oppressive legislation directed against them. In a private capacity, he interested himself both in their education and in their spiritual well-being, laying out land to that purpose from his holdings in the Narragansett country,⁷⁵ for example, and providing funds for an Indian meeting house at Sandwich on Cape Cod, a fact which caused the congregation, as Cotton Mather remarked, "to pray for him under that character, 'he loveth our nation, for he hath built us a synagogue.'"⁷⁶ In addition to his routine duties as what might be termed the executive secretary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he made at least three trips to its more remote holdings, two to Martha's Vineyard, one in 1702 and another in 1714, and one to the island of Arrowsick off the coast of Maine in the fall of 1717. Since the journal he kept on

⁷⁴Chap. 4, sec. IV.

⁷⁵See chap. 3, sec. V.

⁷⁶Magnalia, I, 569. See the Letter-Book, I, 62, letter to Edward Milton, carpenter at Sandwich, dated September 26, 1687. It was to be "a convenient comfortable Meetinghouse . . . the Dimensions about four and twenty foot in Length, about Eighteen foot broad, with two Galleries."

the last of these journeys was unknown to the editors of the Sewall papers, the character of its contents may be briefly noted.⁷⁷ Setting sail from Boston's Long Wharf in the sloop Sea-Flower on the evening of August 1, he reached the island of Arrowsick four days later. Going ashore, he called upon the gentlemen with him "to take notice & bear witness," as he says, "that . . . I did enter upon and take possession of that Island in the Name . . . of the Company. I cut a branch of Thorntree [performing thereby the ancient rite of "turf and twig"], eat very good goosberries & Rasberries gathered there, gathered Apples, cut up a Turf of the ground and cut Fresh and Salt grass for the Sheep aboard." On August 9, at a meeting of Indian leaders with officials of the English government, Sewall being present: "Indians about Eight, are treated with. . . . Natives desire a line might be run; and seem'd to be against more houses being builded. Went away somthing dissatisfied. Watch Enlargd and more Sentinels set out." Next day the Indians came back, "acknowledged their unusual manner of going away . . . and presented . . . two Belts of Wampum." An agreement was reached on the day following, and when it was signed and sealed, Sewall "gave them all to Drink. The young men gave volleys; made a Dance: and all was managed with great Joy." Taking ship home again, he ar-

⁷⁷See the Bibliography, sec. III, part B, Journal of Voyage to Arrowsick and Circuit Court Record. The opening pages of the manuscript are devoted to the Arrowsick journey.

A Memorial

Relating to the

Kennebeck Indians.

THAT my often speaking the same thing, may not be gravaminous; I humbly offer my Sentiments about sending a Military Force against the *Kennebeck* Indians, in Writing.

IT is Resolved that the Government has sufficient Reason to prosecute the *Eastern Indians* for their Rebellion. But I am humbly of Opinion, that sufficient Enquiry has not been made, Whether the Government has done all that is necessary on its part, to prevent a Rupture.

AT the Conference of his Excellency with the Sachems, and Chief Men of the *Eastern Indians*, at *George-Town* on *Arnsfick* Island, *August*, 9. 1717. The Indians shewed a great Reluctancy against Erecting Forts higher up the River; and against the arrival of a Multitude of New Inhabitants; lest they should prove unable heartily to embrace them. They also desired the Running of a Line between the *English*, and them; and made some Proposals on their part, which were rejected: but no Proposals for fixing Boundaries, were offered to them.

WITHOUT doubt, Boundaries are necessary for the preservation of Honesty and Peace among those that border one upon another. This is evident from the Law made for the Renewing of them between Townships once in three Years time, successively; and the penalty of Five Pounds inflicted on those, who shall neglect their Duty herein.

rived at the Long Wharf in the early morning of the fifteenth. When the watch told him that his family was well, he was "much revived," and as he proceeded homeward he gratefully considered his good fortune in having "escaped the danger of the Pirates," in having overcome "the Difficulty arisen in our Treaty with the Indians," and in having been well "whereas many were Sea-sick; others much troubled with Fluxes."

When, in 1721, a resolution was passed for sending an expedition into Maine to put down recent uprisings of the Indians there, Sewall published his Memorial to the Kennebeck Indians, wherein he recalled his meeting with them on the island of Arrowsick four years before and offered his opinion that the fault of the uprisings lay less with the Indians than with the English. The Indians had wanted a line drawn, showing "a great Reluctancy against Erecting Forts higher up the [Kennebec] River; and against the arrival of a Multitude of New Inhabitants; lest they should prove unable heartily to embrace them. . . . but no Proposals for fixing Boundaries, were offered to them."⁷⁸ Such a course, Sewall had long felt,⁷⁹ was as unreasonable as it was dishonorable. "Boundaries are

⁷⁸pages 1-2.

⁷⁹See the Letter-Book, I, 232-233, letter to Sir William Ashhurst dated May 3, 1700. Unless boundaries are drawn, he says, the Indians will become persuaded that the English "will never leave till they have crowded them quite out of all their Lands. And it will be a vain attempt for us to offer Heaven to them, if they take up prejudices against us, as if we did grudge them a Living upon their own Earth."

For convenience of reference, it may be noted that the substance of what Sewall has to say in his Memorial to the Kennebeck Indians is substantially repeated in the Letter-Book, II, 108-110, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated February 23, 1719-20.

necessary for the preservation of Honesty and Peace among those that border one upon another,⁸⁰ and the failure of the government to cooperate in the establishing of them must suggest to the Indians that instead of being interested in their welfare, as the Charter had specifically commanded, the English were intent on their destruction. Therefore, ". . . it is Necessary to state and settle plain and lasting Bounds between the English, and the Indians; that so the Natives may have a certain and establish'd Enjoyment of their Own Country: and that the English may have Deus Nobiscum legibly embroidered in their Banners."⁸¹

⁸⁰Page 2.

⁸¹Page 4. In contrast to the enunciation of pious principle, the records provide several realistic and, if one will, cynical sidelights on Sewall's relations with the Indians. On January 30, 1707/8, for example, John Neesnummin, an Indian preacher, came with letters from Roland Cotton, missionary on the Cape. Sewall tried to arrange for him to lodge at an inn, "but after they sent me word they could not doe it . . . I was fain to lodg him in my Study" (Diary, II, 212). As the editors of the diary note, Sewall, while not asking the Indian to sleep in the barn, as most would have done, was yet not willing to allow him a bed chamber. As with the Negro, so with the Indian, freedom from oppression was one thing, social equality another.

It was one thing, also, to favor a just land policy for the Indians and something else again to find your own land titles challenged by them. In 1683 John Hull had paid one hundred and fifty pounds for something over a thousand acres of land at Woburn, the so-called "Land of Nod." Eighteen years later Sam Thomas, Indian, "grandson of the old Sagamore of those parts," entered claim for the title of this tract, and the Hull heirs drew up a petition to present to the General Court asking confirmation of their title rights and demanding that something be done to stop "the Further Spreading of this Gangrene" (Mass. Archives, XLV, 264, 266, date of June 5, 1701).

The title of lands at Newbury was also in dispute. On June 16, 1679, Sewall received a letter from Daniel Denison

Sewall's position on the Indian, as on that of the Negro, was an honorable one. His failure, insofar as it was that, lay in not supplying the leadership which would have given his policies more than theoretical significance. This is not a particularly damning qualification. It is merely saying that his stature was not of heroic proportions. The men are few who have altered the course of empire by a consideration of right.

III

On New Year's Day morning, 1701, while it was yet dark, there appeared on Boston Common four trumpeters who had been hired by Sewall (cost: five pieces of eight) to assist him in greeting the new century. After sounding a blast on their horns, they retired to the nearby home of their employer, where they continued to sound their "levets" until sunrise, at which time one of the bell-men of Boston who was present

which stated: "I am desired by Job (who married Old Will's grandchild [Old Will being an Indian] and in her right claims the land at Newbury falls, which he long possessed and now you say you purchased of him) that you would make out your right and they will be satisfied, or otherwise let him or them have a quiet possession, or otherwise let the law decide the title." In 1681 he paid twenty pounds to Old Will's heirs for the one hundred and sixty acres in question. (See Coffin, The History of Newbury, p. 363.) Sewall's father had been involved in the same kind of affair twenty years before (see Mass. Records, IV, part 2, p. 21).

One can do with this sort of thing just about as one chooses. The feeling of the present writer is that it says more about a historical situation than it does about the character of Samuel Sewall. It is the kind of thing which is bound to attend the fundamentally immoral act of the usurpation of a continent. Immoral, that is, unless, like the Puritans, one is convinced that it is done, as Cotton Mather said, "to make Room for a Better Growth."

WEDNESDAY

January 1. 1701.

A little before Break-a-day at *Boston* of the
Massachusetts.

ONCE more ! Our GOD, vouchsafe to Shine :
Correct the Coldness of our Clime.
Make haste with thy Impartial Light,
And terminate this long dark Night.

Give the poor *Indians* Eyes to see
The Light of Life : and set them free.
So Men shall GOD in CHRIST adore :
And Worship Idols vain, no more.

So *Asia*, and *Africa*,
Europa, with *America* ;
All Four, in Consort join'd, shall Sing
New Songs of Praise to CHRIST our KING.

recited these verses:

Once more! our God vouchsafe to shine:
Correct the Coldness of our Clime.
Make haste with thy Impartial Light,
And terminate this long dark night.

Give the poor Indians Eyes to see
The Light of life: and set them free.
So Men shall God in Christ adore,
And worship Idols vain, no more.

So Asia, and Africa,
Europa, with America;
All Four, in Consort join'd, shall Sing
New Songs of Praise to Christ our King.⁸²

Their author was Sewall, who, as we have already had several occasions to note, was a ready maker of both Latin and English verse. Exactly how ready he was the reader may quickly learn by glancing through the poetry section of the bibliography which accompanies this study. If the extensiveness of his poetic product as it is there shown proves a matter of surprise, the reason is not so much the obvious one of Sewall's poetry having been forgotten as it is that such activity is

⁸² Diary, II, 27, entry for January 1, 1700/1. Mary C. Crawford, Old Boston in Colonial Days: or, St. Botolph's Town (Boston, 1922), p. 272, notes that at the opening of the present century these same verses were publicly read by the Rev. Edward Everett Hale. In 1713 Sewall reprinted the poem at the end of his Proposals, adding three stanzas. The six stanzas of the final poem are in the Diary, II, 392-393, editors' note.

not included in our stereotype of the Puritan. The oblivion which has descended upon the great body of early New England verse has led us carelessly to think in terms of its not existing. True, the names of Michael Wigglesworth, Benjamin Tompson, Edward Taylor, plus perhaps one or two more, are no longer strange to us, but except to a relatively few specialized students of our early literature, it comes as a somewhat startling fact that in Harvard's first years, as Professor Morison has pointed out, that school "sent forth a more abundant galaxy of poets, in proportion to her numbers, than at any subsequent period of her history . . .";⁸³ or that our knowledge of the verse of the time covers what Jantz terms "a haphazard fifth" of that which was produced;⁸⁴ or that the number of poets in the New England community during the years in which Sewall was writing was around seventy.⁸⁵ Generally speaking, the poetry which was produced appears to us to merit the forgetfulness which it has been accorded. The same forgetfulness should not, however, attend the fact that it was written. It is important to realize that Boston was a writing community with an interest in literary

⁸³Harvard College, I, 132. The great preserving medium was the Cambridge Almanac, which became, says Morison, "the annual poetry magazine of Harvard College."

⁸⁴"The First Century of New England Verse," p. 225. The standard list, he remarks (p. 221), was compiled in "an amusingly haphazard fashion more than a century ago . . . [by] an anonymous reviewer in the American Quarterly Register of December 1827. . . ."

⁸⁵Jantz, pp. 395-408.

concerns which, though sufficiently barren in some respects (e.g., its comparative disregard of the better contemporary English writers),⁸⁶ makes the emergence from it of a writer such as Franklin understandable as something more than a cultural freak.⁸⁷

If Sewall's correspondence be taken as indicative, there was in the first years of the eighteenth century considerable

⁸⁶The aspect in which, from our point of view, the literary culture of the time was most notably lacking was its failure to accord recognition to the writers of the day who seem to us most worthy of it. Palfrey, IV, 384, note 1, for example, remarks of the catalogue of the Harvard library which appeared in 1723 that it did not contain "any work of the wits of Queen Anne's time--of Addison, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, Gay, Pope, Prior, Swift, Steele, Young. . . . There was nothing of Locke or of Dryden . . . and Shakespeare and Milton had been recent accessions," Shakespeare being present in a 1709 edition and Milton in one of 1720. Many of these were available, however, as Palfrey further remarks, in the local book shops. Perry Miller, New England Mind, p. 91, writing on the same subject, says: "Works of literary merit did not often find space on Puritan bookshelves because of their style or beauty. Even if occasional works esteemed by us turn out to have been important to the Puritan, his reasons were certainly quite different from ours; Milton and Bunyan in Puritan eyes were controversialists and theologians who loomed no larger than Owen or Baxter, John Cotton or Thomas Hooker." Sewall's reading is discussed in chap. 2, sec. II, above.

⁸⁷Professor Wright, Literary Culture, p. 215, observes that we "unquestionably . . . owe the writings of the greatest American writer of the eighteenth century to the literary movement which developed in New England and centered in Boston about 1720. . . ." At another point (p. 205) he states that "the central figure in this movement was Samuel Sewall. . . ." As far as the present writer has been able to determine, both the literary movement and Sewall's central place in it are too vaguely defined to warrant such positive assertions. It is plain enough, however, that the literary activity was considerable, as was Sewall's interest in it, a fact which will presently be demonstrated. An assertion of more than this is neither necessary nor particularly meaningful.

group interest in poetry in Boston and the surrounding towns, the first indication of which is the literary friendship between Sewall and a local schoolmaster, Richard Henschman.⁸⁸ Between Sewall and Henschman in particular, but also between Sewall and such other litterateurs as Edward Taylor, Nicholas Noyes, Jeremiah Dummer, and Nehemiah Hobart, there was an exchange of verses and of criticism. A letter to Henschman, for example, begins: "I send home your Verses with Thanks. There are many good strokes in them: but in my mind . . .⁸⁹ a beginning which has, to say the least, a familiar ring. Sewall, in turn, sent verses to Henschman for his "Examination and censure."⁹⁰ When he was disappointed in his "Expectation of receiving a distich or 2" from Nicholas Noyes at Salem, he was, as he says, put quite "out of tune."⁹¹ When, on the other hand, Jeremiah Dummer gratified him with an "excellent Poem," he expressed his indebtedness and declared that he had pleased "many Friends with the Sight of it."⁹² Many such

⁸⁸See the Letter-Book, I, 314, editors' note. In his last years Henschman was one of Boston's licensed liquor dealers. Wright, p. 68, gives the first evidence of this friendship as a poem addressed to Sewall by Henschman on January 1, 1700/1. The first mention by Sewall is in a letter to his brother Stephen dated January 27, 1703/4, where he writes of returning some of Henschman's verses (Letter-Book, I, 290). The editors of the letter-book note verses at the Boston public library addressed by Henschman to Sewall and bearing an earlier date. It is apparently to the earliest of these that Wright refers.

⁸⁹Letter-Book, I, 293, letter dated February 24, 1703/4.

⁹⁰Ibid., II, 318, letter dated October 13, 1705.

⁹¹Ibid., I, 315-316, letter dated October 9, 1705.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 388-389, letter dated February 13, 1709/10.

pieces he copied into a memorandum book, thereby making one of the best collections which we have of our early verse.⁹³ His constant habit, also, was to enclose verses with his correspondence, sometimes his own, sometimes those of others.⁹⁴

For the modern taste, the greater part of Puritan verse has a rather forbidding character. Much of it, for one thing, is in Latin, the worth of which few present-day readers will feel impelled to judge. That written by Sewall has been pronounced feeble but correct.⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that in Sewall's own day his efforts in Latin verse were so lightly regarded by at least one part of the Boston public as to result in a published travesty of them (now lost) in the spring of 1701.⁹⁶ Undiscouraged by such treatment, he continued to turn out numerous distichs as the time and subject seemed to warrant, leaving them with friends, enclosing them

⁹³ See the comment in Jantz, p. 219. For a discussion of this manuscript collection, see chap. 2, sec. II, above.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Letter-Book, I, 253, letter to Edward Taylor dated March 14, 15, 1700/1; ibid., p. 257, letter to Mr. Vreeman dated August 4, 1701; ibid., p. 258, letter to Edward Hull dated August 27, 1701; ibid., p. 259, letter to James Pierpont dated September 17, 1701; Diary, II, 140, entry for October 15, 1705; Letter-Book, I, 351, letter to Samuel Wood dated August 19, 1707; ibid., p. 408, letter to "Mr. Moodey of York," dated December 18, 1710; ibid., p. 408, letter to Joseph Lord dated February 5, 1710/11; Diary, II, 359, entry for August 16, 1712; ibid., p. 360, entry for August 17, 1712; ibid., p. 361, entry for August 20, 1712; ibid., III, 240, entry for January 16, 1719/20; Letter-Book, II, 104, letter to Timothy Woodbridge dated February 1, 1719/20; Diary, III, 279, entry for February 8, 1720/1; Letter-Book, II, letter to Edward Taylor dated February 16, 17, 1719/20; Diary, III, 283, entry for March 7, 1720/1.

⁹⁵ William Everett, "Judge Sewall's Latin Epigrams," Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, IV (Boston, 1889), 80.

⁹⁶ Diary, II, 35, entry for May 29, 1701.

in his correspondence, or simply fashioning them for his own amusement and setting them down in his diary.⁹⁷

Of the poetry written in English, by far the larger part consisted of "shadie lamentation" produced on the occasion of someone's demise, frequently for pinning to the hearse.⁹⁸ Though any type of occasional verse is difficult, success in the funereal variety attempted by the Puritan writer is, in our point of view, impossible. The poet who sets for his object the edification of the reader, as the Puritan writer felt obliged to do, has foredoomed himself to at least partial failure. So at least it seems to us. Sewall's poem entitled "A small Vial of Tears brought from the Funeral of JOHN WINTHROP, a very goodly Child" (1711), is fairly illustrative of its type:

In loving, lovely, Darling John,
Winthrop and Dudley Met in One:
Such Harmony of Charming Features
Rarely appears in Mortal Creatures.
But Oh--! What, meet to part so soon!
Must we Resign this Budding Boon?
We must: We will! CHRIST's Will is done;
Our wills shall make an Unison.
JESUS will call John from the Grave,
From Sin, Eternally to Save.

⁹⁷See the poetry section of the Sewall bibliography at the end of this study.

⁹⁸See the Diary, I, 83, entry for June 9, 1685, description of the funeral of the Rev. Thomas Shepard.

Agreeable enough in its opening lines, the poem dies at the point of exhortation. So, at least, we must once again add, it seems to us. It didn't seem so to the Puritan. For him, it was precisely at this point that a poem justified itself. Like the other arts, poetry's highest end was not an aesthetic one; it was to strengthen the cause of God in New England. Beauty was not its own excuse for being; it existed, rather, as a handmaiden of the good. The poet's aim, as Michael Wigglesworth declared, was "to set forth truth and win men's souls to bliss."⁹⁹ We today may be critical of such an aim, but we ought not to be contemptuous either of it or of the efforts that were made for its fulfillment. Just as it is unfair in the matter, say, of the Salem Witchcraft delusion to judge the ignorance of one age in terms of the enlightenment of another, so it is unfair to apply to the poetry of Puritan New England a critical standard other than that by which it was written. To say this is not to suggest a re-evaluation of early New England poetry. The satisfactions that Sewall's generation derived from the work of its poets were theirs alone to enjoy; even if we wished, we could not share them. It is to suggest, however, that if our aim be the understanding of a historical period we ought not to permit aesthetic considerations to stand in the way. Examples of early New England poetry gathered together in a volume such

⁹⁹F. O. Matthiessen, "Michael Wigglesworth, a Puritan Artist," New England Quarterly, I (October, 1928), 492, cited.

as Kenneth B. Murdock's Handkerchiefs from Paul (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), infelicitous as they generally are, tell us much that we should know if we would understand their creators.¹⁰⁰

While the most inviting subject for Sewall, as for his fellow poets, was that of death, there were other less grim occasions which offered suitable poetic possibilities as well. When Samuel Willard, after a siege of illness, returned to his pulpit in the South Church on Thanksgiving Day, 1700, Sewall circulated a memorial broadside for the day, as he had earlier in the same year for the beginning of the new century. When another man of God, the Reverend John Sparhawk, had a son born to him, Sewall wrote to him saying:

Hath G. who freely gave you his own Son,
Freely bestowed on you, one of your own?
You certainly can justly do no less
Than thankfully to own, yours to be his. . . .

On the occasion of "the drying up of that Ancient River, THE RIVER MERRYMAK," Sewall wrote his longest poem, one of thirty-six lines. It pleased him so well that he ordered no less than three hundred copies run off for distribution.¹⁰¹ In it one is reminded of that other New England phenomenon, "the

¹⁰⁰The introduction to this brief anthology of forgotten verse is extremely valuable, and its viewpoint has frequently been reflected in the above lines. See also, Matthiessen, pp. 491-504; Jantz, pp. 222-224; Wright, pp. 92-93.

¹⁰¹Diary, III, 279, entry for February 8, 1720/1.

wonderful one-hoss shay." Like it, the Merrimack enjoyed a "pleasant, steady course" and "hop'd for Ages to endure." But,

At length, an Ambushment was laid
Near Powwaw Hill, when none afraid;
And unawares, at one Huge Sup,
Hydropick Hampshire Drunk it Up!

The poem cannot, of course, stop at this point. Lines for the reader's uplift must be added. Therefore,

Look to thy self! Wadchuset Hill;
And Bold Menadnuck, Fear same Ill!
Envy'd Earth knows no certain Bound;
In HEAV'N alone, CONTENT is found.

The examples that have been given are representative of the kind of verse which Sewall felt justified in bringing into print. The fact that it stands well with the work of such other writers of the time as John Wilson, Anna Hayden, Samuel Torrey, Samuel Danforth, William Adams, Thomas Wally, Joshua Moody, and others will no doubt seem sufficient indication of why all of them have been forgotten.¹⁰² Considerably better are some few utterances which he did not allow to get beyond his diary or personal correspondence. One may doubt that their brevity evinces, as Jantz says, "a classic terseness and restraint"¹⁰³ so much as it does a poetical

¹⁰²See Murdock's Handkerchiefs from Paul for selections by some of these. Selections by others are in Sewall's memorandum book.

¹⁰³"The First Century of New England Verse," p. 312.

shortness of wind, but they are an improvement over the more pretentious pieces. When, for example, Tom Child, a local painter, died, Sewall noted the fact in his diary and added:

Tom Child had often painted Death,
But never to the Life, before:
Doing it now, he's out of Breath;
He paints it once, and paints no more.¹⁰⁴

After the death of his wife in 1717 he wrote to his friend Jeremiah Dummer telling him what had happened and ending his letter with the lines:

What signify these Locks, and Bolts, and Bars?
My Treasures gone, and with it all my Fears.¹⁰⁵

After the death of his fellow councillor and judge, Isaac Addington, he wrote:

Isaac's withdrawn; my laughter's done
In Council now, I see not Addington.¹⁰⁶

Slight as such lines are in themselves, they are valuable for the variety and relief they afford the reader of Sewall's pages, and particularly the diary. One is pleased to find in this fascinating document even such an entry as that for May 11, 1698: "As I lay in my bed in the morn

¹⁰⁴Diary, II, 170, entry for November 10, 1706.

¹⁰⁵Letter-Book, II, 14, letter dated January 25, 1717/18.

¹⁰⁶Journal of Journey to Martha's Vineyard and Circuit Court Journal, entry for March 31, 1715.

[thinking of the hard winter behind], this verse came into my mind,

To Horses, Swine, Net-Cattell, Sheep and Deer,
Ninety and Seven prov'd a Mortal year.^{#107}

Or that for April 9, 1726: ". . . Mrs. Mary Coney died somewhat suddenly on Tuesday morning . . . and was inter'd in one of the new Tombs in the South-burying place; Bearers, Sam. Sewall, John Clark esqr; Sam. Brown esqr, Thomas Fitch esqr; Sa. Checkley esqr. Capt. John Ballantine. . . . Three Sams being Bearers together on the right side, occasion'd my binding all the Bearers up together in this band,

Three Sams, two Johns, and one good Tom
Bore Prudent Mary to her Tomb.^{#108}

Obviously, it would be unfortunate if such lines were printed for themselves, but in the context in which they appear they contribute to rather than detract from the reader's pleasure. It is in just such artless trivia that a great part of the diary's fascination lies.

IV

Sewall lives today because he kept a diary. He is important less for what he was than for what he enabled us to know both of him and of the society in which he lived. By means of the diary we can approach face-to-face, as it were,

¹⁰⁷ Diary, I, 479.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., III, 375.

more than half a century of New England life: from the winter of 1674, when he was still a student at Harvard, to the fall of 1729, a few months before he died. As with any good diary, it is impossible satisfactorily to indicate its character by means of excerpts from it. To be known, it must be approached entire, with something of the same patience and industry that went into its writing. There is much in it that is dull and more that is trivial; to say otherwise would be to misrepresent the facts. But the reader who is willing to answer its demands finds himself enabled to enter, almost imperceptibly, the world in which Sewall lived.

No other diary of that introspective, diary-keeping time-- and there are literally hundreds of others surviving, as a glance at Harriette M. Forbes' New England Diaries (Topsfield, Mass., 1923) will quickly show--sets forth the Puritan scene in such detail or in pages so quick with life. Next to it, the diary which is best known is that of Cotton Mather. In Mather's diary, however, because its author has his eyes so persistently on the other side of the Jordan, contemporary New England is largely ignored. Not so with the diary of Samuel Sewall. No work serves better to dispell the mystery and unreality, the uncritical disparagement and the equally uncritical praise that have gathered about the time in which it was written; for in it we enter the region of fact. Cotton Mather, fishing in Spy Pond, "falls into the Water, the boat

being ticklish, but receives no hurt."¹⁰⁹ Lieutenant Governor Stoughton is found "Carting Ears of Corn from the upper Barn."¹¹⁰ Sewall himself gallops across Boston Common on a runaway horse, his hat jammed under his arm, catching a "great cold in [his] ear thereby, and friends stop by to chat with him while he builds a chicken coop out in the yard."¹¹¹ In such a climate legend can hardly survive.

The power of the diary to evoke in the reader a sense of present reality might be endlessly illustrated. Telling of a mid-week meeting of the South Church Society, for example, Mrs. Noyes being among those present, he writes: "I went away a little before her but she overtook me near the New Meetinghouse; I saw the Glimpse of her Light and call'd to her; spake a few words and parted; feeling in my self a peculiar displeasure that our way lay no further together."¹¹² The Council meeting late, he notes that "twas dark, and the Candle was brought in."¹¹³ After the funeral of Thomas Graves, Mr. Morton, being short of breath, "sat upon the Tomb in the burying-place, and said, for ought he knew he should be next."¹¹⁴ Meeting Madam Dudley's coach on the

¹⁰⁹Diary, III, 98, entry for August 15, 1716.

¹¹⁰Ibid., I, 462, entry for October 20, 1697.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 42, entry for May (n.d.), 1677; ibid., p. 24, entry for October 13, 1676.

¹¹²Ibid., II, 219, entry for March 10, 1707/8.

¹¹³Ibid., I, 458, entry for September 10, 1697.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 454, entry for June 1, 1697.

causeway of the salt works, he "saw no person; the Coach passing by suddenly in the Dusk."¹¹⁵ It is in such details, slight as they are, that the diary lives.

It is appropriate that the examples just sighted should be on the gloomy side. Emerson once remarked of his journal that it contained no jokes, saying that "every man is grave alone." Sewall might have said the same thing with even more justification. The Puritan was not given to seeing things in a humorous light. Though someone like the popular Dr. Robert Wilde, whom Wood described as "a fat, jolly, and boon Presbyterian," could write,

Here lies the carcass of a cursed sinner,

Doomed to be roasted for the devil's dinner . . . ,¹¹⁶

such a man was exceptional among Puritans even in England. If he had any counterpart in Massachusetts, it was certainly not Samuel Sewall. What humor there is in Sewall's diary is almost entirely of the inadvertent variety, as when, on February 5, 1702/3, he learned that "Ebenezer Franklin [an elder brother of Benjamin] . . . a male-Infant . . . was drown'd in a Tub of Suds."¹¹⁷ When Edward Taylor told him of "Mr. Dod's prayer to God to bring his Affection to close with a person pious, but hard-favoured," Sewall's only reaction was to

¹¹⁵Ibid., III, 280, entry for February 10, 1720/1.

¹¹⁶C.E. Whiting, Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1668 (New York, 1931), pp. 558-559. Wilde was, says Whiting, the "single humorous writer which appears on the Puritan side."

¹¹⁷Diary, II, 73, entry for February 6.

wonder, "Has God answered me in finding out one Godly and fit for me. . . ?"¹¹⁸ His diary, like the clothes he frequently ordered for himself and his family, is "sad-colored." The funerals which he attended were innumerable, and there is a whole series of passages on the sick and dying that are of painful vividness. On his way to Cambridge court, he stopped to see Increase Mather, dying of "the stone." Mather "was agonizing and Crying out, Pity me! Pity me!" "I told him," says Sewall, "God pity'd him, to which he assented and seem'd pacify'd."¹¹⁹ Dame Walker, whom Sewall had attended with his prayers "had an odd Concept all the last night of her life that she was in Travail; and though she ceas'd groaning and gave attention to me when at prayer; yet one of the last words I heard her say, was, My child is dead within me; which were indeed some of the very last."¹²⁰ The dying Mr. Baily cried out, "I am even gon, even gon! . . . In his Paroxism said, Cutting, Cutting, Cutting all to pieces. . . ." When Sewall visited him again several weeks later, he heard him say: "I long to be at home; why tarry thy chariot wheels?" Finally: "New Pains: Cryes out, My Head! my Head! what shall I doe?"¹²¹ Visiting the ancient schoolmaster Ezekiel

¹¹⁸ Ibid., I, 482, entry for July 15, 1698.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., III, 324-326, entry for July 30, 1723.

¹²⁰ Ibid., I, 417, entry for December 21, 1695.

¹²¹ Ibid., II, 170, 172, 193, entries for October 18, November 28, and December 11, 1706.

Cheever, he was received "with abundance of Affection, taking me by the Hand several times. He said, The Afflictions of God's people, God by them did as a Goldsmith, Knock, knock, knock; knock, knock, knock, to finish the plate. . . ." ¹²²

On Thursday, November 9, 1682, Sewall attended the marriage of Daniel Quinsey to Anne Shepard--

. . . many Persons present, almost Capt. Brattle's great Hall full. . . . Mr. Willard begun with Prayer. Mr. Tho. Shepard concluded. . . . A good Space after, when had eaten Cake and drunk Wine and Beer plentifully, we were called into the Hall again to Sing. In Singing Time Mrs. Brattle goes out being ill; Most of the Company goes away, thinking it a qualm or some Fit; But she grows worse, speaks not a word, and so dyes away in her chair, I holding her feet (for she had slipt down). At length out of the Kitching we carry the chair and Her in it, into the Wedding Hall; and after a while lay the Corps of the dead Aunt in the Bride-Bed: So that now the strangeness and horror of the thing filled the (just now) joyous House with Ejulation: The Bridegroom and Bride lye at Mr. Airs, son in law to the deceased, going away like Persons put to flight in Battel. ¹²³

It is in passages such as this that the diary may be said to merit the name of literature. Written in haste, crude, occa-

¹²²Ibid., II, 230, entry for August 19, 1708.

¹²³Ibid., p. 16*.

sionally ungrammatical, it has a virtue to which these matters are not only subordinate but a positive help: it is compellingly alive. We do not ask of a diary that it be more than that. We do not look for a polished style, and we can do without penetrating thought. What we want is the face of life, and this Sewall gives us.

The manner of Sewall's writing is ordinarily downright. He could shape a period if the occasion seemed to require it, but he declared himself "somewhat disgusted" by Cotton Mather's use of such phrases as "sweet sented hands of Christ, Lord High Treasurer of Aetheopia, [and] Ribband of Humility."¹²⁴ A letter written when he was a youth just out of college shows him attempting, somewhat clumsily, an affected style (e.g., "the Axiom that was begirt and saddled with so many Vinculums"),¹²⁵ but only rarely, as when he becomes involved in some matter of prophecy, is the writing of the grown man other than simple and direct. His gift for homely phrase was considerable. What could be better than the picture we get of the angry Reverend Mr. Pemberton, upbraiding Sewall "with extraordinary Vehemency (capering with his feet),"¹²⁶ or of the equally troublesome General Nicholson, a Church of Englander who partook of the Lord's Supper on Saturday and "was this Lord's Day Rummagin and Chittering with Wheelbarrows

¹²⁴Ibid., I, 119-120, entry for January 28, 1685/6.

¹²⁵See the Letter-Book, I, 17-20, letter dated March 16, 1671.

¹²⁶Diary, II, 291, entry for November 28, 1710.

&c., to get aboard at the long Wharf . . . ,¹²⁷ or of the funeral of Governor Dudley, where there "were very many people, spectators out of windows, on Fences and Trees, like Pigeons"¹²⁸ A fine of ten shillings for some Boston rioters he considered "too small a Plaister for so great a Sore."¹²⁹ The dying Mr. Morton, he says, "earnestly stretch'd out his flaming hand to me. . . ."¹³⁰ As the reader of the diary soon learns, it abounds in such turns of phrase.

It was inevitable that Sewall should be named "a Puritan Pepys,"¹³¹ and the title is one that is justified on grounds other than that of alliteration. In this connection we cannot do better than repeat what a reviewer in the Nation wrote at the time when the diary was first making its appearance in printed form. "Sewall's 'Diary'," he says, speaking of the second of the three published volumes,

increases in interest as it proceeds. Indeed, taking into consideration the writer's field of observation, its remoteness from the world's great theatre's of action, its smallness and intense provincialism--taking these things into consideration, if there is anything better in their peculiar lines than these volumes we have yet to meet it. Gov. Joseph Dudley does not fill the place of Charles II; nor was "Boston's greatest Fire," whereby

¹²⁷Ibid., III, 32, entry for December 26, 1714.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 249, entry for April 8, 1720.

¹²⁹Ibid., II, 46-47, entry for November 11, 1701.

¹³⁰Ibid., I, 476, entry for April 8, 1698.

¹³¹The title of Lodge's essay on Sewall in his Studies in History.

on November 27, 1676, "about fifty Landlords were despoiled of their Housing. N.B. The House of the Man of God, Mr. Mather, and God's House were burnt with fire"--not even this conflagration was at all equal in interest to the London fire of September ten years previous; nor are the futile expeditions of Queen Anne's War like the naval engagements of Van Tromp and De Ruyter. This, however, is merely saying that Boston of 1710 was not London of 1666, and that Judge Sewall did not have the incidents to describe which fell in the way of Secretary Pepys. So far, however, as glimpses of life and manners are covered--the revival of a buried past with its lights and shadows--Sewall is hardly inferior to Pepys. It is the touch of nature again; and, though the nature and social existence revealed may not be inviting, it is none the less genuine. It is like an engraving of Hogarth or a chapter of Fielding.¹³²

¹³²Vol. XXX (February 26 and March 4, 1880), 157-158, 177-179.

Chapter Six

PRIVATE LIFE AND LAST YEARS

The home of John Hull was at the South end of Boston on the east side of High (now Washington) street a few doors south of Mylne (now Summer) Street. Somewhat less than a mile to the south along the same street were the fortifications on the Neck, and not quite half a mile up the street to the north stood the Townhouse. Half way to the Townhouse was the South Church. A few hundred yards to the rear of the residence lay Boston Common. Begun by John Hull's father, the building had at first been a simple rectangular structure with a chimney at one end. The son had built an addition on the far side of the chimney and a kitchen at its rear. On the fourth and front side of the chimney were the stairs to the upper floor and a hall opening onto the street. The second story overhung the first, and the lower ends of the second-story posts were probably carved into pendants.¹

¹This information has been compiled from several sources. The most valuable statement is in Morison, Builders of the Bay, p. 137. See also, Robert F. Seybolt, "The Private Schools of Seventeenth Century Boston," New England Quarterly, VIII (September, 1935), 419; Dow, Every Day Life, p. 169; Estes Howe, "The Abode of John Hull and Samuel Sewall," Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., I (Boston, 1885), 312-326; Letter-Book, I, 159-160, editors' note; Clarke, John Hull, pp. 21-22; Winsor, Memorial History, II, xxv, no. 84 on the plan. See the illustrations at the end of Wertenbaker's The First Americans: 1607-1690 (New York, 1927) for plans of the Hempstead House of New London, Conn., which went through the same changes and additions as the Hull residence. The John Bonner map of "The Town of Boston in New England," drawn in 1722, is a valuable guide which has been often reproduced.

In a letter to Nehemiah Grew dated January, 1690/1, Sewall wrote as follows: "[Boston] is built on an Island & Peninsula

It was in this house that on February 28, 1675/6, Sewall was married to Hannah Hull. The marriage was performed in what came to be known as "the Old Hall," in contrast with the newer "Little Hall" which John Hull had added. ". . . 't was then all in one," Sewall later wrote, "a very large Room."² The dividing of the Old Hall into several rooms to which Sewall here makes reference (" . . . 't was then all in one") was accomplished as a part of the alterations and new building which Sewall undertook in the spring of 1693. When they were finally completed more than five years later, the place had doubtless become one of the "stately Edifices" which Ned Ward saw in High Street during his visit in 1699, "some of which," he says, "cost their owners two or three Thousand Pounds the raising."³ Sewall was made somewhat uneasy by the preten-

extended in length from N. East to Southwest about a Mile & half, from the Ferry to the Fortification. The Buildings reach but little more than a Mile and a quarter and more thinly at the South-end. My House stands just a Mile from the Ferry." (Col. Soc. of Mass., Pubs., XIV [Boston, 1913], 152-153.)

² "Gen. Letter," xiv.

³ A Trip to New England, p. 5. Sewall had begun ordering materials as early as October 24, 1691, when he wrote to John Gerrish and Richard Waldron for "Three Thousand of good Boards; clear, sound, Inch and quarter cut" to be delivered "as near the South-End of the Town as may be; and I will give you ready Money for them; shillings or pieces of $\frac{8}{8}$ " (Letter-Book, I, 125-124). On February 19, 1691/2 he $\frac{8}{8}$ ordered his London agent, John Ive, to purchase twenty-eight sheets of "kindly well-temper'd ductile lead, that may endure the Frost and Sun without cracking or warping . . . fourteen foot long and four foot and a half wide," two or three hundred of "Free-stone squar'd, i.e. hewn," sixty "small Blocks of Stone, two foot long, one foot high, one foot upon the head, for coins; also sixty Blocks of Three foot long, and one foot square. Let them be such stones as will endure the weather." (Letter-Book, I, 128-130.)

sions of such a project, feeling that it might seem to "be-
speak . . . a Grandure . . . beyond [his] estate," something
which he had thus far "purposely avoided."⁴ His pastor, Mr.
Willard, assured him that what he was planning seemed both
necessary and meet,⁵ but still he hesitated. Finally, however,
a fire in the kitchen chimney (" . . . by the good Providence
of God, no harm done . . . and we sat merrily to dinner on the
Westfield Pork that was snatch'd from the fire . . .") so
frightened old lady Hull that she decided they were "called to
remove."⁶ This was on March 22, 1692/3. On April 26 following
the kitchen was torn down and work began.⁷

⁴Letter-Book, I, 137-138, letter to John Ive dated October 25, 1693. The supplies mentioned in the preceding note had arrived and were "excessively dearer" than he had imagined. The Ledger, fol. 1, carries the list. The cost of the whole, with shipping, came to seventy-nine pounds, five shillings.

⁵Diary, I, 356, entry for January 25, 1691/2.

⁶Ibid., p. 376, entry for March 22, 1692/3.

⁷Ibid., p. 377. The reader of the diary follows the building through all its stages:

May 5, 1693: Digging of cellar begins (ibid.).

May 16, 1693: First stonework is laid (ibid.).

June 20, 1693: "John Barnard lays our Cellar Floor" (ibid., p. 379).

June 26, 1693: "The Brick-Work is begun. . ." (ibid.).

October 18, 1693: "John Barnard raises the Roof of the brick House. . ." (ibid., p. 385).

November 21, 1693: "Our House is covered and defended against the wether" (ibid.).

November 24, 1693: "The first Snow falls" (ibid.).

January 5, 1693/4: "Being in the chamber . . . next Tiler's I fell down, and razed off the skin of my right Legg upon the shin bone . . .; I was fain to fall across the Joysts, to prevent falling through. . ." (ibid., p. 388).

January 13, 1693/4: "The Floor of the lower Chamber towards the North-East, is laid; I drove a Nail" (ibid.).

January 19, 1693/4: "Kitchen floor is finished" (ibid.).

Built across the front of the old residence, the new structure was a symbol of the more spacious and comfortable life that even so conservative a man as Sewall began to enjoy at the turn of the century. The changes had been great in the fifty years which had passed since John Hull's father first erected his simple frame dwelling. In place of shingles for the roof there were sheets of lead from England. Instead of clapboard siding there was cut stone, also from England, and brickwork. Larger casements made possible rooms that were pleasantly airy and light. Only one thing was lacking: the sure approval of God. On the afternoon of April 29, 1695, there was, says Sewall,

a very extraordinary Storm of Hail, so that the ground was made white with it, as with the blossoms when fallen; 'twas as bigg as pistoll and Musquet Bullets; It broke of the Glass of the new House about 480 Quarrels [squares] of the Front. . . . Mr. Cotton Mather dined with us, and was with me in the new Kitchen when this was; He had just been mentioning that more Ministers Houses than others proportionably had been smitten with Lightning; enquiring what the meaning of God should be in it. Many Hail-Stones broke throw the Glass and flew to the middle of the Room,

January 27, 1695/4: "The Hall Floor is finished" (ibid.).

January 30, 1693/4: "The Kitchin Casements are Glazed and set up" (ibid.).

February 24, 1693/4: "This day our Stairs . . . are finished" (ibid., p. 389).

October 20, 1694: "This week the upper Floors are laid with boards that had only this Summer's seasoning" (ibid., p. 392).

October 12, 1695: "John Cunable finishes the stairs out of the wooden house to the top of the Brick house" (ibid., p. 414).

or farther: People afterward Gazed upon the House to see its Ruins. I got Mr. Mather to pray with us after this awfull Providence; He told God He had broken the brittle part of our house, and prayd that we might be ready for the time when our Clay-Tabernacles should be broken. Twas a sorrowfull thing to me to see the house so far undon again before twas finished.⁸

When at last the house was completed, his friends stopped by to inspect the finished result and express their pleasure. Ninety-two year old Simon Bradstreet wished him joy of it, "drank a glass or two of wine, eat some fruit, took a pipe of Tobacco in the new Hall."⁹ His "Cousin Quincey," who came with others to dine, was particularly pleased with the painted shutters (which, with the rest of the "colouring" on the house, had been done by the painter Tom Childs)¹⁰ and "in pleasancy said he thought he had been got into Paradise."¹¹ A row of four poplars stood "in the Foreyard, to shade the windows from the Western sun,"¹² and two "Cherubim's Heads" adorned the gates to the street.¹³ An orchard and garden occupied a part

⁸Diary, I, 402.

⁹Ibid., p. 412, entry for September 17, 1695.

¹⁰Ledger, fol. 59. This was the same Tom Childs whose epitaph Sewall later wrote. See the preceding chapter, sec. III.

¹¹Diary, I, 413, entry for September 18, 1695.

¹²Ibid., II, 129, entry for April 23, 1705.

¹³Ibid., III, 347, 348, entries for January 26 and February 1, 1724/5. One was blown down in a high wind, and Sewall notes that they "had stood there near Thirty years."

of the spacious grounds at the rear.¹⁴

Such an establishment, however, lay many years in the future when the twenty-three year old Sewall and his eighteen year old wife first established themselves in the High Street house. Just what the first domestic arrangements were as between the Hulls and the younger couple we are not told. Sewall is, in fact, surprisingly reticent on the subject of his married life generally. Rarely, for example, does he report a conversation with his wife. One gets the rather strong impression, indeed, that she was retired almost permanently to an upper chamber for the purpose of bringing forth children. This she did with a fearsome regularity for twenty-five years (as long, that is, as she was able), after which she did "leave off bearing."¹⁵ Whether or not she was originally as plump as Hawthorne would have her be, we cannot say; but by the time she had borne thirteen of her fourteen children (seven sons and seven daughters) she had become so stout that she couldn't tell for sure whether she was "with child or no" when she bore the last one.¹⁶ In one of his infrequent references to the subject Sewall wrote what, so far as the record is concerned, amounts almost to a character of his marriage in three words-- "Uxor praeagnans est."¹⁷ Occasionally we learn of Hannah being taken to a neighboring town,

¹⁴See the concluding paragraphs of chap. 3.

¹⁵Diary, II, 50, entry for January 6, 1701/2.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., I, 418, entry for January 6, 1695/6.

such as Dorchester, Sherborn, Braintree, or Cambridge, to attend a lecture, visit a friend, or just "take the Aer,"¹⁸ and once she emerges from obscurity as the writer of a brief but pleasant letter to Love Fowle in Bermuda, wife of one of her husband's correspondents there (Mrs. Fowle had sent her a gift of some unidentified edibles which had either been stolen before they got to the ship or eaten by the crew on the voyage to Boston, and she asks her "to prevent the Inconvenience of being so deceived for the future, by forbearing to give yourself the trouble of sending." She is "glad to hear of gods blessing" her with children, speaks of her own recent burying of two sons and of having three children living, and expresses the hope that she will benefit by the Lord's "various wayes of Providence").¹⁹ One gets the impression from this letter that its writer was a person of mild temper, kindness, and piety.

In a book entitled The British Apollo: Containing about Two Thousand Answers to Curious Questions (London, 1711) Sewall found it asked: "Is there now, or will there be at the Resurrection, any Females in Heaven, Since there seems to be no need of them there?"²⁰ --his answer to which was

¹⁸Ibid., p. 67, entry for March 10, 1684/5; ibid., p. 83, entry for June 20, 1685; ibid., p. 84, entry for June 24, 1685; ibid., p. 180, entry for June 10, 1687; ibid., p. 187, entries for August 29 and 31, 1687; ibid., pp. 190-191, entries for October 3-6, 1687; ibid., p. 454, entry for June 9, 1697.

¹⁹Letter-Book, I, 35-36, letter dated July 25, 1686.

²⁰See George E. Ellis's digest of Sewall's Salitha Cumi in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., XII (February, 1875), 380-384. The work was apparently printed in 1711(?) but now exists only in manuscript. The reference to The British Apollo is to Vol. II of the second edition.

indignantly in the affirmative (" . . . God is their Father, & therefore Heaven is their Country: Ubi Pater ibi Patria"). Whatever he thought concerning woman's rights in heaven, however, their place in the earthly present was plain. In his Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies he gives what would seem to be an oblique characterization of his own wife's domestic position when he says: "Amongst all the Ornaments wherewith the Chaste Mother is enriched, there is none more constantly worn, or more adorning than that of the Peremptory desire of her Husband's Presence. This causes her to record the time of his departure, keep an exact reckoning of his absence; and with frequent Calculations and Enquiries, to long and look out for the appointed Season of his Expected Return."²¹ His attitude was, in short, typically medieval and Paulistic. Woman was the weaker vessel, her husband's legal vassal on whom the virtues of silence and obedience were traditionally enjoined.²² Such an attitude did not, for the Puritan, sanction abuse or domestic tyranny; Solomon had called his wife his crown, and a crown should not be trampled. Neither did it mean (given a proper acquiescence to the doctrine on the part of the wife, as was apparently the

²¹Page 1.

²²See the discussion in Knappen, pp. 453-456. In 1672, writing from Newbury to a friend at Harvard, Sewall said of his sister Betty (Mehitabel, then seven years old): "She can Read, and Spin passing well; Things (Me Saltem Judice) very desirable in a Woman. She read through one Volume [of] the Book of Martyrs, in three Moneths space; improving only leisure time [at] Night." (Letter-Book, I, 19.)

case with Hannah Sewall) a marriage without tenderness and affection, as the well known correspondence between John and Margaret Winthrop eloquently testifies. We learn of Sewall's feelings toward his wife on his voyage to England. Several times in the journal that he kept during that year he notes having "dreamed of my Wife,"²³ a thing which made him "very heavy." Eating some things she had prepared for him to take along on the trip, he declares that "the remembrance of [her] is ready to cut me to the heart."²⁴ He rejoices in letters from "my dear Wife,"²⁵ and writes in return asking, among other things, to be remembered to "our dear Quaternion. S.H.E.J.," referring to their four children then living, Samuel, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Joseph.²⁶ He records with apparent approval the sentiment expressed by Nicholas Noyes at the wedding of one of Sewall's nieces in Salem, that "Love was the Sugar to sweeten every Condition in the married Relation,"²⁷ and he was disgusted by humor concerned with marital license. Dining with some of his friends on December 20, 1716, he heard Mr. Acmooty read a letter "Bantering Matrimony; mention'd the inconvenience that the body might not be uncircumscrib'd; I

²³Diary, I, 240, 259, entries for December 16, 1688, and June 16, 20, 1689.

²⁴Ibid., p. 237, entry for November 27, 1688.

²⁵Ibid., p. 295, entry for February 25, 1689/90.

²⁶Diary, I, 269-270, entry for August 3, 1689. And see ibid., pp. 268, 271, entries for July 27 and August 20, 1689.

²⁷Ibid., II, 403, entry for October 22, 1713.

disliking the Theam, said, did you read uncircumscrib'd or uncircumcis'd. He said uncircumscrib'd. I think this a little check'd the Career of his Eleuthera."²⁸ The reader of his diary finds none of the kind of adventure below stairs, on Sewall's part at least, which enlivens the diary of Pepys. Indeed, during the more than forty years of his marriage to his wife Hannah, the single occasion on which he made even a reference in his diary to another woman's attractiveness was when, visiting in Southampton during his English journey, he saw "a young Maid, comely enough, whom some allot for my Cousin."²⁹ His courtship of Madam Winthrop after his wife's death is another and more interesting story.

Hannah Sewall's last years were ones of illness and pain. As Sewall wrote to Increase Mather, "She has brought forth fourteen Children, and is depress'd with chronical Infirmities and Diseases."³⁰ In October, 1717, she was "seised with a Vehement Cold, which began to abate . . . but upon the 15th of that Month, it return'd with much greater force. Her Pains grew intolerable, and she Expired upon the 19th, on Saturday a little before sun-set, which fill'd [the] House with a flood

²⁸Ibid., III, 113-114, entry for December 20, 1716.

²⁹Ibid., I, 295, entry for February 22, 1688/89.

³⁰Letter-Book, I, 390-391, letter dated March 16, 1709/10. For other such references, see ibid., 277, letter to Joseph Dudley dated January 5, 1702/3; Diary, II, 241, entries for October 28 and November 1, 1708; Letter-Book, I, 376, letter to Samuel Danforth dated November 13, 1708; ibid., p. 383, letter to Rev. Joseph Gerrish dated May 2, 1709; ibid., II, 31, letter to Seth Shove dated July 14, 1714; ibid., p. 65, letter to Rev. John Williams dated January 21, 1716/17.

of Tears."³¹ "She is now no longer mine," wrote Sewall, "but is joynd to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect."³² In a letter to Gurdon Saltonstall expressing thanks for his "obliging and Refreshing Sympathy," he found that he could "hardly write for tears."³³ His wife was, he said, "my most Constant Lover, my most laborious Nurse"³⁴(he himself had been ill for a fortnight in the month before her death),³⁵ "a most tender Mother."³⁶ Writing the sad news to Jeremiah Dummer he ends with the couplet earlier noted:

What signify these Locks, and Bolts, and Bars?
My Treasures gone, and with it all my Fears.³⁷

On October 23 she was buried, the Governor and the entire General Court attending the funeral.³⁸ John Danforth had prepared an elegy for the occasion in which he declared:

She was too Sparkling for Plebeian Eyes,
Heaven Bless'd SEWALL with this Noble Prize;
Plac'd in the Chrystal Sphere of Chastest Love,
She Flow'r'd a Race, Devote to Heav'n above.

³¹Letter-Book, II, 79, letter to Rev. Thomas Cotton dated August 28, 1717.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 82, letter dated January 15, 1717/18.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 73-74, letter to Cotton Mather dated October 29, 1717.

³⁵Ibid., p. 84, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated January 25, 1717/18.

³⁶Ibid., p. 75, letter to Samuel Storke dated October 29, 1717.

³⁷Ibid., II, 84, letter dated January 25, 1717/18.

³⁸Ibid.

Full of Contentment and Devoid of Strife,
In Golden Characters She wrote her life.

.

Wisdom, with an Inheritance, She had:

Her Charities did make her Neighbours Glad.

Addressing the bereaved husband, he wrote:

Behold! Our Samuel to the Utmost Try'd:

CHRIST's Alsufficient Grace, Ne're yet Deny'd.

.

JESUS Remains: You cannot be Undone;

Excessive Grief, Saints well may Blush to own.

Long may you Stay, to Bless the Church & State!

Kind Heav'n, We Hope, will large Years longer wait.

Strong Consolations from the OMNIPOTENT,

Let Fill your Heart, in your thus Emptied Tent!³⁹

II

Sewall gives us innumerable glimpses into the life of an upper class Puritan family for the period which he records. We get some idea, for example, about servant life of the time. In a well-to-do household, especially one where the children were numerous and the mother was consequently immobilized a great part of the time, servants were very necessary. They might be girls from respectable families who were "working out," as, for example, Sewall's own sisters Anne and Jane

³⁹This poem, entitled "Greatness & Goodness Elegized," is among the broadsides at the Boston Public Library.

had done.⁴⁰ The latter was, in fact, hired for a time by John Hull and told "to stay . . . till she should change her condition if she so liked,"⁴¹ to say which was not primarily an act of generosity, for competent servants were hard to come by ("hard to find a good one," says Sewall)⁴² and harder to hold. Hannah Eastwick, Hannah Hett, Elizabeth Belchar, Mary Kay, Mary Draper, Philadelphia Paybody, Joanna Gerrish, Elizabeth Thurston, Sarah Boucher, all worked in the Sewall establishment at one time or another, and left generally, we may assume, when, like Hannah Hett, they were "upon marriage."⁴³ Ordinarily, these maid servants appear only as names. The first time in the diary that we hear of one of them, referred to simply as "Susan," is when she dies after having served fifteen years. "She had serv'd me and my family faithfully," writes Sewall, ". . . and now I hope she is gon to Heavenly Rest."⁴⁴ We hear somewhat more of the men servants, for it is

⁴⁰Diary, I, 2, entry for March 24, 1673/4.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 34-35, entry for January 31, 1676/7.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 77, entry for May 26, 1685. According to an entry in the "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 2, she would then have worked at the Sewall's for six years, having "come hether to Service" in April 1679. See this same folio page for other entries having to do with women servants. The pay was apparently about one pound a year "all found" for in April, 1683, Hannah Hett received two pounds "advance for 2 years service." Similar entries for later years are in the Ledger, fol. 19. The pay by this time had gone up to from four to six pounds a year. See also the Diary, I, 199, entry for January 15, 1687/8.

⁴⁴Diary, III, 295, 296, entries for November 19, 27, and 30, 1721. She appears in the Ledger, fol. 19, again simply as Susan. The cost of her funeral exceeded her wages by three

they who accompany their employer on his circuit travels, help him set out his fledgling nursery stocks, and work with him at jobs around the house. Sometimes the men servants were Negroes; other times they were boys hired out to service by their parents. The Negroes that we hear of are Onesiphorus, Philadelphia, Bastian, Sappho, Scipio, and Boston,⁴⁵ for the latter two of which, at least, Sewall developed a most affectionate regard. When, for example, "poor Boston," who was, as he says, "a considerable prop of my declining Cottage,"⁴⁶ died in February, 1729, Sewall "made a good Fire, set Chairs, and gave Sack" after the funeral.⁴⁷ The procession to the grave was made up of "about 150 Blacks, and about 50 Whites, several Magistrates, Ministers, Gentlemen &c. . . . [the deceased] having borne the Character of a sober virtuous liver, and of a very trusty honest and faithful Servant to all that employ'd him. . . ." ⁴⁸ One wonders, did both black and white gather to be warmed by Sewall's fire and sack?

Scipio's period of service was from 1718 to 1724.⁴⁹ His case was, as Sewall noted in his ledger, "a remarkably sad" one. He died on January 6, 1727/8, "having been sick about

pounds, ten shillings, and Sewall wrote this off to "profit and loss regarding her 15 years faithful service." In her last two years she had received seven pounds a year.

⁴⁵The single reference to Sappho is in the account book, entry for January 20, 1690/1, where J. Scottow signs a receipt for "fifty Shillings cash for half a year's Service of Sappho Negro."

⁴⁶Letter-Book, II, letter to Sam junior dated March 6, 1729.

⁴⁷Diary, III, 394-395, entry for February 12, 1729.

⁴⁸Ibid., editors' note, citing the New England Weekly Journal for February 24, 1729.

⁴⁹It is in 1718 that the ledger account for Scipio begins

ten days. He purchased, and espoused a wife; but lived not to marry her. . . . It seems he intended to be married on New-Year's day, but died this day about an hour past Noon. He was a Loving faithfull Servant.⁵⁰ Scipio's account in Sewall's ledger is interesting. He had been left twenty pounds by his former master, which he left with Sewall at five per cent interest.⁵¹ Advances from the principal were made at various times until the account was finally settled on November 2, 1724, when he left Sewall's service. Later in the same month Sewall loaned him five pounds "to compleat the Redemption of Margaret, that she might be his Wife." One wonders what happened between then and the time of his death three years later. He apparently died penniless, for Sewall laid out fourteen shillings for his coffin.⁵²

Both his white man servants began service as boys. One, whom he refers to simply as "David," stayed on for at least

(fol. 157), and on November 2, 1724, Sewall notes: "I now dismiss him" (loc.cit.). See references in the Diary, III, 183, entry for April 28, 1718; ibid., p. 192, entry for September 4, 1718; ibid., p. 219, entry for April 25, 1719; ibid., p. 260, entry for September 10, 1720. These all have to do with travel on the circuit.

⁵⁰Ledger, loc.cit.

⁵¹This is mentioned also in the Diary, III, 296, entry for December 8, 1721.

⁵²The salary Sewall paid him (e.g., eleven pounds in 1723) was several times that received by most of the maid servants. It is interesting to note also that on September 1, 1724, Sewall gave him "a suit of black cloaths . . . for the sake of my daughter Hannah, Coat, Jacket, Breeches" worth sixteen pounds. It was not, as one might suppose, given him to attend her funeral. That had occurred two weeks earlier.

On November 25, 1723, Sewall paid a three shillings fine against Scipio for "galloping."

ten years (1706-17).⁵³ The other, Ben Sweet, son of a relative at Newbury, came in 1725. His father brought him, says Sewall, "to dwell with me, and serve me so long as I please. His father tells me he was born April, 6. 1713. . . . I hope he will prove a Staff to support me in my age now Scipio is removed, who died January 6th last. If he be small, tis the fashion now to wear small Staves."⁵⁴ It is interesting to imagine the boy of twelve and his master of seventy-three setting out in a calash to travel the circuits to Ipswich and Plymouth, as the diary mentions their doing.⁵⁵

On one notable occasion Ben Sweet was corrupted by Sam Hirst, a relative staying with the Sewall's (Betty Sewall had married Grove Hirst), with whom he "went into the Common to play at Wicket [i.e., cricket]. Went before any body was up, left the door open; Sam came not to prayer; at which I was much displeas'd." When, two days later, the Grandson did the same thing, this time without Ben, he was told that "he could not lodge here practising thus. So he lodg'd elsewhere. . . . And play'd fast and loose with me . . . procur-

⁵³ Diary, II, 151, entry for January 10, 1705/6. That he began as a youth may be inferred from Sewall's saying that he "corrected David for his extravagant staying out, and for his playing when his Mistress sent him of Errands." Like Scipio, he slept in the garret (Diary, II, 258, entry for July 13, 1709). Like him, too, he accompanied Sewall on the circuit (Diary, III, 101, entry for September 6, 1716; ibid., p. 128, entry for April 22, 1717).

⁵⁴ Ibid., III, 351-352, entry for March 30, 1725.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 355, entry for May 14, 1725; ibid., p. 376, entry for April 30, 1726.

ing me great Vexation."⁵⁶ An inordinate love for cricket was no good sign, but missing morning devotions thereby was a great deal worse.

One of the duties of the Puritan father was to lead the household each morning and evening in prayer, singing of psalms, and the reading of Scripture and other devotional works. "We read in course the defeat of Adonija; and the illustrious Coronation of King Solomon," writes Sewall;⁵⁷ ". . . in the even I read in course in the Family Mr. Norton's Sermon on John 8.20."⁵⁸ "Begun in Course to read the New-Testament, having ended the Revelation the night before."⁵⁹ "133 Ps. sung in morn in course. . . ."⁶⁰ Such entries form a regular feature of the diary. Doubtless some of the younger members of the family circle, at least, welcomed such an unexpected relief as came on a July morning in 1687, when the "was startled . . . as was at prayer in the Kitchen, at a sudden unusual noise; which prov'd to be two Cows running into [the] little Porch. . . ."⁶¹ Frequently the children took part in the devotions, sometimes with rather harrowing results. January 10, 1689: "It falls to my Daughter Elizabeth's Share to read the 24. of Isaiah, which she doth with

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 372, entries for March 15, 17, 1725/6.

⁵⁷Ibid., I, 99, entry for October 10, 1685.

⁵⁸Ibid., entry for October 31, 1685.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 113, entry for December 18, 1685.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 130, entry for March 28, 1686.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 183, entry for July 18.

many Tears not being very well, and the Contents of the Chapter, and Sympathy with her draw Tears from me also."⁶² Betty was then eight years old. May 3, 1696: "Betty [now fifteen] can hardly read her chapter for weeping; tells me she is afraid she is gon back, does not taste that sweetness in reading the Word which once shee did; fears that what was once upon her is worn off. I said what I could to her, and in the evening pray'd with her alone."⁶³

As these entries suggest, the lot of the Puritan child was not an enviable one. The first great question was one of survival, a fact which the records of the time make abundantly clear.⁶⁴ Of Sewall's fourteen children only six lived to maturity, a rate of mortality which, if high, was by no means unusual. Of these six only three outlived the father. (Cotton Mather had sixteen children and survived all but one.) The story as we find it told in the diary has a kind of appalling fascination. Hannah Sewall's first "groaning" as the process of childbirth was nicely termed (Sam had prepared a batch of "groaning beer" several weeks earlier)⁶⁵ was on the first of April, 1677. "About Two of the Clock at night," says Sewall,

⁶²Ibid., p. 308.

⁶³Ibid., p. 423.

⁶⁴See the discussion in Wertenbaker's The First Americans: 1607-1690 (New York, 1927), pp. 184-188.

⁶⁵Diary, I, 36, entry for February 16, 1676/7. Ibid., III, 328, entry for January 9, 1723/4: "Mrs. Dorothy Henchman died very suddenly; She came from a Groaning . . . on Wednesday night about ten a-clock. . . ."

I waked and perceived my wife ill: asked her to call Mother [Hull]. She said I should goe to prayer, then she would tell me. Then I rose, lighted a Candle at Father's fire, that had been raked up from Saturday night, kindled a Fire in the chamber, and after 5 when our folks up, went and gave Mother warning. She came and bad me call the Midwife, Goodwife Weeden, which I did. But my Wives Pains went away in a great measure after she was up; toward night came on again, and about a quarter of an hour after ten at night, April 2, Father and I sitting in the great Hall, heard the child cry, whereas we were afraid 'twould have been 12 before she would have been brought to Bed. Went home with the Midwife about 2 o'clock, carrying her Stool, whoes parts were included in a Bagg. Met with the Watch at Mr. Rocks Erew house, who had us stand, enquired what we were. I told the Woman's occupation, so they bad God bless our labours, and let us pass. The first Woman the Child sucked was Bridget Davenport.

April 3. Cousin Flint came to us. She said we ought to lay scarlet on the Child's head for that it had received some harm. Nurse Hurd watches. April 4. Clear cold weather. Goodwife Ellis watches. April 7, Saturday, first laboured to cause the child suck his mother, which he scarce did at all. In the afternoon my Wife set up, and he sucked the right Breast bravely. . . .

Next day he was baptized with the name of his grandfather Hull. On the morning of June 17 the child had a convulsion. "He wa

asleep in the Cradle, and suddenly started, trembled, his fingers contracted, his eyes starting and being distorted." Two days later he had another.⁶⁶ Shortly after this the diary breaks off with the beginning of the lost second volume. In John Hull's diary, however, the entry for September 10, 1678, says that the child died after "about seventeen sore fits."⁶⁷

Time after time essentially the same story is repeated. The next three children, born in rapid succession (Samuel, June 11, 1678; Hannah, February 3, 1679; Elizabeth, December 29, 1681), survived, though Sam suffered from convulsions and was taken to his grandmother at Newbury "to see if change of air would help him,"⁶⁸ and Hannah quickly began to experience the illnesses and disasters which were to fill her unhappy life. She falls from the cupboard and breaks her head open, "vomits and hath Qualms," "droups" with the measles, is ridden over by a horse on her way to school, "has the Small Pocks very favourably" (as do her brothers Sam and Joseph), falls down in a convulsion, breaks both her knee pans in two successive tumbles in the stairs, and spends her last years under a nurse's care with a "noxious Humour flowing from her Legg."⁶⁹ The next three children all died in infancy: little

⁶⁶ Diary, I, 40-43.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 56, editors' notes.

⁶⁸ Commonplace Book, entry for May 21, 1680. See the Diary, II, 13*.

⁶⁹ References in which her calamity-ridden life may be traced are as follows: Diary, I, 153, entry for September 27, 1686;

Hull Sewall ("Hullie") when not quite two, after more than a year of convulsion fits, coming, as his father says, "Wave upon Wave";⁷⁰ Henry at a year (December 20, 1685, he falls ill; two days later: "Child makes no noise save by a kind of snoring as it breathed, and as it were slept. Read the 16th of the first Chron. in the family. Having read to my Wife and Nurse out of John: the fourteenth Chapter fell now in course, which I read and went to Prayer: by that time had done, could hear little Breathing, and so about Sunrise, or little after he fell asleep, I hope in Jesus, and that a Mansion was ready for

ibid., p. 166, entry for January 29, 1686/7; ibid., p. 231, entry for October 16, 1686; ibid., p. 320, entry for May 10, 1690; ibid., p. 488, entry for December 20, 1698; ibid., III, 13, entry for August 5, 1714; ibid., p. 48, entry for July 2, 1715; ibid., p. 79, entry for April 22, 1716; ibid., pp. 209, 210, entries for January 17, 23, 1718/19; ibid., pp. 339-342, entries for July 30 through August 16, 1724. On this last date she died, unmarried, age fifty-four. Sewall came home from meeting and found her laid out. "Her pleasant Countenance was very Refreshing to me. I hope God has delivered her from all her Fears! She had desired not to be embowelled."

⁷⁰The short and harrowing life of this child may be traced in the following references: Diary, I, 50, entry in an interleaved almanac for July 8, 1684 (his birth); ibid., p. 68, entry for March 31, 1685 (the first convulsions); ibid., p. 76, entry for May 19, 1685; ibid., p. 78, entry for May 28, 1685; ibid., p. 85, entry for July 4, 1685; ibid., p. 101, entry for October 31, 1685; ibid., p. 106, entry for November 16, 1685; ibid., p. 110, entry for December 6, 1685; ibid., p. 112, entry for December 17, 1685; ibid., p. 114, entries for December 24, 25, 1685; ibid., p. 118, entries for January 20, 22, 1685/6; ibid., p. 122, entry for February 14, 1685/6; ibid., p. 125, entry for March 10, 1685/6; ibid., p. 127, entry for March 17, 1685/6; ibid., p. 131, entry for March 29, 1686; ibid., p. 135, entry for April 26, 1686; ibid., p. 143, entries for June 5, 18, 1686. He died on June 11 at Newbury, where he had been taken in April for a change of air (see the Letter-Book, I, 27, letters to Stephen Sewall and James Noyes written April 20 and 21, 1686).

him in the Father's House. Died in Nurse Hill's lap");⁷¹
Stephen at six months.⁷² Coming home from Stephen's funeral
the other children "cryed much . . . so that could hardly
quiet them. It seems they look'd into Tomb, and Sam said
he saw a great Coffin there, his Grandfathers."⁷³ The next
child lived.⁷⁴ The next died when a little more than a month
old.⁷⁵ The next lived, though considerably troubled with con-

⁷¹ Diary, I, 113, entries for December 20, 21, 22, 1685.
And see ibid., p. 110, entry for December 7, 1685 (his birth);
ibid., p. 113, entry for December 13 (the baptism); ibid., p.
114, entry for December 24 (the funeral). See also the Letter-
Book, I, 22, letter to Stephen Dummer dated February 15, 1685/6:
"It pleased God to give me a young son, born December 7, last
past; and to take him away upon the 22^d of the same Moneth.
At his Baptism December 13, I named him Henry; but he never
liv'd to see his Grandfather, or be seen by him, whose Name he
bore."

⁷² Diary, I, 166, entry for January 30, 1686/7 (born); ibid.,
entry for February 6, 1686/7 (baptized: "Day was Lourcing after
the storm, but not freezing. Child shrunk at the water but
cryed not. His Brother Sam. [nine years old] shew'd the Mid-
wife who carried him, the way to the Pew, I held him up");
ibid., p. 181, entry for July 8, 1687 (cuts a tooth); ibid.,
p. 184, entry for July 25, 1687 (falls ill); ibid., entry for
July 26, 1687: ". . . died in his Grandmother's Bed-Chamber
in Nurse Hill's Arms").

⁷³ Diary, I, 184, entry for July 27, 1687.

⁷⁴ Joseph, born August 15, 1688, "between 8. 9. while the
Service-Bell was ringing" (ibid., p. 223).

⁷⁵ Judith, born August 13, 1690, the first of two children
given the name of their grandmother Hull. See the Diary, I,
328, entry for August 13 (birth) and August 24 (baptism: "She
cried not at all, though a pretty deal of water was poured on
her by Mr. Willard . . ."); ibid., p. 331, entry for September
20, 1690 ("My little Judith languishes and moans, ready to
die"); ibid., entry for September 21 (much praying and reading
of psalms; "Told Mr. Walter of her condition . . . desiring him
to give her a lift towards heaven"; died "between 7. and 8. in
the evening, and I hope sleeps in Jesus"); ibid., p. 332, entry
for September 23 (buried in a coffin marked "1690. made with
little nails").

convulsions.⁷⁶ The next died at the age of slightly more than a month.⁷⁷ The next died at two years, "after a sickly painfull life."⁷⁸ The next was stillborn.⁷⁹ The last one lived.⁸⁰ Six left out of fourteen: two sons, Sam and Joseph, and four daughters, Hannah, Betty, Mary, and Judith.

⁷⁶Mary, born October 23, 1691. On August 6, 1703, she was taken to see the Rev. Mr. Wigglesworth, whose helpful verdict was that "her distemper was of a convulsive nature" (Diary, II, 33).

⁷⁷Jane. See the Diary, I, 381, entry for August 7, 1693 (born); baptism not mentioned, but on September 9 she is "not well" (ibid., p. 383) and on September 13 she "expires, much as Henry did in neighbour Smith's lap, nurse Hill and I being by" (ibid.).

⁷⁸Sarah. Diary, I, 394, entry for November 21, 1694: "My wife is brought to bed of a Daughter between 9. and 10. of the Clock in the morn. Mr. Torrey prayd with Mother and me in the Kitchen . . . Mother [Hull] desiring Him, saying that my wife was in great and more than ordinary Extremity, so that she was not able to endure the Chamber: I went also to acquaint Mr. Willard, and as I came back, I met Mrs. Perce, who wish'd me Joy of my Daughter, as came in at the Gate. Mr. Torrey was prevail'd with to go into Chamber and Return Thanks to God. Women din'd with rost Beef and minc'd Pyes, good Cheese and Tarts. Grows to be a very great Storm." Ibid., p. 395, entry for November 25, 1694 (baptized); ibid., p. 410, entry for August 8, 1695 (three convulsions); ibid., p. 442, entry for December 23, 1696: "About Break of Day . . . she gives up the Ghost in Nurse Cowell's Arms. . . . Thus this very fair day is rendered fowl to us by reason of the general Sorrow and Tears in the family." Ibid., entry for December 25, 1696: "We bury our little daughter. In the chamber, Joseph [eight years old] . . . reads Ecclesiastes 3^d a time to be born and a time to die-- Elizabeth, Rev. 22. Hannah, the 38th Psalm. I speak to each as God helped. . . ."

⁷⁹Diary, I, 426, entry for May 18, 1696. The news came to him on the circuit. See also ibid., p. 444, entry for January 1, 1696/7, and the Letter-Book, I, 170-171, letter to Bridget Usher dated September 28, 1696. The child was a boy.

⁸⁰The second Judith. Diary, II, 50, entry for January 6, 1701/2: "Judith Sewall was born upon Friday, January 2, at two in the Afternoon. Hannah Greenlef Midwife, Judd Nurse. . . . Was baptised by the Reverend Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton. It being his Turn; because The Reverend Mr. Willard administered the Lord's supper just before. So is a New Midwife [before it had been Mrs. Weeden], and a New Baptiser."

With such a fearsome winnowing in progress, the reader of the diary begins to experience something of Sewall's own relief on those occasions when he returns home from a trip and finds the family alive and well ("Laus Deo!") or when, after a spell of sickness in the family, he is able to write, "Good night, all Hands."⁸¹ The diary is a document edged in black, illness and death on almost every page. So frequent was death, in fact, that for a man such as Sewall, who, because of his character and position, was forever in demand as "bearer," funeral going became almost an occupation. In the last years particularly, a week did not often go by in which he did not attend at least one funeral, and sometimes he got to two in the same day. The admonition of man's mortality was ever present: "The Lord fit me, that my Grave may be a Sweetening place for my Sin-polluted Body";⁸² "The Lord grant that I may be kindly and effectually Warned and awakened . . . Savingly awakened!"⁸³ "The Lord grant that I may be clothed upon before uncloathed";⁸⁴ "The Lord fit me for my Change!"⁸⁵ "Oh! that I could shake off my Dilatoriness, and become ready for my own Dissolution!"⁸⁶ "The Lord help me aright

⁸¹Diary, I, 24, entry for October 21, 1676.

⁸²Ibid., p. 253, entry for October 22, 1688.

⁸³Ibid., III, 240, entry for January 12, 1719/20.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 249, entry for April 8, 1720.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 280, entry for February 13, 1720/1.

⁸⁶Letter-Book, II, 69, letter to John Winthrop dated April 8, 1717.

to improve my Flesh, Bones and Spirits, which are so soon to become useless, and it may be expos'd in one part or another of God's Creation."⁸⁷ He had, indeed, so many occasions to "look into . . . Machpelah,"⁸⁸ as he says, that tombs and processions to the grave came to have a morbid fascination for him. After the funeral of his little Sarah, for example, he notes that the tomb

was wholly dry, and I went at noon to see in what order things were set; and there I was entertain'd with a view of, and converse with, the Coffins of my dear Father Hull, Mother Hull, Cousin Quinsey, and my Six Children: for the little posthumous was now took up and set in upon that that stands on John's: so are three, one upon another twice, on the bench at the end. My Mother ly's on a lower bench, at the end, with head to her Husband's head; and I order'd little Sarah to be set on her Grandmother's feet. 'Twas an awfull yet pleasing Treat; Having said, The Lord knows who shall be brought hether next, I came away.⁸⁹

The same ghoulish state of mind is indicated in the declaration of his friend, Mr. Joseph Eliot, that "the two days wherein he buried his Wife and Son, were the best that ever

⁸⁷Diary, I, 264-265, entry for July 9, 1689.

⁸⁸Letter-Book, II, 7, letter to Mary Dummer dated August 20, 1712. Machpelah was a burial cave in Hebron, possessed by Abraham (Genesis 23).

⁸⁹Diary, I, 443-444, entry for December 25, 1696.

he had in the world.⁹⁰ Sewall enjoyed stopping at the burying place to read the epitaphs,⁹¹ and when he was too old to follow a corpse on foot he ordered his coach to a point of high ground where he could view its progress to the grave.⁹² His manner is almost professional as he notes the condition of the burial ground at Rowley ("Barly-earish, pure Sand"),⁹³ the arrangements at the Jews' burying place in London ("Bodies . . . now all . . . to be laid North and South"),⁹⁴ the structure of the Earl of Suffolk's vault (which he also saw on his trip to England) and the fittings of his coffin,⁹⁵ the need in Major Richard's tomb for "a Board across the Coffins and then a Board standing right up from that, bearing against the top of the Tomb, to prevent their floating up and down,"⁹⁶ the need for repairs in his own (going to "view the order of things in it" he buries some "scattering bones, and . . . pieces of Coffins" and adds a step),⁹⁷ and so on.

Not only he but the community in general became so pre-occupied with the trappings of funerals that regulatory legis-

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 215, entry for May 30, 1688.

⁹¹Ibid., II, 94, entry for February 1, 1703/4.

⁹²Ibid., III, 386, entry for September 14, 1727.

⁹³Ibid., II, 62, entry for August 11, 1702.

⁹⁴Ibid., I, 301, almanac entry for March 17, 1688/9.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 261, entry for June 28, 1689.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 390, entry for April 6, 1694.

⁹⁷Ibid., II, 359, entry for July 31, 1712.

lation was repeatedly passed against excessive expenditure for them. In 1721 the presentation of scarfs was outlawed, and in 1742 it was declared that "no scarves, gloves (except six pair to the bearers, and one pair to each minister of the church congregation where any deceased person belongs) wine, rum, or rings shall be allowed and given at any funeral."⁹⁸ Dr. Samuel Buxton of Salem left his heirs a quart tankard of rings which he had received at funerals, and the Reverend Andrew Eliot received in thirty-two years of funeral going 2,940 pairs of gloves, which he resold through Boston milliners for from six to seven hundred dollars.⁹⁹ Sewall, likewise, received hundreds of these various mournful tokens and kept long, careful lists of donors, with dates and kinds of gifts received.¹⁰⁰ On at least one occasion his own outlays for such things was very large. For his daughter Hannah's funeral in 1724 the cost of gloves alone (more than twenty dozen pairs) was well over fifty pounds, and the cost for the entire affair reached the astonishing total of around five hundred pounds.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Diary, II, 356, editors' note. On September 16, 1721, Sewall noted of the funeral of Mrs. Francis Webb that it was "the first public Funeral without Scarvs" (ibid., III, 292).

⁹⁹Mary A. Ward, Old Colony Days (Boston, 1896), p. 156.

¹⁰⁰See the Diary, II, 10*-11*. For individual entries see, for example, ibid., p. 20, entry for July 25, 1700; ibid., p. 27, entry for December 5, 1700; ibid., p. 175, entry for December 21, 1707; ibid., I, 195, entry for November 12, 1687; ibid., p. 110, entry for December 12, 1685.

¹⁰¹Account Book, last page but one; Ledger, fol. 177. This included, among other things, new outfits of clothes for various of the relatives. One wonders if Sewall might have been making up to Hannah in this way for the marriage portion which she had not received.

Solemn and pious as the occasion may have been, such ostentation was a long way from the austere simplicity of the first Boston funerals. The Puritans of the first generation had no church service at the burial of the dead (nothing, that is, that might suggest the popish error of praying for departed souls), only prayers at the bedside, a march to the grave, and a silent lowering into the earth. As Lechford wrote in 1642: "At Burials, nothing is read, nor any Funeral Sermon made, but all the neighbourhood, or a good company of them, come together by tolling of the bell, and carry the dead solemnly to his grave, and there stand by him while he is buried. The Ministers are most commonly present."¹⁰² On the Sabbath following there might be a funeral sermon, but this became common only in the eighteenth century, as did the words at the side of the grave.¹⁰³ In these and other ways did the institution gradually assume a character at variance with the earlier forms. The earlier "bearers" now became "pall-bearers" as the coffin was moved into the hearse. The simple march of

¹⁰²plaine Dealing, p. 74. See Dexter, Congregationalism, p. 458, and Morison, The Puritan Pronaos, p. 219. There was no minister present at the burial of Joshua Scottow on January 22, 1697/8 (Diary, I, 467).

After the fall of the Charter government, the Church of England began holding services, and Sewall notes with distaste an early funeral held under its auspices in which the corpse "first was had to the Town-House [where services were temporarily being held] and set before the Pulpit . . ." (Diary, I, 156, entry for November 1, 1686).

¹⁰³An early example is Sewall's speech at the grave of his mother on January 14, 1700/1, during which he expressed the hope that "none will be offended that I have now ventured to speak one word in her behalf; when shee her self is become speechless" (Diary, II, 30-31).

friends to the grave became a formal procession through the streets, with fine coaches and, if the deceased were a soldier or a person of importance in the community, a company or two of militia.¹⁰⁴ After the corpse was put away, a reception might be held at which the grieving guests could revive their spirits with comfortable servings of wine, rum, and sack. Sewall's own pleasure in all this, he realized, sometimes resulted in a frame of mind which was "apt to be too light," so that when he fell down when coming through his gate after the funeral of Mr. Thatcher of Milton, razing the skin off his right leg, he was grateful for a reminder which might bring him "into a frame more suitable . . . and by the loss of some . . . Skin, and blood . . . be awakened to prepare for [his] own Dissolution."¹⁰⁵

Illness and death among his children were but the first of many problems with which Sewall the father had to deal. The six remaining to him were part of a numerous household which had, of course, to be fed and clothed; they had to be educated, settled in their callings, and, if possible, married--all according to their capacities and proper position in the community; most important, they had to be brought to a knowledge of God's saving grace. The energy and devotion with which Sewall devoted himself to all of these tasks is partly explained in a letter he wrote to his friend Bridget

¹⁰⁴The first time Sewall mentions seeing coaches at a funeral was on August 8, 1685: "I saw one or two . . ." (Diary, I, 91).

¹⁰⁵Ibid., III, 388, entry for December 22, 1727.

Usher. "The Fruit of the Womb," he said, "is a Reward, the Reward of the LORD. And therefore when Parents lay up for, and lay out upon their Children, it is a most convenient Expression of their Gratitude to GOD the Giver of them."¹⁰⁶ Even if they turned out badly, the rearing of them was a privilege. When the Reverend Nathaniel Stone wrote saying, "Children are Blessings: but are they so, as depraved?" Sewall replied that parents should be grateful even so, because even such children represent the "Good Providence of God." "A good man is happy, if but in the Tenth Generation, any of his descendants become the Children of God."¹⁰⁷ With such an attitude it never occurred to him to look upon the arrival of his fourteenth child with any less enthusiasm than he had upon the arrival of the first. When the thirteenth appeared still-born, he prayed that God "would make up our Loss . . . pleading with Him as the Institutor of Marriage," and the fourteenth was greeted with expressions of joy.¹⁰⁸

Sewall was a kindly father, whose parental attitude was expressed more frequently by gifts and family outings than by the traditionally popular rod of birch ("Birch breaketh no bones"),¹⁰⁹ but his affection did not blind him to such

¹⁰⁶Letter-Book, II, 94, letter dated April 1, 1718.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 42, letter dated February 25, 1714/15.

¹⁰⁸Diary, I, 444-445, entry for January 11, 1696/7; Letter-Book, I, 267-268, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated March 12, 1701/2.

¹⁰⁹For outings with the children, see the Diary, I, 234,

obvious symptoms of unregeneracy as young Sam's (age ten) playing hooky from his writing school,¹¹⁰ or Joseph's (age four) hitting his sister Betty, playing during family prayers, and eating while thanks were returned at table. "When I first went in," says Sewall, who had been called by Mother Hull when the boy hit his sister, "he sought to shadow and hide himself from me behind the head of the Cradle: which gave me the sorrowfull remembrance of Adam's carriage."¹¹¹ Such instructive examples of original sin in a child, combined with a lively sense of the possibility of death and consequent damnation for its unsaved soul, made it urgent, first, that the child be set at some useful employment: if someone didn't find work for his hands, the devil would. Thus, little Joseph at the at the age of two years and eight months was sent off "to Capt. Townsend's Mother's [reading school], his Cousin Jane [Tappan] accompanying him, carried his Horn-Book."¹¹² Similar-

entry for October 29, 1688; ibid., p. 492, entry for January 23, 1698/9; ibid., p. 346, entry for June 29, 1691. For gifts sent from England, see the Diary, I, 283, 297, entries for August 13, 1689, and March 4, 1688/9. A list of gifts bought for his "Jonny" is in the "Diary and Commonplace Book, 1675--," fol. 24. There are various gifts to the children listed in the account of "Moneys paid out," Ledger, foll. 186-200.

See the discussions of the Puritan child in Knappen, p. 462, and Calhoun, I, 40.

¹¹⁰Diary, I, 225, entry for September 15, 1688.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 369, entry for November 6, 1692.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 344, entry for April 27, 1691. An interesting study using many facts from Sewall's diary is Robert F. Seybolt's "Private Schools of Seventeenth Century Boston," New England Quarterly, VIII (September, 1935), 418-424, where we learn that Mrs. Townsend lived on the opposite side of the

ly, when Hannah and Betty were five and seven respectively, Sewall sent to England for curtains and counterpanes which they might "work and keep . . . out of Idleness."¹¹³ Second, the earliest possible steps must be taken to assure the child's conversion, and an eager watch was kept for what Cotton Mather termed "examples of children in whom the fear of God was remarkably budding before they died."¹¹⁴ We have already seen Sewall's eight year old daughter Betty weeping under the pressure of this dismal preoccupation. One day when this same child was fifteen she "burst out into an amazing cry" one night after dinner, because, says Sewall,

High Street from Sewall's, a short distance toward the center of town, near Mrs. Thayer's where, as we learn from Sewall's diary entry for November 10, 1696, five year old Mary went to learn "to Read and Knit" (Diary, I, 436). Almost directly across the street from Sewall's lived Dame Walker, to whom Hannah and Betty (ages five and six) were unable to go on January 6, 1686/7, because of the teacher's illness (ibid., p. 164). Sam junior first went to Ezekiel Cheever's Latin School at the age of nine, where the famous old teacher "received him gladly" (ibid., p. 15, entry for September 13, 1686), and on May 14, 1688, he was "put to Eliezer Moody to learn to write" (ibid., p. 213). His aptitude was apparently not considered suitable for college, for, as we shall see later, at the age when he should otherwise have been at Harvard, his father was trying with considerable difficulty to find an apprenticeship for him in which he might be satisfied. After Joseph's precocious beginning, we do not hear of him again in an academic way except once (ibid., p. 411, entry for August 27, 1695), until his father takes him to Cambridge to see about entering Harvard (ibid., II, 80-81, entry for June 28, 1703).

¹¹³Letter-Book, I, 44, letters to Edward Hull and Daniel Allen dated March 28, 1687. In a poorer family, of course, the children might have been put out to work, the idea of child labor being quite unappealing to the Puritan (see the comment in Adams, Provincial Society, p. 11).

¹¹⁴Magnalia, II, appendix to chap. 7, bk. 6. Jonathan Edward's account of four year old Phoebe Bartlett is well known. She

she was afraid she should goe to Hell, her Sins were not pardon'd. She was first wounded by my reading a Sermon of Mr. Norton's. . . . And those words in the Sermon . . . Ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins, ran in her mind, and terrified her greatly. And staying at home [one day, a week later] . . . she read out of Mr. Cotton Mather--Why hath Satan filled thy heart, which increas'd her Fear. Her Mother ask'd her whether she pray'd. She answer'd, Yes; but feared her prayers were not heard because her Sins not pardon'd. [Mr. Willard being sent for] . . . he discoursed with Betty who could not give a distinct account, but was confused as his phrase was. . . . Mr. Willard pray'd excellently. The Lord bring Light and Comfort out of this dark and dreadful Cloud, and Grant that Christ's being formed in my dear child, may be the issue of these painfull pangs.¹¹⁵

There are several other such entries concerning the unhappy Betty.¹¹⁶ Nor was she alone:

Richard Dumer, a flourishing youth of 9 years old, dies of the Small Pocks. I tell Sam. [age ten] of it and what need he had to prepare for Death, and therefore to

was affected by the talk of her newly-converted eleven year old brother. See the discussion in Calhoun, I, 108.

¹¹⁵Diary, I, 419-420, entry for January 13, 1695/6.

¹¹⁶See ibid., pp. 422-423, entry for February 22, 1695/6; ibid., p. 423, entry for May 3, 1696; ibid., p. 423, entry for August 24, 1696.

endeavour really to pray when he said over the Lord's Prayer: He seem'd not much to mind, eating an Apple; but when he came to say, Our father, he burst out into a bitter Cry, and when I askt what was the matter and he could speak, he burst out into a bitter Cry and said he was afraid he should die. I pray'd with him, and read Scriptures comforting against death, as, O death where is thy sting, &c. All things yours. Life and Immortality brought to light by Christ, &c. 'twas at noon.¹¹⁷

It was Sewall's oft-expressed desire that his children might learn to "speak the Jews Language and to forget that of Ashdod."¹¹⁸ The schooling process was not an easy one.

There were other aspects of the Puritan child's upbringing which were scarcely less trying. A common means of avoiding too much "cockering" (pampering) was to take children out of the home and leave them for long periods with friends and relatives.¹¹⁹ Thus, on October 12, 1693, thirteen year old

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 309, entry for January 12, 1689.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 328, entry for August 24, 1690. See similarly the Letter-Book, I, 268, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated March 12, 1701/2.

Nehemiah 13:23-24: "In those days also . . . Jews . . . married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and the children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language. . . ."

¹¹⁹Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Family (Boston, 1944), pp. 37-38, discusses this custom and notes that ". . . almost every surviving correspondence of seventeenth-century New England gives evidence that . . . [it] existed." It was common in England as well.

Hannah was left with Sewall's sister Longfellow at Rowley, and when he came away the next day he had, he says, "much adoë to pacify my dear daughter, she weeping and pleading to go with me."¹²⁰ The two boys, Sam and Joseph (ages fifteen and five), were at Newton that same fall,¹²¹ as Sam had been two years before. Sewall then coming to visit him found that "he could hardly speak to me, his affections were so mov'd, having not seen me for above a fortnight. . . ."¹²² The Puritan child was early made to realize that the disposition of his life was in his father's hands, from what he read at family devotions to whom he chose as a mate.

Marriage, as Betty Sewall painfully learned when she reached the mature age of seventeen, did not necessarily mean falling in love; in most cases, rather, it meant a decision to enter the married state (sometimes, as in her case, with some rather sharp parental prodding) followed by the choice of a suitable person (a "good Match," as Sewall prayerfully hoped, in which she might be "equally yoked"),¹²³ a choice which might

¹²⁰Diary, I, 385.

¹²¹Ibid., entry for October 30.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 351, 353, entries for November 2, 19, 1691. He had been left with Nehemiah Hobart on the earlier date. This may have been the first of the several attempts to find a suitable apprenticeship for him, because he is still there in the fall and winter of the next year (see ibid., pp. 362, 377, 370, 372, entries for August 10, October 1, November 24, 1692, and December 31, 1692/3). When he returned home we are not told, but he is back in 1694 (ibid., 391, entry for October 5).

¹²³Letter-Book, I, 380, letter to "Cousin Moodey of York" dated February 4, 1708/9.

or might not be her own.¹²⁴ A Captain Tuthill having expressed an interest in her (to the father, not to her), Sewall made enquiries as to whether he "had any blot."¹²⁵ His reputation being found good, he was invited to call:

[January 4, 1698/9.] About 11 m. [morning] Daughter Elizabeth reads to me the second of Genesis in course. In the evening between seven and eight Capt. Zech. Tuthill speaks with her.

.....

[January 7 (?)] . . . at night Capt. Tuthill comes to speak with Betty, who hid her self all alone in the coach for several hours till he was gon, so that we sought at several houses, till at last came in of her self, and look'd very wild.

January 9. . . . speaks with her in my presence. . . .

January 10. at night sent Mr. Tuthill away, because company was here, and told him [I] was willing to know her mind better.

.....

Friday, January 20. Capt. Brown and Turner breakfast here: Betty came in afterward, and serv'd Almonds and Raisins, and fill'd a Glass of Wine to us; and it fell to her to drink to Capt. Turner. She went out of the way at

¹²⁴See the comments on this subject by Calhoun, I, 54; Knappen p. 455; Morgan, chap. 1 nassim, esp. p. 22.

¹²⁵Diary, I, 490, entry for January 2, 1698/9.

first, after I had spoke to her to fill wine: which surpris'd me: and I contriv'd that of the Raisins on purpose to mend the matter.¹²⁶

After such incomprehensible behavior poor Betty became the special object of her father's prayers,¹²⁷ and when, a few months later, she refused Grove Hirst as well, Sewall was really disturbed, ending his notice of it in the diary with the hope that "the Lord [would] sanctify . . . Afflictions."¹²⁸ When Hirst proved persistent in his suit, Sewall wrote his daughter, visiting at Braintree, as follows:

ELISABETH,--Mr. Hirst waits on you once more to see if you can bid him welcom. Itought to be seriously considered, that your drawing back from him after all that has pass'd between you, will be to your Prejudice; and will tend to discourage persons of worth from making their Court to you. And you had need well to consider whether you be able to bear his final Leaving of you, howsoever it may seem gratefull to you at present. When persons come toward us, we are apt to look upon their Undesirable Circumstances mostly; and thereupon to shun them. But when persons retire from us for good and all, we are in danger of looking only on that which is desirable in them, to our woful Disquiet. Whereas tis the

¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 490-492.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 492, entry for January 5.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 502, entry for September 28, 1699.

property of a good Balance to turn where the most weight is, though there be some also in the other Scale. I do not see but the Match is well liked by judicious persons, and such as are your Cordial Friends, and mine also.

Yet notwithstanding, if you find in yourself an immovable, incurable Aversion from him, and cannot love, and honour, and obey him, I shall say no more, nor give you any further trouble in this matter. It had better be off than on. So praying God to pardon us, and pity our Undeserving, and to direct and strengthen and settle you in making a right Judgment, and giving a right Answer, I take leave, who am, Dear Child,

your loving father.¹²⁹

While the parents got together at home, Betty's suitor set out to woo her at Braintree.¹³⁰ Whether it was his wooing or Sewall's letter that did the trick we do not learn, but a year later the couple were married in the parlor of Sewall's new house. Cotton Mather presided, and Sewall led the company in singing Psalm 128, accidentally setting it to a tune which he did not intend.¹³¹ The bride, sufferer in her youth of so many embarrassments and fears, now became a mother, both soon and often. At the age of thirty-four years she died, having borne eight children, five of which were then living. "I am

¹²⁹Letter-Book, I, 213, letter dated October 26, 1699.

¹³⁰Diary, I, 503, entry for October 24, 1699.

¹³¹Ibid., II, 24, entry for October 17, 1700.

just a-going," her father heard her say, "Call Mr. Hirst." After this, says Sewall, "She Moan'd lower and lower till she dyed, about Midnight."¹³²

The record of the courships and marriages of Sewall's children, all of them carefully presided over by the conscientious and affectionate father, contains the materials for several novels ready to hand. Take, for example, the story of his daughter Mary. As with the other children, her "marriage to Christ," as Sewall termed it, had cost him "considerable Agony and . . . many Tears,"¹³³ and it was presumably with some relief that he turned his attention to the more tangible problem of her espousal on earth. When she was eighteen a suitor presented himself in the person of Sam Gerrish, a Boston bookseller and son of a country clergyman, the Reverend Joseph Gerrish. That Mary should look favorably upon him was at first not too agreeable to her parents. There had been "various and uncertain reports" about attentions Gerrish had paid to Sarah Coney. Finally Sewall wrote to the boy's father asking for "the naked Truth . . . whether the way be now fairly open for an Address of that kind, upon assurance of agreeable entertainment."¹³⁴ Receiving a satisfactory reply to this query, he

¹³²Ibid., III, 89-91, entry for July 10, 1716. See the Letter-Book, II, 56, letter to Jonathan Belcher dated July 28, 1716; ibid., p. 84, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated January 25, 1717/18.

¹³³Diary, II, 249, entry for January 24, 1708/9; Letter-Book, I, 331, letter to Edward Taylor dated April 21, 1709.

¹³⁴Letter-Book, I, 379, letter dated February 1, 1708/9. Diary, II, 249, entries for February 4 and January 31, 1708/9. Ibid., entry for February 6.

left word at Gerrish's shop (February 18, 1708/9) that he would see him that night after the mid-week prayer meeting--

He came and I bid him wellcom to my house as to what his father writt about. So late hardl, fit then to see my daughter, appointed him to come on Tuesday, invited him to Supper; I observ'd he drunk to Mary in the third place. Febr. 23. When I came from the Meeting at Mr. Stephens's I found him in the Chamber, Mr. Hirst and wife here. It seems he ask'd to speak with Mary below, whether it were best to frequent my House before his father came to Town: I said that were the best introduction: but he was wellcom to come before, and bid him come on Friday night. Febr. 24. Mr. Hirst tells me Mr. Gerrish courted Mr. Conney's daughter: I told him I knew it, and was uneasy. In the evening daughter [Betty] Hirst came hether, I suppose to tell that Mr. Gerrish had courted Mr. Coney's daughter: and if she should have Mr. Stoddard, she would mend her market. Friday, Febr. 25. Madam Winthrop, Oliver, and Mico visit my wife. In the evening S. Gerrish comes not; we expected him, Mary dress'd her self: It was a painfull disgracefull disappointment. Febr. 26. Satterday, Sam Gerrish goes to Wenham unknown to me, till Lords-day night Capt. Greenleaf told me of it. He was not seen by us till Wednesday March 2, David saw him.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Diary, II, 250-251.

.....
 March, 11th S. Gerrish calls here. . . . March, 14.
 The Reverend Mr. Joseph Gerrish comes to our house in the
 evening. Dines with us March 15th. . . . At night his
 Son comes, and Mary goes to him. Mr. Gerrish goes home on
 Wednesday. His son comes and is entertain'd then also.

Friday-night. [March 18.] S. Gerrish comes. Tells
 Mary except Satterday and Lord's-day nights intends to
 wait on her every night; unless some extraordinary thing
 happen.

Satterday, March 19. I call at S. Gerishes shop;
 he was not within: but came in presently: I desired him
 to Bind me a Psalm-Book in Calv's Leather.¹³⁶

In August they were married,¹³⁷ and on November 10 of the
 following year the twenty year old wife gave birth to a daugh-
 ter.¹³⁸ Then--

November 15. Came home [from court], fair Wether,
 and not very Cold. Enquired of Mr. Gerrish as I came
 along concerning his Wife: He said she was something
 disorder'd; but I apprehended no danger, and . . . went
 not to see her that night.

November 16. Thanksgiving. My wife sent my daughter
 Gerrish part of our Dinner, which as I understood she eat

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 251.
¹³⁷Ibid., p. 263, entry for August 24, 1709.
¹³⁸Ibid., p. 289, entry for November 10, 1710.

of pleasantly. But twas a Cold Day and she was remov'd off her Bed on to the Palat Bed in the morning. After the Evening Exercise my wife and I rode up in the Coach: My daughter ask'd me to pray with her, which I did; pray'd that God would give her the Spirit of Adoption to call Him Father. Then I went away with Mr. Hirst to his House, leaving my wife with my daughter Gerrish, till she call'd to go home. After our coming home, the northern Chimney of the New house fell a-fire and blazed out extremly; which made a great Uproar, as is usual. An hour or two after midnight Mr. Gerrish call'd me up acquainting us of the extream illness of his wife; All the family were alarm'd, and gather'd into our Bed-Chamber. When I came there, to my great Surprise my Daughter could not speak to me. They had try'd to call up Mr. Wadsworth [minister of the South Church]; but could not make the family hear. I sent for Mr. Mayhew, who came and pray'd very well with her.¹³⁹

The reader of the diary learns to recognize the appearance of ministers at such a time as fatal and therefore is not surprised when, at "four a clock after Midnight my dear child expired, being but Nineteen years, and twenty days old."¹⁴⁰ Next day was the funeral, for which Danforth prepared an elegy

¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 289-290.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 290.

in honor of her who had thus suddenly "Entered on the Celebration of Triumphant Hallelujahs."¹⁴¹ In the following spring the child followed its mother to the grave, bringing to a close the short and sad chronicle of Sewall's Mary.¹⁴² One thing, however, had not been taken care of before her death, namely her marriage portion, an important, standard, and completely unsentimental part of the inter-family arrangements. Three months after Mary's funeral, therefore, we find Sewall meeting with the Gerrishes to talk terms, he arguing for five hundred and fifty pounds and they holding out for six hundred. Finally they decided to split the difference, with Sewall throwing in the unpaid rent of his Cotton Hill house (where the young couple had been living) to bring the figure to six hundred.¹⁴³ The last wry detail of the story is that Sam Gerrish returned to the arms of Sarah Coney and married her on May 8, 1712. Sewall was there, set the tune for a psalm (successfully this time), and enjoyed very much

¹⁴¹Broadsides, Ballads, &c. Printed in Massachusetts 1639-1800, in Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 7, V (Boston, 1922), 46. Cotton Mather dedicated his Nehemiah. A Brief Essay on Divine Consolations (Boston, 1710) to "the honourable Judge Sewall . . . because you have been Exercised with some Funerals in your Family; and especially one of a Daughter, falling Suddenly into the arms of Death, a few Days after she had comforted you with the Birth of her First-born Infant."

¹⁴²Letter-Book, II, 12-13, letter to Sarah Storke dated January 10, 1712/13; Diary, II, 307, entries for April 21, 22, 23, 24, 1711.

¹⁴³Diary, II, 336, entry for February 19, 1711/12. See the Ledger, fol. 136. Sewall paid part in plate, part in cash, and for part he gave a note. See also the Letter-Book, I, 413, letter to the Reverend Joseph Gerrish dated January 7, 1711/12. Gerrish remained in the house at Cotton Hill until

the refreshments (sack-posset and cake) that were served.¹⁴⁴

Of the three children who survived Sewall, two, Judith and Joseph, apparently led prosperous and contented lives. The third, however, Sam Junior, experienced some extremely interesting tribulations. Judith, at the age of nineteen, after a short (five months) and pleasant (much slay riding, "noble" correspondence, and giving of gifts) courtship, married the Reverend William Cooper.¹⁴⁵ Her father presided

1724, when Sewall asked him to make way for the Reverend Mr. Cooper, who had married his daughter Judith (Letter-Book, II, 176, letter dated September 23, 1724).

¹⁴⁴Diary, II, 347.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., III, 235-238, entries for December 1, 4, 11, 1719, and January 1, 1719/20; ibid., pp. 243-244, entries for February 4 and 23, 1719/20. A few months earlier Colonel William Dudley had expressed an interest in her and had the support of Governor Joseph Dudley, who spoke to Sewall in his behalf. Sewall was not enthusiastic, however, and the affair came to nothing. (Diary, III, 229, 231, entries for September 26 and October 15, 1719.)

Judith had arrived in Sewall's fiftieth year, making it, as he says, a "year . . . of . . . Jubilee" (Letter-Book, I, 267-268, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated March 12, 1701/2). The delivery had been a hard one, and it had been difficult to get a nurse. The father of the one who had agreed to come "huff'd and ding'd, and said he would lock her up . . . she should not come" (Diary, II, 51, entry for January 12, 1701/2). After that, however, everything went well. The child had been good from the first, giving the parents "very little Exercise after 3 or 4 nights" (ibid., p. 75, entry for March 22, 1703). Two weeks after she was born the mother was sufficiently recovered to entertain her women attendants at dinner: "Had a good Dinner, Boil'd Pork, Beef, Fowls; very good Rost Beef, Turkey-Pye, Tarts, Madam Usher carv'd, Mrs. Hannah Greenlef; Ellis, Cowell, Wheeler, Johnson, and her daughter Cole, Mrs. Hill our Nurses Mother, Nurse Johnson, Hill, Hawkins, Mrs. Goose, Deming, Green, Smith, Hatch, Blin. Comfortable, moderat weather: and with a good fire in the Stove warm'd the Room." (Diary, II, 50, entry for January 16, 1701/2.) At the age of two Judith was "carried . . . unto the house of Mr. Robert Avery of Dedham, for to be healed of her Rupture" (Diary, II, 101, entry for April 27, 1704). Here, where she remained for at least five months, Sewall frequently visited her, sometimes bringing her presents of cake (ibid., pp. 101, 112, 114, entries for April 27, May 13, July 12 and 31, and September 15, 1704).

at the wedding, which as a magistrate he of course had the right to do,¹⁴⁶ and spoke these characteristic words:

Sir, Madam [addressing Simeon Stoddard and his wife, who was mother of the groom by a previous marriage], The great Honour you have conferr'd on the Bridegroom and the Bride, by being present at this Solemnity, does very Conveniently supersede any further enquiry after your Consent. And the part I am desired to take in this Wedding, renders the way of my giving my Consent very Compendious: There's no manner of room left for that previous Question, Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man?

Dear Child, you give me your Hand for one moment, and the Bridegroom forever. Spouse, You Accept and receive this Woman now given you &c.

He adds that "Mr. Sewall [Joseph, who had now been a pastor at the South Church for seven years] pray'd before the Wedding, and Mr. Colman [of the Brattle Street Church, whose assistant Mr. Cooper was to be] after. Sung the 115. Psalm from the 9. verse to the end, in the New-Hall, [to] St David's, which I set[.] There we had our Cake, and Sack-posset."¹⁴⁷

As soon as it had become apparent that this, his last daughter, would soon be married, Sewall (who was now approaching seventy) sent to his cousin Samuel Storke in England a

¹⁴⁶A few other times in the diary he notes having performed weddings, but not often and never before for one of his own children.

¹⁴⁷Diary, III, 253, entry for May 12, 1720.

list of things to buy. This list, constituting as it does an approximate inventory of the "movables" with which Judith began her housekeeping, is of considerable interest. "To be Bought," it begins,

Curtains and Vallens for a Bed, with Counterpane, Head-Cloth and Tester, of good yellow watered worsted camlet [note added: "Send also of the same Camlet and Trimming, as may be enough to make Cushions for the Chamber Chairs"], with Trimming, well made: and Bases, if it be the fashion.

A good fine large Chintz Quilt well made.

A True Looking Glass of black Walnut Frame of the newest Fashion (if the Fashion be good), as good as can be bought for five or six pounds.

A second Looking Glass as good as can be bought for four or five pounds, same kind of frame

A Duzzen of good black Walnut Chairs, fine Cane, with a Couch. A Duzzen of Cane Chairs of a different figure, and a great Chair, for a Chamber; all black Walnut.

One Bell-mettal Skillet of two Quarts: one ditto one Quart

One good large Warming Pan bottom and Cover fit for an Iron handle.

Four pair of strong Iron Dogs with Brass heads, about five or six shillings a pair.

A Brass Hearth for a Chamber, with Dogs, Shovel,

Tongs and Fender of the newest Fashion. (the Fire is to ly upon Iron).

A strong Brass Mortar, that will hold about a Quart, with a Pestle.

Two pair of large Brass sliding Candlesticks, about four shillings a pair.

Two pair of large Brass Candlesticks, not sliding, of the newest Fashion, about five or six shillings a pair.

Four Brass Snuffers, with stands.

Six small strong Brass Chafing-dishes, about four Shillings a-piece.

One Brass basting Ladle; one larger Brass Ladle.

One pair of Chamber Bellows with Brass Noses.

One small Hair Broom sutable to the Bellows.

One Duzzen of large hard-mettal Pewter Plates, new Fashion weighing about fourteen pounas.

One Duzzen hard-mettal Pewter Porringers.

Four Duzzen of small Glass Salt-cellars, of white glass, Smooth, not wrought, and without a foot.

And if there be any Money over, send a piece of fine Cambrick, and a Ream of good Writing Paper.

A Duzzen of good Ivory-hafted Knives and Forks.¹⁴⁸

The last we hear of Judith she is the mother of five children, living in her father's house at Cotton Hill and receiving money from him for a "help . . . in . . . Dis-

¹⁴⁸Letter-Book, II, 105-107, list and accompanying letter dated February 20, 1719/20.

bursements. ¹⁴⁹

Joseph Sewall seems to have been a pious bore, ¹⁵⁰ one whose character is suggested by the fact that his copious shedding of tears during prayer gained for him the name of "the weeping Apostle." ¹⁵¹ The fact that he was long a popular minister of the South Church, so well thought of that at the age of thirty-six he was chosen to be President of Harvard (he "gave them a denyall"), is a sad indication of what had happened to the "right New England spirit." ¹⁵² To Sewall,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 261, letter to Rev. William Cooper dated January 24, 1728/9. One of the children had died, ". . . so that now your Children make a File four deep; three Sons, and one Daughter."

¹⁵⁰ See "The Sins and Mercies of a Harvard Student," More Books, XI (September, 1936), 277-285, for a discussion of his college diary. It may be noted that his The Orphan's best Legacy: or, GOD's Parental Care of Bereaved Children: a Discourse occasion'd by the Death of the Honourable Samuel Sewall, Esq. (Boston, 1730), though mentioned by James Truslow Adams in the D.A.B. Sewall bibliography, contains nothing but the emptiest of platitudes, the general purport of which is to "look to God to take you up." It tells us nothing about Sewall but a good deal about his minister son.

¹⁵¹ Roberts, History of the Military Company, I, 259. Once, at the age of thirty-four, he was, says his father, "drench'd in Tears" at the news of the loss of Captain Thomas at sea, "being distressed for his lovely and beloved David" (Letter-Book, II, 63-64).

¹⁵² Diary, III, 340-341, entry for August 12, 1724; Letter-Book, II, 305, memoranda by Sam Junior for August 11, 26, and September 30, 1725. Cotton Mather remarked bitterly at the time of Joseph Sewall's appointment that he was "a modest young man, of whose piety (and little else) every one gives a laudable character. I always foretold these two things of the Corporation; first, if it were possible for them to steer clear of me, they will do so; secondly, that if it were possible for them to act foolishly, they will do so." (Diary, III, 341, editors' note.)

Hamilton A. Hill, History of the Old South Church (Boston, 1890), I, 367, gives this curious judgment of Joseph Sewall's pastorate: "He may not have been endowed with exceptional ability, but he possessed that which is worth more than this

however, he was a continual source of satisfaction and joy-- from the time when, at the age of three, he said, "News from Heaven, the French [are] come" ("No body has been tampering with him as I could learn," writes the startled father, who quite obviously was dealing with a budding prophet),¹⁵³ to the day when at last he stood in the pulpit of the South Church and preached from Psalm 73:28: "But it is good for me to draw near unto God." He "stood a little above an hour," Sewall notes, and, "Before we went out of the seat, Major General [Winthrop] congratulated me on account of my son; said he had done Pie et Docte."¹⁵⁴ To all his children Sewall was

for permanent success in the pastoral work, --adaptation to its requirements by natural taste, by careful training, and by an experimental knowledge of the truth."

¹⁵³Diary, I, 348, entry for August 28, 1691.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., II, 287, entry for August 20, 1710. He had got his Master's degree a month before (ibid., p. 282, entry for July 5, 1710). Three years went by, however, before he was ordained and settled at the Old South. In the meantime he preached occasionally in various of the Boston churches and received a call from Salem, which he declined (ibid., p. 299, entry for February 4, 1710/11; ibid., p. 301, entry for February 18, 1710/11; ibid., p. 308, entry for May 5, 1711; ibid., p. 331, entry for January 4, 1711/12; ibid., p. 339, entry for March 19, 1711/12; ibid., p. 345, entry for April 25, 1712). In May, 1712, he became ill and did not preach for several months (ibid., p. 349, entry for May 28, 1712; Letter-Book, II, 12, letter to Sarah Storke dated January 10, 1712/13). Sewall's description of the ordination, which took place on September 16, 1713, has considerable interest. At a little after ten in the morning,

Dr. Cotton Mather begun with Prayer, Excellently, concluded about the Bell ringing for Eleven. My son preached from 1 Cor. 3.7. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that Watereth; but God that gives the Increase. Was a very great Assembly; were Elders and Messengers from 9 Churches viz. North, Old [First], Colman, Cambridge, Charlestown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Milton, Weymouth. Twelve Ministers sat at the Table by the Pulpit. Mr. Pemberton made an August Speech, Shewing the Validity

a kind, interested, and frequently generous father; but particularly was he so to Joseph. He takes him out to see the military companies marching on the common,¹⁵⁵ delights in his childish boasting ("If this Country stand when I am a man [he was six], I'll drive . . . [the French] all out"),¹⁵⁶ buys children's cakes especially for him,¹⁵⁷ feels that his teachers aren't sufficiently sympathetic,¹⁵⁸ buys him gold buttons when he enters the ministry,¹⁵⁹ refuses to eat when Joseph falls ill ("I refrain going to Dinner; because of my Son's incapacity to feed, I refus'd to Feast"),¹⁶⁰ gives him an allowance of thirty pounds a year soon after his marriage,¹⁶¹

and Antiquity of New English Ordinations. Then having made his way, went on, ask'd as Customary, if any had to say against the ordaining the person. Took the Churches Handy vote; Church sat in the Gallery. Then declar'd the Elders and Messengers had desired the Ministers of Boston to lay on Hands (Mr. Bridge was indispos'd and not there). Dr. Increase Mather, Dr. Cotton Mather, Mr. Benjamin Wadsworth, Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton and Mr. Benjamin Colman laid on Hands. Then Mr. Pemberton Pray'd, Ordain'd, and gave the Charge Excellently. Then Dr. Increase Mather made a notable Speech, gave the Right Hand of Fellowship, and pray'd. Mr. Pemberton directed the three and Twentieth Psalm to be sung. The person now Ordain'd dismiss'd the Congregation with Blessing. The chief Entertainment was at Mr. Pemberton's; but was considerable elsewhere. Two Tables at our House, whereat were Mr. Gerrish of Wenham, Mr. Green, Mr. Graves, Mr. Holyoke, Mr. Robie, &c. &c. [Diary, II, 397-398.]

¹⁵⁵Diary, I, 329, entry for September 1, 1690.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 400, entry for April 1, 1695.

¹⁵⁷Ledger, fol. 197, entry for July 14, 1705.

¹⁵⁸Letter-Book, I, 255, letter to Peter Burr dated March 31, 1701.

¹⁵⁹Ledger, fol. 109, entry for October 28, 1713.

¹⁶⁰Diary, II, 349, entry for May 28, 1712.

¹⁶¹Ledger, fol. 109. From 1715 on he got this as "his Share in the Land Entail'd by his Grandmother Hull."

and at the time of his entry into the ministry reacts with an almost abnormal sensitivity to the merest suggestion of indifference on the part of other ministers of Boston ("I could not perceive that in either of his prayers he [Cotton Mather] did one jot mention the Building the South-church has in Hand in Settling another Minister." "Hear nothing particular in Mr. Wadsworth's Prayer, only for this Flock." "Could not perceive that Mr. Bridge pray'd for my Son." ". . . I could not discern that Mr. Pemberton pray'd for my son . . .").¹⁶²

Joseph's courtship of Elizabeth Walley, in the summer of his ordination (1713), was carried on with a propriety that was truly clerical. So far as can be learned from the diary, the initiative lay with the father more than the son and found expression in gifts such as "Dr. C. Mather's Treatise against Antinomianism, just come out"¹⁶³ and "Mr. Walter of CHRIST, very well bound in Calves Leather."¹⁶⁴ On the couple's wedding night, Sewall tells us, "Daughter Sewall [the bride] came in the Coach with my Wife, who invited her to come in and lodge here with her Husband; but she refus'd, and said she had promis'd to go to her Sister Wainwright's, and did so."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶²Diary, II, 348, 360, 361, 388, and III, 17: entries for May 15, August 17, 21, 1712; June 7, 1713; August 29, 1714.

¹⁶³Ibid., II, 375 - 376, entry for April 8, 1713.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 378, entry for April 25, 1713. The day before he had talked the match over with Mrs. Pemberton, who had "commended Mrs. Betty."

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 405, entry for October 29, 1713. Sewall had tried to get her to marry before rather than after Joseph's ordination on September 16 but without success.

It is, perhaps, not altogether surprising that the number of children born to this union was two.¹⁶⁶

The story of Joseph's older brother, Sam, is set in quite a different key. Though for the most part sufficiently pious and respectable, he seems to have suffered from an unregenerate liking for taverns and serving maids. His father warned him against the first,¹⁶⁷ and as for the second--

. . . spake to Sam [age seventeen] as to his Mistress' Maid being with child, and that she Laid it to him, and told him if she were with child by him, it concerned him seriously to consider what were best to be done; and that a Father was obliged to look after Mother and child. Christ would one day call him to an account and demand of him what was become of the child: and if [he] married not the woman, he would always keep at a distance from those whose temporal and spiritual good he was bound to promote to the uttermost of his power. Could not discern that any impression was made on him. I remark'd to him the unsuitableness of his frame under a business of so great and solemn Concern.¹⁶⁸

What the outcome of this particular matter was we are not told, but many years later his wife Rebecca (of whom more shortly) angrily told his mother that "if it were not for her, no Maid could be able to dwell at their house."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶Ibid., I, xxx.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., III, 78, entry for April 17, 1716.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., I, 420, entry for February 1, 1695/6.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., II, 371-372, entry for February 21, 1712/13.

He was, furthermore, greatly troubled by "unsettledness" as to his calling. Since he possessed, as it would seem, neither the desire nor the aptitude for attendance at Harvard, it was necessary when he reached the age of sixteen (when he had presumably finished grammar school, that is) to settle him in some other respectable employment. First he went to live and work with a shopkeeper by the name of Michael Perry, but after about three months he came home one day with "sore and swoln feet" caused by the cold (it was in January, and Perry "had no coles").¹⁷⁰ Not long after this he gave up this employment for good and returned home, Bastian being sent to fetch his chest of belongings.¹⁷¹ After six months of idleness, the father devoting himself to special sessions of prayer for help in "Sam's being to be placed out,"¹⁷² he went to work at the shop of Sam Checkley.¹⁷³ After a few months here, however, he could not sleep one night (February 7, 1695/6) because Sewall's brother Stephen, down from Salem, had been

speaking to him of removing to some other place, mentioning Mr. Usher's. I put him to get up a little wood, and he even fainted, at which Brother was much startled, and advis'd to remove him forthwith and place him somewhere else, or send him to Salem and he would doe the best he

¹⁷⁰Ibid., I, 397, entries for October 11, 1694, and January 14, 1694/5.

¹⁷¹Ibid., entry for February 15.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 398, entry for February 19, 1694/5; ibid., p. 409, entry for July 12, 1695.

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. 409, 410, entries for July 15 and August 13, 1695.

could for him. . . .

He [Sam] mention'd to me Mr. Wadsworth's Sermon against Idleness, which was an Affliction to him. He said his [work with Checkley] was an idle Calling, and that he did more at home than there, take one day with another. And he mention'd Mr. Stoddard's words to me, that should place him with a good Master, and where had fullness of Employment. It seems Sam. overheard him, and now alledged these words against his being where he was because of his idleness. Mention'd also the difficulty of the employment by reason of the numerousness of Goods and hard to distinguish them, many not being marked; whereas Books, the price of them was set down, and so could sell them readily. I spoke to Capt. Checkly again and again, and he gave me no encouragement that his being there would be to Sam's profit; and Mrs. Checkly always discouraging.

Mr. Willard's Sermon from those Words, What doest thou here Elijah? was an Occasion to hasten the Removal.

Feb. 10. Second-day. I went to Mr. Willard to ask whether had best keep him at home to day. He said, No: but tell Capt. Checkly first; but when I came back, Sam was weeping and much discompos'd, and loth to goe because it was a little later than usual, so I thought twas hardly fit for him to go in that Case, and went to Capt. Checkly and told him how it was, and thank'd him for his kindness to Sam. Capt. Checkly desired Sam. might come to their house and not be strange there, for which I thank'd him

very kindly. He presented his Service to my wife, and I to his who was in her Chamber. Capt. Checkly gave me Sam's Copy-Book that lay in the drawer.

Just before I got thether, I met Mr. Grafford who told me that Mumford said I was a knave. The good Lord give me Truth in the inward parts, and finally give Rest unto my dear Son, and put him into some Calling wherein He will accept of him to Serve him.¹⁷⁴

The patient father now found him a place with Mr. Wilkins, a bookseller, and the last time that we hear of Sam in his adolescent years he has been successful in selling "some of the Joy of Faith and some of Dr. Goodwin's 3d volum," the prices on which were doubtless plainly marked.¹⁷⁵

In the summer that Sam turned twenty-two (1702) he began paying court to Rebecca Dudley, daughter of the irascible Governor Joseph Dudley. The match was well liked by the parents on both sides, and that fall the marriage took place in the Sewall dining room.¹⁷⁶ After considerable bickering, a property settlement was reached by which Sam, who had now decided that he wished to be a farmer, received the Sewall lands at Muddy River (Brookline), with the understanding that

¹⁷⁴Diary, I, 421-422. The copy book here referred to may be the one now at the Massachusetts Historical Society. It belonged to Sam junior and contains mainly exercises in arithmetic.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 452, entries for April 8 and 12, 1697.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., II, 60, 61, 63, 65, entries for July 20, 30, August 4, 19, and September 15, 1702.

Dudley would there build a house into which the couple might shortly move.¹⁷⁷ After several years Sam began to suffer from melancholy,¹⁷⁸ and when finally (several more years having gone by) Sewall asked the wife "what might be the cause of my Son's Indisposition, are you so kindly affectioned one toward another as you should be?" she replied, "I do my Duty."¹⁷⁹ Sam went home with his father, and a week passed before friends managed to get the couple together again. It was at this time (February 21, 1712/13) that Rebecca defended herself to mother Sewall with the charge that no maid was safe around her son.¹⁸⁰ From this point on we cannot do better than let the scattered diary entries tell their own lively story.

Febr. 27. [1712/13, after a meeting of the Council at Dudley's house.] I slipt into [the] Kitchen . . . sat with Madam Dudley alone a pretty while; She said nothing to me; I gave her my Silk-Hand-kerchief, which I bought last Satterday for my daughter [Rebecca], but was prevented giving it to her, she being just gon before I got home. Yet this occasion brought her not to speak. . . .¹⁸¹

Febr. 28. Amos Gates comes to Town, and says my Son is better.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷Letter-Book, I, 276-281, exchange of letters between Sewall and Dudley in January-March, 1702/3.

¹⁷⁸Diary, II, 175, entry for December 24, 1706.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 371, entry for February 13, 1712/13.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 371-372, entries for February 19, 21, 1712/13.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 372.

¹⁸²Ibid.

.....
April 23. . . . I saw Samuel; It is yet dark wether
at Brooklin.¹⁸³

.....
[October 5.] I goe to Brooklin, meet my daughter
Sewall going to Roxbury with Hannah [an only child, two
others having died], to dine with her Brother Winthrop.
Sam. and I dined alone. Daughter return'd before I came
away. I propounded to her that Mr. Walter [their minister]
might be desired to come to them and pray with them. She
seen'd not to like the motion, said she knew not wherefore
she should be call'd before a Minister! I urg'd him as
the fittest moderator; the Governor or I might be thought
partial. She pleaded her performance of Duty, and how
much she had born. Mr. Hirst came in and smok'd a pipe
and we came away together.¹⁸⁴

.....
[October 30.] Sam. and his Wife dine here, go home
together in the Calash. William Ilsly rode and pass'd by
them. My son warn'd him not to lodge at his house;
Daughter said she had as much to doe with the house as
he. Ilsly lodg'd there. Sam. grew so ill on Satterday,
that instead of going to Roxbury [for services on Sunday]
he was fain between Meetings to take his Horse, and come

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 380.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 400.

hither; to the surprise of his Mother, who was at home.
Lord save him and us!¹⁸⁵

.....

November 2. Sam. is something better, yet full of
pain; He told me with Tears that these sorrows (arising
from discord between him and his wife) would bring him to
his Grave. I said he must endeavour to be able to say,
O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy vic-
tory?¹⁸⁶

After this the diary lapses into a discreet silence,
Sewall making no mention even of the fact that on January 28,
1714/15, Sam again came home, this time to stay for almost
three years.¹⁸⁷ Finally, however, on October 16, 1716--

p.m. Went a foot to Roxbury [where the Dudleys lived].
Governor Dudley was gone to his Mill. Staid till he came
home. I acquainted him what my Business was; He and
Madam Dudley both, reckon'd up the Offenses of my Son;
and He the Vertues of his Daughter. And alone, mention'd
to me the hainous faults of my wife, who the very first
word ask'd my daughter why she married my Son except she
lov'd him? I saw no possibility of my Son's return; and
therefore asked, that he would make some Proposals, and
so left it. Madam Dudley had given me Beer as I chose;
G: Dudley would have me drink a Glass of very good Wine;

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., III, 137, editors' note.

and made a faint of having the Horses put in, to draw me; but with all said how many hundred times he had walked over the Neck. I told him I should have a pleasant Journey; and so it prov'd; for coming over with Mrs. Pierpoint, whose maiden name was Gore, had diverting discourse all the way. Met Mr. Walter in his Calash with his wife returning home, were very glad to see one another, he stopping his Calash. 'Twas quite night before we got to our house.¹³⁸

A year elapses, and then on August 29, 1717, after a Thursday lecture--

Note, As I came out of the Meetinghouse, Mr. Eliot's youth told me Governor Dudley would speak with me. . . . I said, I think it will be best after Dinner; and went accordingly, after a little Waiting on some Probat business, which I thought not of. Governor Dudley mention'd Christ's pardoning Mary Magdalen; and God hates putting away; but did not insert sine causa. . . . I said my Son had all along insisted that Caution should be given, that the infant lately born should not be chargeable to his Estate. Governor Dudley no ways came into it; but said 'twas best as 'twas, No body knew whose twas.¹³⁹

¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 108-109.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 137. Evidently some negotiation had preceded this, for on the previous April 1 Sewall had written Dudley saying: "There is one thing to be Remembred; that convenient Caution be given, that Mrs. Sewall do not run her Husband in Debt, without his Order" (Letter-Book, II, 69).

Finally, on February 28, 1717/18:

My Son Samuel Sewall and his Wife Sign and Seal the Writings in order to my Son's going home. Governor Dudley and I witnesses, Mr. Sam. Lynde took the Acknowledgment. I drank to my Daughter in a Glass of Canary. Governor Dudley took me into the Old Hall and gave me ~~5~~100. in Three-pound Bills of Credit, new ones, for my Son; told me on Monday, he would perform all that he had promised to Mr. Walter. Sam agreed to go home next Monday, his wife sending the Horse for him.¹⁹⁰

After this we hear of no more domestic strife at the Muddy River farm. It is interesting to note that divorce, permissible in such a case, had apparently never been considered, the remedy employed for the couple's incompatibility being rather that which Henry Smith, a Puritan preacher in the time of Elizabeth, described as "hold[ing] their noses together till weariness make them leave struggling; like two spaniels which are coupled in a chain, at last they learn to go together because they may not go asunder."¹⁹¹ A final observation to be made on the affair is that it was quite obviously deemed unmeet that a daughter of the Governor should join her more common unchaste sisters at the town whipping post. Of the fate of the illegitimate child there is no suggestion.

¹⁹⁰ Diary, III, 173.

¹⁹¹ Knappen, p. 455. Three more children were born to the marriage, all of whom quickly died. Of the four that had been born prior to the separation, two died in their first year, one lived to the age of six and another to the age of nine. (Diary, I, xxvii-xxviii.)

III

At this point, the reader must regard as somewhat superfluous the statement that Sewall's life was dominated by religious concerns. The fact is illustrated in so many aspects of his life that it becomes completely obvious even while ignoring for the most part that which is most pertinent to it, namely the actual character of his religious activities, experience, and attitudes. Not to consider these things, however, would be to ignore much that, to Sewall at least, was of paramount importance. To us, many of these same matters seem either trivial or dull. At best we are amused, and at worst we are bored. As we have more than once had occasion to remark, however, such reactions are generally the result either of an inability or an unwillingness to establish for ourselves the proper frame of reference. This is repeatedly demonstrated in our attitude toward the Puritan's preoccupation with various questions of behavior and personal dress. Why, we are inclined to ask, did presumably intelligent men so much concern themselves with things that are quite obviously removed from religion's central concern, namely the relationship of man to his God? The answer is that they weren't at all obviously removed from that concern, that, rather, they were very lively symbols of it indeed. As Thomas Cartwright, sixteenth century Puritan leader in England, early declared, changes in the dress of ministers of the Gospel were desired because things such as the cap, tippet, and surplice

had become "marks of popish abominations . . . hurtful monuments of idolatry, grieving the godly who hold everything connected with Antichrist in detestation, tending to draw weak brethren back to Rome. . . ." ¹⁹² It was in this so-called Vestiarian controversy that the term "Puritan" first came into use, and in it, speaking loosely, the movement may be said to have had its beginning. ¹⁹³ In short, the Puritan first became known as such in a controversy over clothes, and for someone like Sewall to be indifferent to such matters meant a loss of identity as a religious being.

Such an approach to the matter, at any rate, enables one to view Sewall's life-long campaign against periwigs, for example, with something besides simple astonishment. ¹⁹⁴ The Puritans' aversion had originally been to the wearing of long hair, earning for themselves thereby the derisive name of Roundheads. As late as 1675 the Massachusetts magistrates had inveighed against "this ill custome," ¹⁹⁵ and the reverses suffered in King Philip's War were regarded as a punishment which God had laid upon the colony for this and other

¹⁹²A. F. Scott Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism: 1535-1603 (Cambridge, Engl., 1925), p. 99, cited.

¹⁹³See Knappen, p. 483 and app. 1; also, S. Lothrop Thorndike, "The Psalmodies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay," Col. Soc. of Mass., Proc., I (1892-94), 229.

¹⁹⁴See Worthington C. Ford, "Sewall and Noyes on Wigs," Col. Soc. of Mass., Pub., XX (January, 1918), 109-128, for an exhaustive treatment of this subject. Because the pertinent references in Sewall's diary are so very numerous, the reader is referred to this article for such of them as are not here given.

¹⁹⁵Colonial Laws, p. 239. The courts were instructed to fine, admonish, or correct, according to their discretion.

such sins of pride.¹⁹⁶ Even worse, however, was the introduction of wigs (from Restoration England) at about this same time. This development caused the battlefront to shift apparently, for most of the portraits of the time show the men with locks of sinful length. Even the scrupulous Sewall appears wearing his hair down to the shoulders, though he did get it trimmed several times a year.¹⁹⁷ If he gave some ground here, however, he remained adamant on the score of wigs. When he grew old and bald he wore, as our portrait of him shows, a black skull cap for a protection against drafts (wigs were frequently justified on grounds of medical necessity), and when Colonel Townsend twitted him about it, saying he should get a wig, Sewall was proud to reply that he regarded it as his "chief ornament." As was often the case in such matters, he found himself left standing more and more alone. One can imagine his dismay when, on March 19, 1690/1, an apologist for the new fashion appeared in the person of none other than Cotton Mather--

Said one sign of a hypocrit was for a man to strain at a Gnat and swallow a Camel. . . . to be zealous against an innocent fashion, taken up and used by the best of men; and yet make no Conscience of being guilty of great Immoralities. Tis supposed means wearing of Perriwigs:

¹⁹⁶ Mass. Records, V, 59.

¹⁹⁷ See the numerous entries in the pages of "moneys paid out" at the back of the Ledger. For the equally numerous diary entries, see Ford, p. 111.

said would deny themselves in any thing but parting with an opportunity to do God service; that so might not offend good Christians. Meaning, I suppose, was fain to wear a Perriwig for his health. I expected not to hear a vindication of Perriwigs in Boston Pulpit by Mr. Mather. . . .¹⁹⁸

One by one the other men of God surrendered to fashion, paid their visits to the Boston "peruke-king," a Mr. Farnham, and appeared in their pulpits modishly adorned with great mops of false hair--Pemberton, Wadsworth, Charles Chauncy, even his own son-in-law, William Cooper.¹⁹⁹ In the face of such wholesale defection among the righteous, Sewall made his diary entry on the death of the ancient schoolmaster, Ezekiel Cheever: "A rare Instance of Piety, Health, Strength, Serviceableness. The Wellfare of the Province was much upon his Spirit. He abominated Perriwigs."²⁰⁰ To Nehemiah Walter he wrote: "I thank you for bearing me company as far as you can in the fashion of your Head-Dress. The Truth is, a Great Person has furnished me with Perukes Gratis, these Two and Fifty years, and I cant yet find in my heart to goe to another."²⁰¹ The

¹⁹⁸ Diary, I, 342. And see ibid., p. 102, entry for November 6, 1685, for another case of justification arguing medical necessity.

¹⁹⁹ ibid., II, 171, entry for October 24, 1706; ibid., III, 54, entry for August 18, 1715. See Wertenbaker, The Puritan Oligarchy, p. 176.

An earlier wig-maker, William Clendon, came to a just and miserable end on November 29, 1696, ". . . being almost eat up with Lice and stupified with Drink and cold. Sat in the watch-house and was there gaz'd on a good part of the day, having been taken up the night before." (Diary, I, 158.)

²⁰⁰ Diary, II, 231, entry for August 21, 1708.

²⁰¹ Letter-Book, I, 288, letter dated December 16, 1703.

current was so much against him, particularly among Cotton Mather's "best" people, that for the most part he maintained a grieving silence. Occasionally, however, he let his mind be known, as when Josiah Willard, son of his pastor, cut off his hair, "a very full head of hair." Sewall went to see him--

Told his Mother what I came about, and she call'd him. I enquired of him what Extremity had forced him to put off his own hair, and put on a Wig? He answered, none at all. But said that his Hair was streight, and that it parted behinde. Seem'd to argue that men might as well shave their hair off their head, as off their face. I answered men were men before they had hair on their faces, (half of mankind have never any). God seems to have ordain'd our Hair as a Test, to see whether we can bring our minds to be content to be at his finding; or whether we would be our own Carvers, Lords, and come no more to Him. . . .

He seem'd to say would leave off his Wig; when his hair was grown. I spake to his Father of it a day or two after; He thank'd me that had discoursed his Son, and told me that when his hair was grown to cover his ears, he promis'd to leave off his Wig. If he had known of it, would have forbidden him. His Mother heard him talk of it; but was afraid positively to forbid him; lest he should do it, and so be more faulty.²⁰²

²⁰²Diary, II, 36-37, entry for June 10, 1701.

Several months after this he made his protest felt by absenting himself from his customary place in Mr. Willard's audience and went to hear Mr. Coleman at the Brattle Street church instead, where he was pleased to perceive that "Mr. Coleman's people were much gratified by my giving them my Company, Several considerable persons expres'd themselves so."²⁰³ Of his various old acquaintances among the military leaders who had succumbed to the fashion,²⁰⁴ he managed, it would seem, to surprise at least one into some thoughtfulness on the subject: "In the morning [of January 16, 1703/4] walk'd with Major Walley, Capt. Timothy Clark, Mr. Calef, constable Franklin, to visit disorderly poor; Met at my house. Capt Clark took up his Wigg: I said would have him consider that one place; The Bricks are fallen &c. But here men cut down the sycamores. He seem'd startled."²⁰⁵

Another matter of intense preoccupation with Sewall concerned the keeping of holidays. From the very beginning, a cardinal point in the Puritan's creed had been the abrogation of all ecclesiastical festivals as smelling of Rome. The Sabbath alone was to be observed.²⁰⁶ Thus we find Sewall,

²⁰³Ibid., pp. 48-49, entry for November 30, 1701.

²⁰⁴See the Diary, II, 33, entry for April 7, 1701; ibid., p. 152-153, entry for January 12, 1705/6; ibid., p. 406, entry for November 5, 1713.

²⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 92-93. Isaiah 9:10: "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars."

²⁰⁶William D. Love, Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England (Boston, 1895), p. 32. The first two chapters of this work are a well-documented description of the background of the Puritan view of this subject. At the end of the century, Ned Ward, A Trip to New England, p. 5, could write: "Election, Commencement, and Training-days, are their only Holy-days. . ."

almost two centuries after the battle on this issue had first been joined, writing in his diary: "Yesterday [August 17, 1708] the Governor committed Mr. Holyoke's Almanack to me; and looking it over this morning, I blotted against February 14th Valentine; March, 25. Annunciation of the B. Virgin; Apr. 24, Easter; September 29. Michaelmas; December 25 Christmas. . . ." ²⁰⁷

On April 1 of the same year he had written to Boston's schoolmasters, Ezekiel Cheever and Nathaniel Williams, as follows:

If men are accountable for every idle word; what a Reckoning; will they have, that keep up stated Times, to promote Lying and Folly! What an abuse is it of precious Time; what a Profanation! What an Affront to the Divine Bestower of it! I have heard a child of Six years old say within these 2 or 3 days; That one must tell a man his Shoes were unbuckled (when they were indeed buckled) and then he would stoop down to buckle them; and then he was an April Fool.

Pray Gentlemen, if you think it convenient, as I hope you will, Insinuat into your Scholars, the defiling and provoking nature of such a Foolish practice; and take them off from it. ²⁰⁸

Similarly, eleven years later:

In the morning I dehorted Sam. Hirst and Grindal Rawson from playing Idle Tricks because 'twas the first

²⁰⁷ Diary, II, 229-230, entry for August 18, 1708.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., III, 217.

of April; They were the greatest fools that did so. M.E. Men came hither to avoid anniversary days, the keeping of them. . . . How displeasing must it be to God, the giver of our Time, to keep anniversary days to play the fool with ourselves and others.²⁰⁹

The main attack, however, centered on the observance of Christmas. In 1659 the General Court had passed a law whereby whoever should be found keeping the day "by forbearing to labor, feasting or any other way" was to be fined five shillings.²¹⁰ One of the demands of Charles II's commissioners to New England in 1665 was that this law be repealed as being obviously against the laws of England. Finally, in 1681, with the Charter beginning to be threatened, it was "left out," and in 1685, after the Charter had been lost, the law was formally annulled.²¹¹ Not for someone like Sewall, however, to whom nothing gave more satisfaction than the opportunity to observe on each Christmas day that business in the community was going on pretty much "as formerly." In the same year (1685) that the law against Christmas observance was annulled, he wrote: "Dec. 25. . . . Carts come to Town and Shops open as is usual. Some somehow observe the day; but are vexed I believe that the Body of the People prophane it, and blessed be God no Authority yet to compell them to keep it."²¹² On the following Sunday he heard

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 217, entry for April 1, 1719.

²¹⁰William C. Fowler, Local Law in Massachusetts and Connecticut (Albany, 1872), p. 27, cited.

²¹¹Mass. Records, II, 212, and V, 476. See Ellis, The Puritan Age, p. 259.

²¹²Diary, I, 114.

Mr. Allen preach against observance of the day, "Called it Anti-christian Heresie: Spoke against the Name. Canker began in the Tongue."²¹³ On Christmas day, 1686, Governor Andros, who had arrived just five days before, held special services in the Townhouse, "a Red-Coat going on his right hand and Capt. George on his left." Nevertheless, ". . . shops open . . . generally and persons about their occasions. Some, but few, Carts at Town with wood. . . ." ²¹⁴ A few other of these annual entries are worth recording for the glimpses they give of the every day Boston scene:

[1694] Shops are open, men at work; Carts of Pork, Hay, Coal, Wood come to Town as on other days. ²¹⁵

.

[1697] Snowy day: Shops are open, and Carts and sleds come to Town with Wood and Fagots as formerly. . . . This morning we read in course the 14, 15, and 16th Psalms. . . . I took occasion to dehort mine from Christmas-keeping, and charged them to forbear. Hannah reads Daniel, 6. and Betty, Luke, 12. ²¹⁶

.

[1705] Very cold Day but Serene Morning, Sleds, Slays, and Horses pass as usually, and shops open. ²¹⁷

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 396.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 466.

²¹⁷ Ibid., II, 150.

.....

[1711] I took with me Joseph, Hannah, and Judith; and went to Brooklin in Mr. Simson's sledge to see little Mary [his grandchild], 5. Months old; taken with Convulsions last Lords day night. . . . We had much ado to get along for the multitude of sleds coming to Town with wood, and returning.²¹⁸

.....

[1716] Shops are open, and sleds come to Town as at other times. I went to Cambridge to wish Mr. Brattle Joy; and found the Ferry-boat crowded much with passengers coming to Town: and so going back at my Return.²¹⁹

On one occasion the price of his righteousness proved painfully high:

[December 24, 1695.] It seems the Lieutenant Governour [Soughton] invites the Council to Dinner to morrow at his house [Sewall being omitted because of his feelings about anything that would suggest special observance on that day]. . . . The Grievousness of this proetermission is, that by this means I shall be taken up into the lips of Talkers, and shall be obnoxious to the Governour [Bello-mont] at his coming, as a person deserted and fit to be hunted down, if occasion be; and in the mean time, shall goe feebly up and down my Business, as one who is quite

²¹⁸Ibid., p. 330.

²¹⁹Ibid., III, 115.

out of the Lieutenant Governour's favour. The Lord pardon my share in the abounding of Iniquity by reason whereof the Love of many waxes cold.²²⁰

The question of publicly observing Christmas by adjourning the General Court for the day came up for the first time in 1722. Governor Shute, an Episcopalian and therefore in favor of the idea, took Sewall aside in the Council chamber and asked him what he thought. Sewall replied that he "would consider of it." Next day he consulted with Cotton Mather, who felt that the matter should be put to a vote of the Council and the House of Representatives. On December 21,

The Governour took me to the window again . . . and spake to me again about adjourning the Court to next Wednesday. I spake against it; and propounded that the Governour would take a Vote for it. . . . His Excellency went to the Board again, and said much for this adjourning; All kept Christmas but we; I suggested K. James the first . . . how he boasted what a pure church he had; and they did not keep Yule nor Pasch.

Mr. Dudley ask'd if the Scots kept Christmas. His Excellency protested, he believ'd they did not. Governour said they adjourn'd for the Commencement and Artillery [training day]. But then 'tis by Agreement. Col. Taylor spake so loud and boisterously for Adjourning, that 'twas hard for any to put in a word. . . . I said the Dissenters

²²⁰Ibid., I, 489.

came a great way for their Liberties and now the [Episcopal] Church had theirs, yet they could not be contented, except they might Tread all others down.

The Governor went ahead and adjourned the Court; wherefore on December 25 Sewall "chose to stay at home and not go to Roxbury Lecture," which might seem to savor of observance. Instead, he visited his "old friend and Carpenter, Peter Weare, but found him gon to h[eaven]. He expired about one a-clock in the Morning. He was quiet, minded his own business, eat his own Bread, was antiquis moribus, prisca fide, about 73. years old."²²¹

Like his friend Peter Weare, Sewall could be depended on to stand for things as they were in the good old days, whether the matter at hand concerned the wearing of wigs, the observance of Christmas, the manner of oath-taking (the hand should be lifted up, not laid on the Bible: man "must Swear by his Creator, not Creature"),²²² dancing around the Maypole

²²¹Ibid., III, 314-316.

²²²Ibid., I, 201, entry for January 31, 1687/8. At the first meeting of the Superior Court under the Dudley government, after the loss of the Charter, "the Foreman of the Grand-Jury, Capt. Hollbrook, swore laying his hand on the Bible, and one or two more. . . . Others swore lifting up their hands, as formerly." (Ibid., p. 145, entry for July 27, 1686.) In the next year several persons were fined and imprisoned for refusal to conform (ibid., p. 212, entry for February 8, 1687/8; ibid., pp. 208, 212, entries for March 30 and May 10, 1688).

The rather pathetic character of Sewall's position is indicated in his experience on June 7, 1688: "Mr. Dudley and Stoughton call here. In comes Mr. West and hath one Mr. Newton, a newcomer, sworn an Attorney. Mr. Dudley ask'd for a Bible, I ask'd if it might not better be done without. He laugh'd and seeing a Bible by accident, rose up and took it." (Ibid., p. 216.)

(in 1687 one was set up at Charlestown by sailors from the English frigate Kingfisher; when it was cut down a bigger one was put in its place with "a Garland upon it"),²²³ the naming of the days of the week (so that "in stead of Tuesday, Thursday, and Satterday in every Week, it might be said, Third, fifth and seventh," a change for which Sewall strove hard; but he ". . . could not prevail, hardly one in the Council" being willing to second him),²²⁴ or the "Inconvenient Innovation" of saying "Saint Luke, and Saint James &c." (" . . . not Scriptural . . . absurd and partial to [say] Saint Matthew &c. and Not to say Saint Moses, Saint Samuel &c. And if we said Saint we must goe thorough, and keep the Holydays appointed for them . . .").²²⁵

To someone like Sewall, such things as wigs, maypoles, and a new manner of oath-taking appeared as signs of a disastrous change that had come to the Bible Commonwealth. And he was quite right. As Professor Wertenbaker has remarked: "One wonders whether the ministers, as they looked out from beneath their borrowed locks over the wig-adorned heads of their congregations, stopped to think of their own warnings against 'pride of hair,' or to admit to themselves that their own surrender

²²³Ibid., p. 173, entry for May 26 and 27.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 428, entry for June 11, 1696. He "urg'd that the Week only, of all parcels of time, was of Divine Institution, erected by God as a monumental pillar for a memorial of the Creation. . . ." See the comment in Dexter, p. 459.

²²⁵Letter-Book, I, 370-371, letter to Henry Flint dated August 23, 1708, and Diary, II, 232, entry for August 27, 1708.

was a convincing evidence of the 'spiritual decay' which they so deeply deplored."²²⁶ The weakness of Sewall's position lay in the fact that in something like the dress of one's hair he was dealing with an outward symbol of a cause which, with the passage of two centuries, had lost much of its force. It was a symbol which, for most of his generation, if not for him personally, time had decayed, and in his preoccupation with it he comes to seem both pathetic and absurd.

The establishment of the provincial government in Massachusetts meant the arrival of numerous "strangers"--Royal governors, soldiers of the King, minor government officials--men whose ideas concerning the good life were frequently far removed from those of men like Sewall. Under their influence, the lighter side of life in the community underwent a comparatively rapid development. Roisterers appeared in the streets at night ("singing as they come . . . inflamed with Drink. . . . Such high-handed wickedness has hardly been heard of before in Boston");²²⁷ celebrators of the Queen's birthday and of Coronation day desecrated the Sabbath ("Made a great Fire in the Evening [Saturday], many Hussas." "Down Sabbath, Up Saint George");²²⁸ pranksters marched in the streets on Shrove Tuesday playing their outlandish tricks (a man appearing with "a Cock at his back, with a Bell in's hand . . . severall

²²⁶The Puritan Oligarchy, p. 176.

²²⁷Diary, I, 150-151, entry for September 3, 1686.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 152, entry for September 25, 1686; ibid., II, 101, entry for April 23, 1704.

follow him blindfold, and under pretence of striking him or's
cock, with great cart-whips strike passengers [of passing
vehicles] . . .");²²⁹ duellers paraded through the town ("one
array'd in white, the other in red . . . with naked Swords
advanced," the victor appearing later "accompanied with a
Drumm and about 7. drawn Swords, Shouting . . . in a kind
of Tryumph");²³⁰ a room at the Castle Tavern was fix'd up "for
a man to shew Tricks in" ("It seems the Room is fitted with
Seats")²³¹ --abomination after abomination. In the spring
of 1714 there was even talk of having "a Play acted in the
Council-Chamber," a thing which Sewall found quite beyond
belief. To Isaac Addington, Secretary of State, he wrote:
". . . as much as in me lyes, I do forbid it. The Romans
were very fond of their Plays: but I never heard they were
so far set upon them, as to turn their Senat-House into a
Play-House. . . . Let not Christian Boston goe beyond
Heathen Rome in the practice of shamefull Vanities."²³²
Whether or not because of Sewall's protests, the perfor-
mance apparently never came off. Other things, however,
he was powerless to do anything about. The organist of
King's Chapel, Edward Enstone, who became a dancing master
with the approval of his church, could not be touched,²³³

²²⁹Ibid., p. 167, entry for February 15, 1686/7.

²³⁰Ibid., pp. 173, 175-6, entries for April 22, 25, 28, 1687.

²³¹Ibid., p. 196, entry for December 4, 1687.

²³²Letter-Book, II, 29-30, letter dated March 2, 1713/14.

²³³Diary, III, 111, entry for November 29, 1716, and editors'
note.

and neither, of course, could Governor Shute, who patronized horse racing and staged balls that lasted far into the morning.²³⁴

The opposition of men like Sewall to so many of the things which their unregenerate brothers enjoyed has fostered the idea that the Puritan's existence was a barren and joyless one. The idea is one that, from our point of view, certainly contains much truth. The Puritan, however, would challenge it. Men's satisfactions, he might point out, are where they find them. The founders of Massachusetts crossed the ocean sea in pursuit of what they thought to be the good life, and, careless of deprivations and hardships, found it in their Wilderness Zion. That they actually did find it there is a fact for which Sewall supplies ample illustration. Though not of the first generation, he was yet close enough to it (he had come from England in 1661 as a boy of nine to the frontier town of Newbury, which his father had helped to found not many years before) to remember its "primitive glories"; and though, as we have earlier noted, his own career contained elements exemplifying the growing secular interest of the colony, it contained much more that was faithful to the spirit of the fathers, so much so, in fact, that by the end of his life he had come to be a kind of venerated anachronism, relic of an age that was past. Prayer and fasting, reading of Scripture, singing of psalms, attendance at meetings, pious meditation, and a close and pleasant communion with other Godly "New English Christians"--these were,

²³⁴Ibid., p. 193, entry for September 8, 1718; ibid., p. 158, entry for January 7, 1717/18.

for him, prime ingredients of the good life. And it was a good life. If it had not been, his diary would not continue to be read and enjoyed well over two centuries after it was written. It remains alive because its author found pleasure and excitement in the New England world that he knew.

Consider the matter of the Puritan sermon. Looking through the pages of the numerous little books in which Sewall kept careful notes of the many sermons that he heard (in the long-established Puritan tradition of "writing after the preacher"),²³⁵ the present-day reader is appalled by the flat and commonplace character of what apparently was his ordinary fare at meeting.²³⁶ Sewall was not appalled however; more

²³⁵In the opening pages of Scott's Woodstock there appears a description of church-goers of 1652 carrying "their Bibles and memorandum-books at their girdles, instead of knife and sword." Scott gives as his authority an anonymous comedy called "The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street," which was acted as early as 1607. A stage direction in this play reads: "Enter Nicholas St. Antlings, Wimon St. Mary-Overies, and Frailty, in blank Scurvy mourning-coats, with books at their girdles, as coming from church."

John Hull's sermon note books for the years 1671-79 are discussed and described by Edmund S. Morgan, "Light on the Puritans from John Hull's Notebooks," New England Quarterly, XV (March, 1942), 95-141.

²³⁶See the Diary, III, 26, editors' note, for a similar reaction to these same sermon notes. Their character may be suggested by three or four brief random excerpts. On March 29, 1691--"Mr. Willard . . . Rev. 22. 17. vid. n. 22. --Water of Life; all the Benefits it has purchased. / Doct. Those glorious Benefits of Christ which are freely offered to all, are fully suited to there wants; & compleatly sufficient to make them happy for ever. Water slakes thirst. (1) Thirst is natural to sensitive living creatures. Every one desires happiness. Ps. 4.6. (2) natural thirst is profitable & delightfull to the creature . . .," etc.

On February 7, 1685/6, he heard James Allen speak on "Cant. 7.4. Thy Nose is as the Tower of Lebanon which looketh

often than not he "was much refresh'd." Expressions such as "Spake well," "Made good work of it," "Preached excellently" appear a thousand times in the diary, and when he was forced by an occasional brief illness to miss a service or two he felt that providence was using him roughly indeed.²³⁷ The idea that he might as well "read a good book at home" caused him to cry, "Fy for Shame! The presenting our selves before GOD in the solemn Assembly cannot be dispensed with."²³⁸ When, in 1721, Mr. Prince announced but one service for Thanksgiving Day, Sewall was much disturbed that "so great an Alteration should . . . have been made; without the Knowledge and Agreement of the Councillours and other Justices in Town, met

toward Damascus. / By the Nose meant the gift of God's Spirit whereby Believers Scent and discern evil & avoid it. / Doct. 'Tis a part of the Spiritual beauty of Christ's Church to be watchfull against Enemies . . .," etc., through six close-packed pages of development.

On October 5, 1707, he heard Mr. Pemberton: "Revel. 5. 12. Saying with a loud Voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was Slain. Doct. Our crucified J. is justly accounted worthy of Supream Homage Veneration & Praise. 1. Christ is worthy in Himself. 2. Our crucified S. is justly accounted Worthy by others." The topic is developed under eight heads and concluded with five suitable "inferences."

²³⁷E.g., the Diary, III, 391-293, entry for June 2, 1728. The kind of sermon that Sewall heard is what he termed "plain but Orthodox" (Letter-Book, II, 174, letter to Governor Saltonstall dated September 5, 1724). The sinner-in-the-hands-of-an-angry-God type of thing did not become common until toward the middle of the eighteenth century, in the years of the Great Revival. As Perry Miller, New England Mind, p. 68, says, "A Puritan preacher never surrenders to feeling; he does not celebrate the glories of religion in sustained paeans or bring home its terrors by shouting, but argues his way step by step, inexorably disposing of point after point, quoting Biblical verses, citing authorities, watching for fallacies in logic, drawing upon the sciences for analogies, utilizing any information that seems pertinent."

²³⁸Letter-Book, II, 182, letter to Rev. Timothy Woodbridge dated February 25, 1724/5.

together for that purpose!" He declared that "twas the privilege we in Boston had, that might have two. . . ." ²³⁹

On Wednesday evening of each week was the meeting of the South Church Society at the home of one of its members, a group which he joined shortly after his arrival in the Hull household (John Hull being a charter member) and of which he continued a faithful member throughout the more than half a century of his life in Boston. ²⁴⁰ The character of these meetings is suggested by the following entry in Sewall's diary:

Novem. 27, 1676. . . . This day at even went to a private meeting held at Mr. Nath. Williams's. Emaus Smith spake well to Script. Philip 2.3. latter part. Smith spake more to my satisfaction than before. Note, The first Conference meeting that ever I was at, was at our House, Aug. 30, '76 at which Anna Quinsey was standing against the Closet door next the Entry. Mr. Smith spake to Ps. 119.9. The next was Oct. 18, at Mrs. Olivers: Capt. Henschman spake well to Heb. 6.18.

The Wednesday following I was at Sandwich.

The 3^d at Mr. Hill's. Goodman Heedan and my Father [Hull] spake to Heb. 3.12. Nov. 1.

²³⁹ Diary, III, 293, 294, entries for October 15, 20, and 26.

²⁴⁰ See Dexter, p. 456; Hull's Diary, pp. 254-255, ed. note; Hill, History of the Old South Church, p. 120. An interesting suggestion of the place of Hull in Sewall's life is in his saying, less than two years before he died, of a woman recently dead: "She was of my Father Hull's privat Meeting [i.e., the Wednesday night group] . . ." (Diary, III, 391, entry for March 26, 1728).

D Ps. P. 31 19

what this fear of the Lord is
trust in him before the fury
of men is that thereby we
may be partakers of his
great goodness - - -

A ...

How may we know whether our
eyes be turned away from vanity?
How may we know whether we
are truly ...

F E John 2: 15

What is this love of
the world which is so
perilous? ... the
soul of the love of God

I T Ps. 5: 13
How may we be sanctified
as to make him ...

W T Lam. 1: 3

What are these things which
the want of coming ...

R H 7 ... 17

what is the willfulness to
the will of God to which ...
shall the ... of God?

P O ...

How the ... to
the ... of the ...
appointed to ...

I H Ep. 4

What is it to walk ...
off of ... how we may
be helped for ...

I H Ps. 89: 9

How may a soul be ...
that he may ...

The 4th, Nov. 15, at Mr. Wings where Mr. Willard spake well to that proper place, Malach, 3, 16.

The 5th, at Mrs. Tappins, where Mr. Sanford and Mr. Noyes spake to 1 Peter, 5.7. Nov. 22. Mr. Fox prayed after. 6th, Nov. 29, at Mrs. Aldens, where Mr. Williams and Wing spake to Heb. 5.7. Dec. 6. no meeting because of the ensuing Fast. The 7th. at Mr. Williams's mentioned first.²⁴¹

From entries in the notebook which he carried with him to these Wednesday night meetings we find that some of the questions discussed were as follows:

What is this love of the world which is so perilous?

How may we know whether our eyes be turned away from vanity . . . ?

How may we know when God's providentiall stroakes are his Love chastisements?

What is the good that a Christian should learn by affliction?

How a Christian may know that Christ hath Loved him in particular.

What is to walk worthy of God . . . ?

What is it to be rooted and built up in Christ . . . ?

What is it to be filled with Joy and peace and to Abound in hope?

²⁴¹Diary, I, 28-30.

It is interesting to note that when, in the later years, Josiah Franklin was the Wednesday night host, a youthful member of the audience was probably his boy Benjamin, enjoying the Puritan child's privilege of sitting quite still at meeting.²⁴²

Thursday afternoon brought the weekly lecture, which was essentially a repetition of one of the Sabbath Day services.²⁴³ From the first years of the colony Lecture day had been an extremely popular institution, and though its hold on the people was weakening at the beginning of the eighteenth century,²⁴⁴ Madam Knight found on her visit to Boston in 1704 that the people still found their diversions in "Lecture days and Training days mostly," on the first of which, as she says, there was "Riding from town to town."²⁴⁵ This last mentioned custom is illustrated innumerable times in the pages of Sewall's diary, as witness the following series of entries:

²⁴²See, for example, the Diary, II, 380-381, entry for April 29, 1713, when Benjamin was in his eighth year. The editors comment on the possibility of his being present.

²⁴³Knappen, pp. 221-222, remarks of the English beginnings of this institution that, since a long and difficult preparation for the Sunday sermon was assumed, ". . . that age [the Tudor] saw nothing incongruous in having an extra clergyman attached to a parish for preaching duties alone. . . . The result was that lectureships sprang up on all sides, salaried posts which did not involve pastoral duties or the use of the Prayer Book."

The best sources for details of the Puritan service are Byington, The Puritan in England and New England, pp. 139-153, and Dexter, Congregationalism, pp. 452-453. See Dexter, p. 457, on the Thursday lecture.

²⁴⁴Diary, I, 452, entry for April 8, 1697. Cotton Mather reproves the people for not attending better.

²⁴⁵Journal, p. 52.

Friday [December 23, 1687] goe to Charlestown Lecture.

. . .

Sabbath, 25. Have the Lord's Supper at the South Church. . . .

Wednesday, Jan. 4. Rode to Cambridge-Lecture, Mr. John Bayly preached from Ephes. 2.1.

Visited Aunt Mitchell and Cousin Fissenden, where I dined in Company of him, his wife and father Chany. Very cold day, yet got home comfortably.

Tuesday, Jan. 10th 1687/8. Carried Mother Hull on my Horse to Roxbury-Lecture, where Mr. Moodey preached from John 15.6. shewing, that not abiding in, or apostatizing from Christ, is a ruinating evil. Mr. Stoughton, the President, and Unkle Quinsey there. A very pleasant comfortable day. . . .

Thursday, Jan. 12. . . . Mr. Allen preaches the Lecture.²⁴⁶

The Lecture days were thus staggered among towns in the Boston vicinity so that an enthusiast like Sewall could have the pleasure of attending one almost at his desire. On his many travels through the outlying districts he often stayed over at a place (as, of course, he invariably did if it were Sunday) especially to hear a lecture. Thus, on a visit to Newbury in 1686 he stopped at Salem, where he "lodged 2 nights

²⁴⁶Diary, I, 198-199.

for the sake of Mr. Noyes's Lecture, who preached excellently of Humility, from the woman's washing Christ's feet."²⁴⁷

A final type of church service was that which accompanied the day of public fasting and prayer, a thing of frequent occurrence in the Puritan community. The following declaration, made by the General Court on May 27, 1635, sufficiently suggests the object and occasion of this particular type of religious observance:

This Court having taken into their serious consideration, that in respect of afflictive Sicknesses in many Places, and some Threatenings of Scarcity as to our necessary food, and upon other Accounts also, we are under solemn Frowns of the Divine Providence; being likewise sensible, that the People of God in other parts of the World are in a low Estate,

Do therefore appoint the Sixteenth day of July next, to be set apart as a Day of publick Humiliation by Fasting and Prayer throughout the Colony, exhorting all who are the Lord's Remembrancers, to give Him no rest, till Isai. 62.7. He establish and make Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth: And do hereby prohibit the Inhabitants of this Jurisdiction all servile Labour upon the said Day.²⁴⁸

Five years before this, the Dutch traveller, Jaspas Danckaerts,

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 143, entry for June 5.

²⁴⁸Copied into the Diary, I, 84, under date of June 25. July 16 was a Thursday, the usual day for fasts in New England. In England the favored day was Friday, or, if there were two in a week, then Friday and Wednesday, both of which days the Puritans wished to avoid. (See Love, Fast and Thanksgiving Days, p. 43.)

visited Boston and attended a fast-day service at one of its churches. "We went into the church," he says, "where, in the first place, a minister made a prayer in the pulpit, of full two hours in length; after which an old minister delivered a sermon an hour long, and after that a prayer was made, and some verses sung out of the Psalms. In the afternoon three or four hours were consumed with nothing except Prayers, three ministers relieving each other alternately; when one was tired another went up into the pulpit."²⁴⁹ Sewall, after a spiritual marathon such as this, would note in his diary that "twas a good day."²⁵⁰

Sewall's power of endurance, or, better perhaps, the measure of his content, in this type of exercise is wonderfully illustrated by an entry in which he sets down a petition which he sent up on one of his own frequent, self-imposed, days of fasting and prayer. It reads as follows:

²⁴⁹Journal, p. 261, entry for June 28, 1680.

²⁵⁰E.g., Diary, III, 140, entry for September 25, 1717. How far Danckaerts is from exaggerating the facts is indicated in the following entries in the Diary, I, 76:

--Thursday May 14th [1685] . . . Have agreed to have a Fast here at our house next Friday. . . . I invited all the Magistrates: to most writ the following words-- . . .

"Sir--The Ministers of this Town are desired to Pray and Preach at my House next Friday, to begin about half an hour past Nine; which I acquaint you with that so yourself and Wife may have the opportunity of being present. . . ."

--Friday May 22d. 1685, had a private Fast: the Magistrates of this town with their Wives here. Mr. Eliot prayed, Mr. Willard preached. I am afraid of Thy judgments --Text Mother [Hull] gave. Mr. Allen prayed; cessation half an hour. Mr. Cotton prayed; Mr. [Increase] Mather preached Ps. 79, 9. Mr. Moodey prayed about an hour and half; Sung the 79th Psalm from the 8th to the End: distributed some Biskets, and Beer, Cider, Wine. . . .

The appointment of a Judge for the Super. Court being to be made upon next Fifth day, Febr. 12, I pray'd God to Accept me in keeping a privat day of Prayer with Fasting for That and other Important Matters: I kept it upon the Third day Febr. 10. 1707/8 in the upper Chamber at the North-East end of the House, fastening the Shutters next the Street. ——— Perfect what is lacking in my Faith, and in the faith of my dear Yokefellow. Convert my children; especially Samuel and Hannah; Provide Rest and Settlement for Hanah: Recover Mary, Save Judith, Elisabeth and Joseph: Requite the Labour of Love of my Kinswoman Jane Tappin, Give her health, find out Rest for her. Make David a man after thy own heart, Let Susan live and be baptised with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Relations. Steer the Government in this difficult time, when the Governour and many others are at so much Variance: Direct, incline, overrule on the Council-day fifth-day, Febr. 12. as to the special Work of it in filling the Super. Court with Justices; or any other thing of like nature; as Plimouth infer[ior] Court. Bless the Company for propagation of the Gospel, especiall[y] Governour Ashurst &c. Revive the Business of Religion at Natick and accept and bless John Neesnumin who went thither last week for that end. Mr. Rawson at Nantucket. Bless the South Church in preserving and spiriting our Pastor; in directing unto suitable Supply, and making the Church unanimous: Save the Town, College; Province from Invasion of Enemies, open, Secret, and from false Brethren:

Defend the Purity of Worship. Save Connecticut, bless their New Governour: Save the Reformation under N. York Government. Reform all the European Plantations in America; Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch; Save this New World, that where Sin hath abounded, Grace may Superabound; that CHRIST who is stronger, would bind the strong man and spoil his house; and order the Word to be given, Babylon is fallen.—— Save our Queen, lengthen out her Life and Reign. Save France, make the Proud helper stoop [Job 9:13], Save all Europe; Save Asia, Africa, Europe and America.

He ends by saying that "these were general heads of my Meditation and prayer; and through the bounteous Grace of GOD, I had a very Comfortable day of it."²⁵¹

Sewall found such private sessions very satisfying, or, to use his own word, "sweet."²⁵² In addition to the pleasures which prayer afforded, however, it served the eminently practical end of obtaining God's help in innumerable causes. Obviously he could, if he wished, heal the sick, end a drouth, or

²⁵¹Diary, II, 216-217.

²⁵²E.g., ibid., p. 6, entry for February 13, 1699/1700. It is interesting to note that, because of its association with the earliest days of New England, the meetinghouse at Plymouth was for him a special shrine, and he never stopped over in the town without going into it for a secret session of prayer. See, for example, ibid., p. 75, entry for April 1, 1703; ibid., p. 97, entry for March 29, 1704; ibid., p. 182, entry for March 27, 1707; ibid., pp. 276-277, entry for March 28, 1710; ibid., p. 375, entry for April 1, 1713; ibid., III, 128, entry for April 26, 1717; ibid., p. 184, entry for April 30, 1718.

rout the Indian foe. Proof of this was in the frequency with which he did these very things. The fact that on many occasions he did not was no indication of the inefficacy of prayer; it simply demonstrated the unworthiness of the supplicants. Another proof of prayer's effectiveness was in the disastrous results of its being neglected. One morning, for example, when Sewall "went . . . out without private prayer" his horse ran away and he "took great cold in [his] ear."²⁵³ Another time, while stopping over at Plymouth-- "I pray'd not with my Servant being weary; seeing no Chamber-pot call'd for one: A little before day I us'd it in the Bed, and the bottom came out, and all the water run upon me. I was amazed, not knowing the bottom was out till I felt it in the bed. The Trouble & Disgrace of it did afflict me. As soon as it was Light, I call'd up my man & he made a fire & warm'd me a clean sheet & I put it on, & was comfortable. How unexpectedly man may be Expos'd! There is no Security but in God, who is to be sought by Prayer."²⁵⁴

This is but one of innumerable incidents in which he was able to discern either a potent moral lesson or the portentous working of God's busy hand. Thus, on January 13, 1676/7:

²⁵³Ibid., I, 42, entry follows that for April 30, 1677.

²⁵⁴Entry for March 27, 1706. These lines have been omitted from the published Diary as "unsuitable for publication" (see Vol. II, 157, editors' note). Since, however, the editors describe the omission as involving "a mortifying accident which befel him in the night," the reader is moved to speculations which, if anything, exceed the amusing fact.

Giving my chickens meat, it came to my mind that I gave them nothing save Indian corn and water, and yet they eat it and thrived very well, and that that food was necessary for them, how mean soever, which much affected me and convinced what need I stood in of spiritual food, and that I should not neglect daily duties of Prayer, &c. ²⁵⁵

.....

June 15. [1689.] Being at Mrs. Calvin's alone in a Chamber, while they were getting ready dinner, I, as I walked about, began to crave a Blessing, and when went about it remembered my Cloaths I had bought just before, and it came into my mind that it was most material to ask a blessing on my Person: so I mentally pray'd God to bless my Flesh, Bones, Blood and Spirits, Meat, Drink, and Apparel. And at Dinner, paring the Crust of my Bread, I cut my Thumb, and spilt some of my Blood, which word I very unusually, or never before, have used in prayer to my present remembrance. ²⁵⁶

.....

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1691/2. . . . This night [blank] Hamlen, formerly Plats, before that, Crabtree, a middle-aged woman, through some displeasure at her Son whom she beat, sat not down to Supper with her Husband and a Stranger at Table: when they had done, she took away, and in the Room

²⁵⁵ Diary, I, 44.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 258-259.

where she set it, took a piece of grisly meat of a Shoulder of Mutton into her mouth which got into the top of the Larynx and stopt it fast, so she was presently choak'd. Tho. Pemberton and others found it so when they opened her Throat. She gave a stamp with her foot and put her finger in her mouth: but Pemberton not at home, and di'd immediately. What need have all to Acknowledge God in whose Hand their breath is, &c. ²⁵⁷

.....

Satterday, Feb. 27. [1691/2.] Between 4. and 5. mane, we are startled at the roaring of a Beast, which I conjectur'd to be an Ox broken loose from a Butcher, running along the street, but proved to be our own Cow bitten by a dog, so that were forc'd to kill her; though calved but Jan. 4th and gives plenty of Milk. Happy are they, who have God for their Spring and Brest of Supplies. ²⁵⁸

.....

January 1. 6th day 1696/7 One with a Trumpet sounds a Levett [blast] at our window just about break of day, bids me good morrow and wishes health and happiness to attend me. I was awake before, and my wife, so we heard him: but went not to the window, nor spake a word. The Lord fit me for his coming in whatsoever way it be. ²⁵⁹

.....

[February 10, 1696/7.] Goodw. Duen putting on a Rugg

²⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 354-356.

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 357.

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 444.

and going into our house much scares the children; so that come running to me throw the old Hall, with a very amazing Cry. I was sawing wood; and much surpris'd. Wife came and all. The Lord save me and his people from astonishing, suddain, desolatine Judgments; pardon all my folly and perverting my way, and help me to walk with a right foot.²⁶⁰

.....

[October 1, 1697.] Jer. Balchar's sons came for us to go to [Hog] Island. My Wife, through Indisposition, could not goe: But I carried Sam. Hannah, Elisa, Joseph, Mary and Jane Tapan: I prevail'd with Mr. Willard to goe, He carried Simon, Elisabeth, William, Margaret, and Elisa Tyng: Had a very comfortable Passage thither and home again; though against Tide: Had first Butter, Honey, Curds and Cream. For Dinner, very good Rost Lamb, Turkey, Fowls, Applepy. After Dinner sung the 121 Psalm. Note. A Glass of spirits my Wife sent stood upon a Joint-Stool which, Simon W. jogging, it fell down and broke all to snivers: I said twas a lively Emblem of our Fragility and Mortality.²⁶¹

.....

Third-Day, July, 25. 1699. . . . When I came home Sam, Hanrah and Joanna being gon to Dorchester with Madam

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 450.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 460.

Usher to the Lecture, I found the House empty and Lock'd. Taking the key I came in and made a shift to find a solitary Dinner of bak'd Pigeons and a piece of Cake. How happy I were, if I could once become wise as a Serpent and harmless as a Dove!²⁶²

.....

[October 1, 1709.] Bait at Dedham. I got to Mr. Belcher's, where I drink warm chockelat, and no Beer; find my self much refresh'd by it after great Sweating to day, and yesterday. Got home to Dinner about One. Laus Deo. My Horse went very hard, which made me strain hard on my Stirrup and contract a Lameness on my Left Hip. . . . If I might with Jacob prevail with GOD for his Blessing; and be surnamed Israel, how happy should I be! though I should go limping.²⁶³

.....

Satterday, June, 6. [1713.] The Rain-water grievously runs into my son Joseph's Chamber from the Window above. As went out to the Barber's I observ'd the water to run trickling down a great pace from the Coving. I went on the Roof, and found the Spout next Salter's stop'd, but could not free it with my Stick. Boston went up, and found his pole too big, which I warn'd him of Before; came down a Spit, and clear'd the Leaden-throat, by thrusting out a

²⁶²Ibid., p. 500.

²⁶³Ibid., II, 265. The reference is to Genesis 32: 24-31.

Trap-Ball that stuck there. Thus a small matter greatly incommodes us; and when God pleases, tis easily remov'd.²⁶⁴

.

October 25. [1713.] In the Night after 12. Susan comes, and knocks at our chamber door, said she could not sleep, was afraid she should dye. Which amaz'd my wife and me. We let her in, blew up the Fire, wrapt her warm, and went to bed again. She sat there till near day, and then return'd; and was well in the morning. Laus Deo. I was the more startled because I had spilt a whole Vinyard Cann of water just before we went to Bed: and made that Reflection that our Lives would shortly be spilt.²⁶⁵

Citations have been made purposely numerous because of the constancy of the mental habit which they illustrate. One can almost say that for Sewall everything was a sign of something. Events with unexplained natural causes were particularly ominous, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Rainbows, of course, were good omens, "a . . . Token that CHRIST remembers his Covenant for his beloved Jews," and repeatedly he noted their appearance in the sky.²⁶⁶ He felt that in them God was trying to

²⁶⁴Ibid., p. 388.

²⁶⁵Ibid., p. 404.

²⁶⁶Letter-Book, II, 248, memoranda for August 11, 1728. See references in the Diary, II, 189, entry for July 1, 1707; ibid., pp. 314, 318, 319, entries for June 12, July 12, 30, 1711; ibid., pp. 352-353, entry for June 18, 1712; ibid., III, 14, entry for August 7, 1714; ibid., p. 50, entry for July 30, 1715; ibid., p. 386, entry for September 17, 1727.

"speak . . . to New-England" and lamented that New England had not "ears to hear."²⁶⁷ When an inverted rainbow appeared, however, that was a different matter, and he soberly recorded the speculation of his friend Mr. Lee that God was "shooting at somebody."²⁶⁸ A gentle shower from heaven was a propitious sign.²⁶⁹ Thunder and lightning, on the other hand, were a pretty good indication that God was in one of his blacker moods, and they sent Sewall onto his knees ("I humbly and Thankfully bless God that we saw the quick and powerfull fire; heard the Terrible Voice, and yet we live!").²⁷⁰ Though speculations of portent do not attend the appearance of comets, eclipses, and sun dogs, the awed noting of them strongly suggests that they were felt to bode no good.²⁷¹ So one might go on--small pox, the severity of a winter, loss of cattle are "Tokens of [God's] Anger";²⁷² when two ministers die in the same week Sewall hopes that it "be not portentous . . . Deus avertat omen";²⁷³ worms in the barley mean that God is trying to awaken New England by "his stroaks."²⁷⁴

²⁶⁷Letter-Book, II, 257, letter to Samuel Partridge dated November 25, 1728.

²⁶⁸Diary, I, 165, entry for January 20, 1686/7.

²⁶⁹Letter-Book, II, 78, letter to Rev. Thomas Cotton dated August 28, 1717.

²⁷⁰Diary, III, 215, entry for March 13, 1718/19; ibid., p. 187, entry for June 23, 1718.

²⁷¹ibid., I, 486, entry for October 29, 1698; ibid., II, 88, entry for August 23, 1703; ibid., III, 312, entry for November 27, 1722.

²⁷²ibid., I, 127-128, entry for March 17, 1685/6.

²⁷³ibid., III, 120, entry for February 15, 1716/17.

²⁷⁴Letter-Book, I, 52, letter to John Storke dated August 8, 1687.

This way of regarding events was by no means a personal idiosyncrasy of Sewall's. In Samuel Mather's life of his father, Cotton Mather, the author declares that "when he washed his hands, he must think of clean hands, as well as pure heart, that belong to the citizens of Zion. . . . And when he did so mean an action as paring his nails, he thought how he might lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness."²⁷⁵ The habit of drawing moral lessons from every day experiences and searching for portents in natural phenomena was, in fact, well nigh universal. It was also, from the Puritan's point of view, a highly appropriate one. John Cotton declared that all of nature is "a mappe and shaddow," in which there are "Numberless Lessons of Morality, which by the Help of the Analogy between the Natural and Spiritual World . . . we may learn. . . ."²⁷⁶ At the Synod meeting in 1648 from which came the famous Cambridge Platform, a snake entered at the door and was crushed by an elder from the town of Braintree. Governor Winthrop felt that this incident "being so remarkable, and nothing falling out but by Divine providence, it is out of doubt the Lord discovered something of his mind in it. The serpent is the devil; the synod, the representatives of the Churches of Christ in New England."²⁷⁷ We are likely to think

²⁷⁵Tyler, History, II, 77, cited.

²⁷⁶Miller, New England Mind, 213-214, cited. See his chapter on "Nature," passim, and also his introduction to Jonathan Edwards' Images or Shadows of Divine Things (New Haven, 1948).

²⁷⁷History, II, 330.

of this way of regarding natural events as being extinct as the ichthyosaurus and just about as strange. It is worth noting, however, that Winthrop's remark quite obviously finds artistic expression in the work of Hawthorne, and that Emerson's doctrine of "correspondence" is something for which he need not have gone to Swedenborg.²⁷⁸ The New England renaissance had strong roots in the spiritual traditions of two hundred years.

In examining, as we have been doing, the character of the Puritan's religious life it is difficult, even though we recognize that certain aspects of it were to him somehow satisfying and even "sweet," to avoid the thought that his was a grim existence. The wrath of a too-demanding God, the menace of an ever-scheming Satan and all his wily imps, children crying out for fear of being damned, a brutal scheme of election and reprobation, strange portents on every side, witches riding the midnight air--these, we feel, are scarcely the elements of a happy experience of life. We should remember, however, that every one of these same things had been present in "merric" Old England just as definitely, if somewhat less abundantly, as they were in her "sad" New England offspring. The Puritan was quite unoriginal in his beliefs; what he desired was simply a more rigorous application of beliefs already established and widely held. Being the person that he typically was, this meant, of course, a good deal. It did not mean, however, that he ceased to be human; and, being human, he cannot be understood

²⁷⁸See the discussion in Miller, New England Mind, loc. cit.

in terms of what might be called the theological fallacy, which is the fallacy of interpreting a man's experience of life in terms merely of his stated belief, however sincere that belief may be. Consider the case of Timothy Dwight, one of John Hull's apprentices, who,

just as prayer ended . . . sank down in a swoon, and for a good space was as if he perceived not what was done to him: after, kicked and sprawled, knocking his hands and feet upon the floor like a distracted man. Was carried pickpack by John Alcock [to his room], there his cloaths pulled off. In the night it seems he talked of ships, his master, father, and unckle Eliot. The Sabbath following Father [Hull] went to him, spake to him to know what ailed him, asked if he would be prayed for, and for what he would desire his friends to pray. He answered, for more sight of sin, and God's healing grace. I asked him, being alone with him, whether his troubles were from some outward cause or spiritual. He answered, spiritual. I asked him why then he could not tell it his master, as well as any other, since it is the honour of any man to see sin and be sorry for it. He gave no answer, as I remember. Asked him if he would goe to meeting. He said, 'twas in vain for him; his day was out. I asked, what day: he answered, of Grace. I told him 'twas sin for any one to conclude themselves Reprobate, that this was all one. He said he would speak more, but could not, &c. Notwithstanding all this semblance

(and much more than is written) of compunction for Sin, 'tis to be feared that his trouble arose from a maid whom he passionately loved: for that when Mr. Dwight and his master had agreed to let him goe to her, he eftsoons grew well.²⁷⁹

At least two observations may be made concerning this homely little incident. One is that the emotional upsets of the Puritan child and youth may reasonably be interpreted as havin' been symptoms of puberty and adolescence quite as much as the results of any theological doctrine, however depressing. Certainly such symptoms are not peculiar to Puritan New England. The other is that the terrors of Timothy Dwight's religious beliefs, real as they may have been, were doubtless forgotten in his going to the "maid whom he passionately loved." A man's beliefs are ordinarily less important in determining his experience of life than are such mundane things as the state of his health, the food that he eats, and the woman he loves. If, like Sewall, one is blessed with a good digestion, a good wife, plenty of good food and drink, and a respected status among one's fellow men, the doctrine of reprobation will hold few terrors, a circumstance which undoubtedly accounts, at least in part, for the fact that the record of his spiritual experience as we find it revealed in the pages of his diary is remarkably free of the harrowing self-doubt and gnawing introspection that, logically, would seem to be the necessary result of submission to Puritan doctrine.

²⁷⁹Diary, I, 15-16, entry for August 12, 1676.

Another contributing circumstance is the fact that Puritan doctrine, though certainly formidable enough, had become, under the so-called "covenant theology," considerably less harrowing in its implications than the doctrine of John Calvin with which it is popularly equated. Under the covenant idea, God was absolute but not arbitrary. A man who submitted himself in honest belief, earnestly acknowledging and repenting of his sins, would not be turned away. God had voluntarily placed himself under a covenant, and the man who performed his necessary part under that same covenant had little to fear.²⁸⁰

The nearest thing to a spiritual crisis in Sewall's life came, appropriately, at the time of his joining the South Church, when he was for several months suitably distressed by thoughts of his unworthiness ("Troubled that I could love Xt. no more . . ."); but the elders encouraged him, and when he communicated his fears to the minister, Mr. Thatcher, he was told that this "stirring up to it . . . was of God" and to come ahead. So, on March 30, 1677, he stood up, "together with Gilbert Cole, [and] was admitted . . . making a Solemn covenant to take the L. Jehovah for our God, and to walk in Brotherly Love and watchfulness of Edification. Goodm. Cole first spake, then I, then the Relations of the Women were read: as we spake so were we admitted; then all together covenanted. Prayed before, and after."²⁸¹ After this his

²⁸⁰See the statement by Morison, Puritan Pronegs, p. 156.

²⁸¹This time of stress may be traced in the Diary, I, 32-37, entries for January 10, 1676/7, to the end of the first manuscript volume, the last pages of which are somewhat confused. The process of becoming a member has been variously described. An early statement is in Lechford, Plaine Dealing

religious experience is best described by his own favorite word "comfortable." Not that he did not have his times of spiritual trial and stress, times when he felt himself "Listless as to Spiritual Good," less "constantly and effectually inquisitive about [his] Way to Heaven" than he should have been;²⁸² even one of the elect was not immediately made perfect.²⁸³ His position, however, was secure, and if, having sinned, he earnestly prayed for help and forgiveness, he had done his needful part. Now it was up to God to do his. This is what he means when he says: "I pray'd this morn that God would give me a pardon of my Sins under the Broad Seal of Heaven; and through God's goodness have receiv'd some Refreshment and Light; I hope I doe thirst after Christ; and sensible of my own folly . . . that I value Him no more, and am so backward to be married by Him."²⁸⁴ The God addressed in such a prayer was not an arbitrary being but one, rather, who could be depended upon to act in a responsible manner. As such, it was quite unthinkable that he would deal hardly with a busy and conscientious servant, one whose place was in the "fore-seat" in the churches of his New England Israel.²⁸⁵ If Sewall ever

pp. 65-67. See also, Ellis, Puritan Age, p. 207; Dexter, Congregationalism, pp. 449-450; Wertebaker, Puritan Oligarchy, pp. 66-67.

²⁸²See, for example, the Diary, I, 319-320, entry for May 9, 1690; ibid., II, 189, entry for June 15, 1707; ibid., p. 74, entry for February 22, 1702/3.

²⁸³See Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp. 395-396, and Miller, New England Mind, p. 54.

²⁸⁴Diary, I, 351, entry for October 25, 1691. Morison, loc. cit., cites this passage and comments on it as I have done.

²⁸⁵The place where one sat in church was, of course, a first

brooded on the subject of hell he did not record the fact; what he did at various times record was his anticipation of heaven, a line of thought which was very pleasant indeed. For example, on January 26, 1696/7:

I lodged at Charlestown. at Mrs. Shepards, who tells me Mr. Harvard built that house. I lay in the chamber next the street. As I lay awake past midnight, In my Meditation, I was affected to consider how long agoe God had made provision for my comfortable Lodging that night; seeing that was Mr. Harvards house: And that led me to think of Heaven the House not made with hands, which God for many Thousands of years has been storing with the richest furniture (saints that are from time to time placed there), and that I had some hopes of being entertain'd in that Magnificent Convenient Palace, every way fitted and furnished. These thoughts were very refreshing to me.²⁸⁶

The pleasures which a saint might enjoy did not, however, lie exclusively on the other side of the Jordan. The Puritan, for all his deprecating of the pleasures of the flesh, was not an ascetic who fled to his Wilderness Zion as a refuge from the

mark of one's position in the community. Especially in his later years, Sewall often notes the fact that at one or another of the churches he attended he was honored by a place in the "fore-seat." See, for example, the Diary, III, 116, entry for January 8, 1716/17; ibid., p. 142, entry for October 2, 1717; ibid., p. 290, entry for July 13, 1721.

Sewall was himself a member of the seating committee at the South Church for many years. See Hill, I, 253-254; Diary, II, 379, entry for April 28, 1713; ibid., p. 389, entry for June 10, 1713; Letter-Book, II, 21-22, letter to Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton. See the discussion of seating in Dexter, p. 454.

²⁸⁶Diary, I, 446-447, entry for January 26, 1696/7.

world. As Professor Miller has remarked, the only wilderness into which the Puritan ever fled was New England;²⁸⁷ and once there, as we have earlier noted,²⁸⁸ he quickly set himself up as comfortably as possible. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, as a writer of the time declared, "a Gentleman from London would almost think himself at home at Boston when he observes the Numbers of People, their Houses, their Furniture, their Tables, their Dress and Conversation, which perhaps is as splendid and showy, as that of the most considerable Tradesman in London."²⁸⁹ There is little reason to doubt that one of the houses here referred to was Sewall's new place on High Street. We are not told much about how it was furnished, but are numerous indications that its inhabitants did not dress in accordance with the idea that any color was all right so long as it was black, an idea that school room lithographs of "The Landing of the Pilgrims" and "The First Thanksgiving" have so firmly fixed in the popular mind. Among the many

²⁸⁷New England Mind, p. 35. "When," he says, "critics accuse Puritan society of glossing its avarice with sanctimoniousness, or of taking solid satisfaction in the things of this world while pretending to despise them, they presuppose that the piety was a gloomy, otherworldly, and tragic conception of life, which ought to have forbidden such relaxations. . . . Yet in everyday life Puritanism did not mean that because Puritans were virtuous there should be no more cakes and ale." For similar statements, see Knappen, p. 428; Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," p. 594; E. D. Bebb, Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life: 1660-1800 (London, 1935), pp. 98-99. The matter is applied to Sewall in Crawford, Old Boston, p. 255, and Laurence, "Samuel Sewall: Revealer of New England Puritanism," pp. 29-30.

²⁸⁸Chap. 3.

²⁸⁹Neal, History (London, 1720), II, 590.

items of clothes that Sewall ordered from England we find, it is true, many that are required to be "of a grave color" or of a "sad colour" (by which he meant brown, not black). Other items, however, are "Silk Stockings, pink colored," "Serviceable Silk for our Daughter, coloured with two kinds of Red; or Red and White," "Three yards of Silver Net," "Red and White Flowerd silk enough to make a Woman Suit," flowered damask (some "Green and White" and some "Blue and White" with "Silk laces for trimming the petit coats to be made of [it]"), silk in "Orange, blew, red, white colours," and "checquered Galoom" (trimming tape). These things obviously were for the women folk. For himself there was "good black Broad-Cloth" for "Coat[,] Jacket and Breeches with Trimming Buttons of Hair &c. to make it up," "an end of coloured Broadcloth to make my self a suit," "Holland for shirting," and "good black Silk Mens Stockings."²⁹⁰ For a baby there was "a red Coat [with] . . . blew facing for the sleeves."²⁹¹ The interestingly un-

²⁹⁰ See the following references: Diary, I, 34, entry for January 30, 1676/7; Letter-Book, I, 44, letter to Daniel Allen dated March 28, 1687; ibid., pp. 136-137, letter to Edward Hull dated October 24, 1693; ibid., p. 152, letter to Edward Hull dated January 14, 1694/5; ibid., pp. 152-153, letter to Edward Hull dated January 22, 1694/5; ibid., pp. 191-192, letter to Edward Hull dated November 1, 1697; ibid., p. 199, memorandum of an order sent by Capt. Thomas Carter dated April 25, 1698; ibid., p. 274, letter to John Love dated November 16, 1702; ibid., p. 299, letter to John Love dated March 6, 1703/4; ibid., p. 311, memorandum of letter to John Love dated March 20, 1704/5; ibid., p. 331, letter to John Love dated October 16, 1706; ibid., p. 384, letter to John Love dated October 24, 1709; ibid., II, 36-37, letter to John Storke dated December 10, 1714; ibid., p. 53, letter to John Love dated March 20, 1715/16.

²⁹¹ Diary, III, 11-12, entry for July 28, 1714.

doctrinal motivation for some of these purchases is indicated in his writing to Edward Hull to "intreat Cousin Brattle to bye me a pattern of good silk to make my Wife a Gown. She has great Credit by that she bougt in pater noster row."²⁹²

The Puritan's attitude toward alcoholic beverages was well expressed in Increase Mather's statement that "the Wine is from God, but the Drunkard is from the Devil."²⁹³ Thus, Sewall was "grieved" to see that his friend Nathaniel Saltonstall had imbibed so freely that his "head and hand were rendered less usefull than at other times," and wrote him a letter gently begging him to watch his step ("Don't furnish your Enemies with Arms").²⁹⁴ It never occurred to him to object to drink itself (a development of the later evangelicalism), so obviously one of God's better tokens of his love for the human creature. The sin lay not in its use but in its abuse, and Sewall's use was constant, grateful, and life-long. Rarely a wedding without its "Sack-Posset" or funeral either for that matter. When he went to a barn raising on his farm at Hog Island he "carried over a Jugg of Madera of Ten Quarts,"²⁹⁵ and at a church raising at Charlestown he sat watching in a nearby shop with "a Cool Tankard" for company.²⁹⁶ A "noble Treat," of which he enjoyed many score, was not really com-

²⁹²Letter-Book, I, 153, letter dated January 22, 1694/5.

²⁹³Miller, New England Mind, p. 41, cited.

²⁹⁴Diary, I, 373, entry for March 3, 1692/3.

²⁹⁵Ibid., II, 355, entry for July 15, 1712.

²⁹⁶Ibid., III, 86-87, entry for June 20, 1716.

plete without "good Drinks,"²⁹⁷ and when there were none he particularly noted the fact: "Mr. Bedford invited Mr. Brattle and me to dinner to Mr. Dracot's. Had a dish of Fowls and Bacon with Livers: A Dish of Salt Fish, and a Piece of Mutton reaching from the neck a pretty way of the back, the Ribs reaching equally from the back bone, Cheese and fruit: no Wine."²⁹⁸

As the description of this dinner at Dracot's suggests, Sewall's attitude toward food can scarcely be described as austere. Excessive drinking meant drunkenness, a thing to be deplored; but excessive eating, short of foundering oneself, was attended by no such phenomenon to serve as a yardstick. For Sewall at least, it meant no more than a gradual increase in girth. A short man, he weighed in at 193 pounds at the age of fifty; nineteen years later the figure had risen to a comfortable 228.²⁹⁹ A "sumtuous feast" was something one could enjoy with an undisturbed conscience. A man's weight was in the hands of the Lord, who, he prayed (at the same time that he records the facts of his weight), would "add, or take away from this our corporeal weight, so as shall be most advantageous for our Spiritual Growth." So it is with unalloyed satisfaction that he notes the occasions on which he sat down to "a good fat tender Goose," "a very

²⁹⁷ Diary, II, 298, entry for January 31, 1710/11.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., I, entry for September 30, 1689.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., II, 71, entry for December 30, 1702.

good Minc'd Py, "applepy," "Strawberries and Cream," "Venison Pasty, Cake and cheese," "Green pease," "Fry'd Lamb and Part-ridge," "a good Frigusee of Fowls," and, of course, the ever-present cake and wine.³⁰⁰ Because his sweet tooth was a very lively one, the roomy pockets of his outer garments were, as we have already seen, continually filled with various pleasant dainties. The favorite item was "Balls of Chockallett," but at various times there were also such things as figs, currants, "Banbury Cakes" (Banbury being a town in England famous for its cakes and Puritanism, a place where, as the verse went, a cat was hung on Monday "for killing of a mouse on Sunday"),³⁰¹ "Marmalet" (marmalade; carried to the dying Ezekiel Cheever in a dish), and oranges.³⁰²

We learn of these things that he carried with him through their presentation as gifts to little nieces and nephews, grandchildren, ailing friends, or simply persons on whom he had come

³⁰⁰References which might be sighted are innumerable. For the items given, see the Diary, I, 337, entry for November 4, 1690; ibid., p. 143, entry for June 5, 1686; ibid., II, 43, entry for October 10, 1701; ibid., p. 246, entry for December 15, 1708; ibid., p. 257, entry for June 17, 1709; ibid., p. 347, entry for May 8, 1712; ibid., III, 57, entry for September 19, 1715; ibid., p. 196, entry for September 17, 1718; ibid., p. 323, entry for March 2, 1722/23.

³⁰¹Ibid., II, 176, editors' note.

³⁰²Again the possible citations are very numerous. The items named may be seen in the Diary, II, 67, entry for October 26, 1702; ibid., p. 151, entry for January 11, 1703/4; ibid., p. 157, entry for April 5, 1706; ibid., p. 183, entries for March 27 and 31, 1707; ibid., p. 193, entry for July 8, 1707; ibid., p. 192, entry for July 29, 1707; ibid., p. 223, entry for April 16, 1708; ibid., p. 231, entry for August 20, 1708; ibid., p. 319, entry for July 17, 1711; ibid., pp. 11-12, entry for July 28, 1714.

to call. Sometimes his gifts took the form of money--usually only a shilling or so but sometimes more in case of need--and often, as we have earlier noted, of sermons and religious tracts. Because of his own fondness for them, it gave him particular pleasure to make presents of the psalms. Thus, at the wedding of a niece at Salem: "After the Sack-Posset, &c. Sung the 45th. Psalm from the 8th verse to the end, five staves. I set it to Windsor Tune, I had a very good Turkey-Leather Psalm-Book which I look'd in while Mr. Noyes Read: and then I gave it to the Bridegroom saying, 'I give you this Psalm-Book in order to your perpetuating this Song: and I would have you pray that it may be an Introduction to our Singing with the Choir above.'"³⁰³

The Puritan's opposition to music (by which word he meant instrumental music; "singing" being the word otherwise used)³⁰⁴ has been over-emphasized and misunderstood. What he was opposed to was instrumental music in church, because he found such a thing nowhere mentioned in what the Bible had to say of the early Church, and because, like part singing and anti-

³⁰³Diary, II, 403-404, entry for October 22, 1713. For other gifts of the psalms, see ibid., pp. 15-16, entry for August 21, 1714, and ibid., p. 29, entry for April 27, 1719.

For gifts of money, see, for example, ibid., I, 298, entry for March 6, 1688/9; ibid., II, 192, entry for July 29, 1707; ibid., III, 66, entry for November 16, 1715. Generally they were sent by letter. See the Letter-Book, I, 376, letter to Hannah Moodey dated November 17, 1708; ibid., II, 128, letter to Rowland Cotton dated January 30, 1720/1; ibid., p. 138, letter to his nephew namesake at Salem dated May 26, 1722; ibid., p. 211, letter to Nehemiah Walter dated September 9, 1726; ibid., p. 260, letter to Rev. Williams at Deerfield dated December 10, 1728; ibid., p. 269, letter to Ashbell Woodbridge dated June 12, 1729.

³⁰⁴Percy A. Scholes, The Puritan and Music in England and New England (London, 1934), p. 42.

Wednesday Jan^r 16th
To Dartford where had
a good Goose to Dinner
In a considerable place
a river runs into ye
Thames under a Stone
Bridge of four Arches
To Southwark where we
mink & reckon with
ye Coach-man. Hire
another Coach for 18^d
to Cous. Hull's

Thursday, Jan^r 17th went
to ye Exchange
Jan^r 30th went to Temple,
& to White-hall, saw
Westminster-Abby, Hen-
ry 7th Chapel: Heard Dr.
Sharp preach before ye
Commons from Pl. 51. Deliv-
er me from Blood-guiltinesse
Saw St. James's Park

Jan^r 31. Heard Mr. (Hau-
ey) preach.

Wrote to Mr. Flavel this day
Febr. 1. Recd one from Mr.
Flavel inclos'd in Mr. Mathew's

Febr. 7th A Minister who
lives at Abbingdon carrying
invites me to his house with
Mr. Mathew & He will go
& shew us Oxford. I had
shew'd me Gresham College
by Mr. Dubois his kindnes
Capt. Afterward went to
field & ye Cloister of ye
Coat-Boys.

Gresham - Colledge
one Hundred & fifty foot long
and Eighteen foot wide.

Febr. 9. 1688 Guild-Hall I find
to be Fifty yard long & will
ye Hallings take up near
Seven yards. Measure by
ye same yard in the Rule
Mr. Brattle & I find ye breadth
to be Sixteen yards.

Febr. 11th Mr. Brattle & I
went to Covent-Garden, and
heard a Consort of Musick
Din'd to day with Maum Lloyd
and Elsher

Febr. 12. Saw three Wagons
full of Calves by together
off ye star on ye Bridge Mr
Ruck's saw ye Prince's pass in
her Barge, Anciently & shee
mess of Shipt flying Bells
Ringing Gun roaring
Sup'd at Mr. Marshall's

March 18. write to my wife
& to Cousin Quinley 3. To
Bro. St. Sewall in coll to
Sir. William's into ye Downs.

March 20. 1688 write to
Cous. Stork to send me a box
of Dr. Cr. to ye Bal-
cony & a up in Stocking
8-17-2. Am writing about it
reasonable for recd my money

March 29. To Mrs. Eliza
with 4 poles Synopsid with
Larding holding with gilt & 4. here

phonal singing, it was a distraction from the business at hand, which was to voice the praises of God.³⁰⁵ When Sewall went to a service at St. Mary's during his visit to England he was much displeased with the booming of the organ and felt that "the justling out [of] the Institution of Singing Psalms by the organ, is [a thing] that can never be answered to the great master of Religious ceremonies." Yet in the same letter in which he thus expressed himself he also declared that he was "a lover of Musick to a fault"³⁰⁶—outside of the church; and there is sufficient evidence to show that he was telling the truth. On this same trip to England he enjoyed a "Consort of Musick" at Covent Garden, "³⁰⁷ was privately played to at Oxford Inn by "Three Musicians . . . two Harps and a Violin,"³⁰⁸ heard the work of some bell ringers and proclaimed it good,³⁰⁹ At home he bought his wife a set of virginals,³¹⁰ went to his "Cousin Porter's" at Salem to "See and Hear the Dulcimer,"³¹¹

³⁰⁵See the discussion in Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 128, and Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp. 432-433. The first pipe organ in New England was installed in King's Chapel in 1713, a present of Mr. Brattle that had been refused by his own church (Adams, Provincial Society, p. 146). At the marriage of Cromwell's daughters there was music by a great orchestra, and mixed dancing went on far into the morning (Henry W. Foote, Three Centuries of American Hymnody [Cambridge, 1940], pp. 75-76; Scholes, p. 144). One thinks, of course, of Milton.

³⁰⁶Letter-Book, I, 149, letter to Mr. Burbank dated June 6, 1694.

³⁰⁷Diary, I, 248, entry for February 11, 1689.

³⁰⁸Ibid., p. 260, entry for June 27, 1689.

³⁰⁹Ibid., p. 272, entry for August 15, 1689; and see ibid., p. 305, entry for April 10, 1689.

³¹⁰Ibid., p. 506, entry for December 1, 1699.

³¹¹Ibid., III, 131, entry for May 23, 1717.

and enjoyed being played to on various occasions by local musicians. One of these occurred a few months before he died. June 12, 1729: "His Excellency [Lieutenant Governor William Dummer] sent Andrew to me with his Violin. I was refreshd by many of his Tunes; he plays well, yet his Tunes are too gaudy and Luscious, that the Tune doth not appear so plainly as it should. I was stricken with Horror at the . . . Relation of the Murder of Glencove by Soldiers in their Quarters at Midnight in their Beds, who treated their Guests kindly. . . . Gave Andrew an Angel [an English coin]."³¹²

There was one painful defect in the idea of congregational singing without instrumental accompaniment and even, as in the Bay Psalm Book, without musical notation: the results were generally pretty bad. As an anonymous versifier at Salem declared (in lines written on the back of a church pew),

Could poor David but for once

To Salem church repair,

And hear his Psalms thus warbled out,

Good Lord how he would swear.³¹³

³¹²Letter-Book, II, 270, memorandum under date of June 12, 1729.

³¹³William A. Fisher, Notes on Music in Old Boston (Boston, 1918), p. 17. Bad congregational singing was not peculiar to New England. A writer in seventeenth century England said: "Tis sad to hear what whining, tooting, yelling, or screeking there is in many congregations" (Foote, p. 95), and Lord Rochester wrote these lines for Charles II:

Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms,

When they translated David's psalms,

To make the heart right glad;

But had it been King David's fate

To hear thee sing and them translate,

By God, 'twould set him mad. --Foote, p. 96.

It may be noted that psalm singing was not an exclusively Puritan practice, though it was Protestant. The Church of

Sewall's experience at the South Church suggests that conditions were about the same in Boston. With his liking for music and, as it would seem, a better-than-average voice (an admiring contemporary called him "our Israel's Judge and Singer Sweet"),³¹⁴ he was a logical candidate for the office of precentor, whose job it was to "line out" the psalms. This meant singing the first line of the selection chosen to establish the pitch and tune; then a pause, and the congregation would join in, after which he must exert himself to keep it in the chosen path.³¹⁵ Sewall made his first attempt at this on the Sabbath of October 25, 1691, "Capt. Frary's voice failing him in his own Essay, by reason of his Palsie."³¹⁶ Proving successful, he thereafter held the post for no less than twenty-four years. At public and private gatherings outside the church as well, he was regularly called upon to "set the tune." More and more often as the years went by, however, he had his difficulties. At Capt. Belchar's private thanksgiving for the preservation of his son, for example, he "intended Windsor, and fell into High-Dutch, and then essaying to set another

England retained the emphasis, in fact, long after the non-conformist congregations had taken to Watts. (See Foote, pp. 1, 26.)

³¹⁴Letter-Book, I, 314-316, editors' note. The line is from a translation by Sewall's friend, Richard Henchman, of some Latin verses addressed to Sewall by the Rev. Nehemiah Hobart.

³¹⁵Wertenbaker, Puritan Oligarchy, p. 129. Foote, p. 96, remarks of the job that it was one "which many a modern, trained singer would hesitate to accept." The holder of it needed "a good ear and a strong voice."

³¹⁶Diary, I, 351.

Tune, went into a Key much too high. So I pray'd Mr. White to set it; which he did well, Litchf. Tune. The Lord humble me and Instruct me, that I should be occasion of any Interruption in the Worship of God. Had a very good Dinner at three Tables.³¹⁷ On other occasions, generally in church where the task of dominating the singing was greater, the selection would sometimes begin in one tune and end up in another. February 6, 1714/15: "This day I set Windsor Tune, and the people at the 2^d going over run into Oxford, do what I could."³¹⁸ February 2, 1717/18: "Lord's Day. In the Morning I set York Tune, and in the 2^d going over, the Gallery carried it irresistibly to St^t David's, which discouraged me very much. I spake earnestly to Mr. White to set it in the Afternoon, but he declines it. p.m. The Tune went well."³¹⁹ Three weeks later:

Lord's Day, Feb. 23. Mr. Foxcroft preaches. I set York Tune, and the Congregation went out of it into St. David's in the very 2^d going over. They did the same 3 weeks before. This is the 2^d Sign. I think they began in the last Line of the first going over. This seems to me an intimation and call for me to resign the Praecentor's Place to a better Voice. I have through the divine Longsuffering and Favour done it for 24. years, and now

³¹⁷Ibid., II, 151, entry for December 28, 1705. For a similar experience at church, see ibid., p. 391, entry for July 5, 1713.

³¹⁸Ibid., III, 39.

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 164, entry for February 2, 1717/18.

God by his Providence seems to call me off; my voice being enfeebled. I spake to Mr. White earnestly to set it in the Afternoon; but he declin'd it. After the Exercise, I went to Mr. [Joseph] Sewall's, Thank'd Mr. Prince for his very good Discourse: and laid this matter before them, told them how long I had set the Tune; Mr. Prince said, Do it Six years longer. I persisted and said that Mr. White or Franklin [Ben's father] might do it very well. The Return of the Gallery where Mr. Franklin sat was a place very Convenient for it.³²⁰

During the week he consulted with the elders, who agreed that the time had apparently come for him to step down, and warned Mr. White that the job was now his.³²¹ Next Sabbath-day morning Mr. White "disabled himself, as if he had a Cold," but, says Sewall, ". . . when the Psalm was appointed, I forbore to do it, and rose up and turn'd to him, and he set York Tune to a very good Key. I thank'd him for restoring York Tune to its Station with so much Authority and Honor. I was Glad; I saw twas Convenient that I had resign'd, being for the benefit of the Congregation."³²²

Sewall's own singing days were now for the most part behind him, but when the "new way" of singing from notes began to be introduced, he gave the movement his interested support,

³²⁰Ibid., III, 171.

³²¹Ibid., pp. 172-173, entries for February 27 and 28.

³²²Ibid., p. 173, entry for March 2.

attending the so-called "Singing Lectures" instituted for instruction in the new method (where he was happy to find the singing "extraordinarily Excellent, such as has hardly been heard before in Boston"),³²³ and on at least one occasion holding such a meeting at his own house, where he "gave every one a Booke, so the singing was continued without reading between whiles. Gave 15 or 16. New Hall."³²⁴

It must by now be fairly clear that Sewall's experience of life was far from being unrelievedly lugubrious and grim, though certainly it was both of these things often enough. If the point seems to have been dwelt upon at great length,

³²³Ibid., III, 285, entry for March 16, 1720/1. The meeting was held in the school house, Cotton Mather preaching to the "young Musicians, from Rev. 14.3. --no man could learn that Song. --House was full. . . ." The night before there had been a "Great Singing . . . in the Court-Chamber" (ibid., p. 284).

See the discussion of the subject in Foote, pp. 97-100. The work was begun about 1712 by Rev. John Tufts of Newbury. On July 27, 1726, Sewall notes that he "Went to Mr. Toft's Lecture" (Diary, III, 378).

³²⁴Diary, III, 325, entry for February 26, 1722/3. In taking leave of the subject of the Puritan's attitude toward music, the following statement, though certainly not from a disinterested source, is worth noting: ". . . it was in Puritan Boston," says Foote, pp. 122-123,

. . . that there appeared the first music printed in the English Colonies in North America; the first book of instruction in singing; the first book printed with modern musical notation; the first discourses advocating better singing in the churches--a dozen of them between 1720 and 1727, all by Puritan divines. During the same period the earliest American singing schools were established in New England. In all this movement for better singing the ministers took the lead. Furthermore, the first organ imported into the English-speaking colonies came to Boston before 1711; and the first organ made in the colonies by a native-born American was built in Boston before 1746. The earliest concert of instrumental music recorded in any of the colonies was held in Boston in 1731. . . .

the reason lies rather in the abundance of materials to illustrate it than in a desire on the writer's part to paint out the shadows and put sunlight in their place. Some of these materials, in fact, have been little used and deal with things which deserve at least passing mention. One such thing is the joy with which, each year, Sewall noted the passing of the "sad face of Winter"³²⁵ and the appearance, generally in mid-April, of the first robins and swallows: "Swallows proclame the Spring"; "I saw Six Swallows together flying and chippering very rapturously"; "Singing of Birds is come"; ". . . the Robbins cheerfully utter their Notes this morn."³²⁶ Now once more he could begin to graft, and plant, and prune as he so loved to do.

His recreations and social life also deserve an added word of comment. When a writer holds forth on the social life of the time, as Weeden has done, calling it "bare and spiritless beyond description" and uses Sewall as his chief witness,³²⁷ he is being either unpercipient or deliberately unfair. For few men anywhere or at any time have enjoyed a

³²⁵Diary, II, 89, entry for September 29, 1703.

³²⁶Such entries are very numerous. Those cited are: Diary, II, 223, entries for April 11, 12, and 13, 1708; ibid., p. 343, entries for April 11 and 12, 1712; ibid., p. 124, entry for February 24, 1704/5; ibid., pp. 74-75, entry for March 16, 1702/3.

The New England winter often proved very grim. Sewall notes occasions on which it became so cold that clocks stopped, ink froze by the fire, and communion bread "rattle[d] sadly as broken into the Plates." (See the Diary, I, 467-468, 471, entries for January 23 and February 20, 21, 1697/8; ibid., p. 118, entry for January 24, 1685/6; ibid., III, 71, entries for January 15 and 16, 1715/16.)

³²⁷Economic and Social History, I, 295.

social life more full or more satisfying than did Samuel Sewall. The reader must by this time realize that he was a highly social creature, and that the pleasures which he enjoyed were by no means exclusively religious. As we have already noted, he loved to be in the company of his friends at dinner (once, being in a somber mood, he refused an invitation "because," as he said, "a feast is made for Laughter"),³²⁸ organized picnic expeditions with his family and friends, participated in shooting competitions, and went to "raisings." We have not had occasion to mention that he also enjoyed fishing (among the things that he brought from England was "One Angling Rod")³²⁹ and swimming (very "healthfull and refreshing").³³⁰ He went nutting and visited travelling shows.³³¹ On his way to England he even entered a shipboard wager as to the day on which land would first be sighted, a surprising departure from the Puritan dislike for lotteries as frivolous trials of providence (from which, also, derived the antagonism toward games of cards and dice),³³² and once there, besides attending musical concerts, he and some friends one night "went to a Garden at Mile End and drunk Currant and Rasberry Wine, then to the Dog and

³²⁸Diary, III, 257, entry for June 6, 1720.

³²⁹Ibid., I, 283, entry for August 13, 1688/9. And see ibid., p. 182, entry for July 12, 1687, where he describes a fishing trip on which he lost his hat.

³³⁰Ibid., p. 264, entry for July 8, 1689. And see ibid., p. 186, entry for August 15, 1687, and ibid., II, 260, entry for July 22, 1709.

³³¹Ibid., I, 98, entry for October 2, 1685; ibid., p. 257, entry for June 3, 1689; ibid., II, 355, entry for July 2, 1712.

³³²Ibid., I, 240, entry for December 21, 1688. See the discussion in Miller, New England Mind, p. 16.

Partridge's, and plaid Nine Pins, "333 a pastime which at home was punishable by a fine of five shillings. 334 Such items, dredged up from the voluminous records of half a century, are admittedly of limited individual significance, but in their totality they are a legitimate dispeller of at least a part of the gloom that tends to settle over the Puritan scene. 335

Concluding this part of our discussion, we can scarcely do better than to note a diary entry which Sewall made during his year in England. Brief as it is, it says much both of the nature of the man and of his work-a-day experience of religion: "Monday March 18, [1688/9.] Went and saw the Jews burying Place at Mile-End: Some Bodies were laid East and West; but now all are orderd to be laid North and South. Many Tombs. Engravings are Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, English, sometimes on the same stone. Part of the Ground is improv'd as a Garden. . . . — I told the keeper afterwards wisht might meet in Heaven: He answerd, and drink a Glass of Beer together, which we were then doing." 336

333 Diary, I, 255, entry for May 14, 1689. Many years later, back in Boston, he went out with a company to inspect the town and "dissipated the players at Nine Pins at Mount-Whoredom [a name which later Boston modesty changed to 'Hoardam']" (ibid., III, 52, entry for August 8, 1715).

334 Palfrey, III, 46.

335 For a discussion of many of these same materials, see John L. Ewell, "Judge Samuel Sewall (1652-1730), a Typical Massachusetts Puritan," in Papers of the American Society of Church History, VI (New York, 1895), 25-54, and William Everett, "Six Provincial Worthies" (unpublished MS. at the Boston Athenaeum), p. 49.

336 Diary, I, 301.

IV

On the afternoon of October 19, 1717, Hannah Sewall breathed her last, "whereby," wrote the stricken husband, "the Chamber was fill'd with a Flood of Tears. God is teaching me a new Lesson; to live a Widower's Life. Lord help me to Learn. . . ." ³³⁷ Feeling, perhaps, that for one sixty-five years of age such a lesson would not prove particularly difficult, the Lord withheld his assisting hand. The result was that before four months were past Sewall found himself "wandering in [his] mind whether to live a Single or a Married Life. . . ." ³³⁸ One of the things which he found particularly disturbing was the absence from meeting of Madam Winthrop, until recently the wife of his late colleague on the Superior Court, Wait Still Winthrop. ³³⁹ It did not help matters when, immediately that he paid her a visit or two, people began to busy themselves about his intentions. Cotton Mather sent him his tract entitled "An Essay to do Good Unto the Widow" with a note appended saying that he had not yet done his full duty. ³⁴⁰ Mrs. Willoughby "seem'd to hint persons had need be ware how they married again." The Rev. Mr. Walter at Roxbury had heard that people were saying that Governor Dudley had "laid out" Madam Winthrop

³³⁷ Ibid., III, 143.

³³⁸ Ibid., p. 165, entry for February 6, 1717/18.

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 151, entries for December 1 and 2; ibid., p. 164, entry for February 3, 1717/18.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 177, entry for March 17, 1717/18.

for him, and when Sewall objected that he "had been there but thrice, and twice upon Business: He said, Cave tertium."³⁴¹ Mr. Walter's personal recommendation was the Widow Ruggles. Mr. Leverett told him that he and his wife had decided that Madam Brown was Sewall's best bet, though he had to admit that there was much to recommend Madam Winthrop as well.³⁴² Mr. Henchman "took occasion highly to Commend Madam Winthrop. . . ." ³⁴³ Deacon Marion came to seem him, and ". . . after a great deal of Discourse about his [own] Courtship--He told [me]," says Sewall, "the Olivers said they wish'd I would Court their Aunt [Madam Winthrop]. I said little, but said twas not five Moneths since I buried my dear Wife. Had said before 'twas hard to know whether best to marry again or no; whom to marry."³⁴⁴

Before proceeding farther with this favorite among Sewall topics,³⁴⁵ the courtships of his later years, a word or two of comment is in order. The material may be considered simply for the amusement it affords, used as a source of invidious comment on Sewall, or explored for its elements of the curious

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 172, entry for February 25, 1717/18.

³⁴² Ibid., p. 177, entry for March 19, 1717/18.

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 175, entry for March 10, 1717/18.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 176-177, entry for March 14, 1717/18.

³⁴⁵ See, for example, Calhoun, A Social History, I, 56 ff.; Crawford, Old Boston, p. 279 ff.; Alice M. Earle, Customs and Fashions in Old New England (New York, 1916), pp. 43-56; Ellis, An Address, p. 18 ff.; Winthrop, A Difference of Opinion, passim; Wilbertine Worden, "Love Currents that Cross," Park-Avenue Social Review (November, 1927), p. 28 ff.

and quaint. Any one of these approaches is at least partially legitimate: the material is often funny, much of it is unflattering to Sewall, and much of it, too, is curious and quaint. There is a fourth approach, however, which is too likely to be neglected: the material may be understood. The facts presented in the preceding paragraph, for example, all of which bear dates which fall within six months after Hannah's death, make it quite plain that Sewall's early remarriage was not only regarded as a respectable possibility, it was actively anticipated. The relatives of Madam Winthrop were not shocked by the idea of Sewall's commencing a courtship any more than they were by the possibility that the object of it should be one whose husband had died even more recently (November 7, 1717)³⁴⁶ that Sewall's wife. The institution of marriage, as we have seen amply illustrated in the arrangements which Sewall made for his children, was regarded in a most matter-of-fact light. Sentiment, though it might be present, was not presupposed, and the absence of it was not felt to reflect unfavorably on the parties concerned. We know, too, that Sewall at this time was an old man, living in a house from which all the children had gone but one and that this one, his eldest daughter, Hannah, was a bed-ridden invalid. The idea of having simply a housekeeper was disagreeable to him;³⁴⁷ Puritan tradition called for a wife. As John Cotton had declared, "Women are Creatures without which there is no comfortable Living for man: it is

³⁴⁶Diary, III, 262, editors' note.

³⁴⁷Letter-Book, II, 133, letter to Timothy Woodbridge dated June 1, 1721.

true of them what is wont to be said of Governments, That bad ones are better than none. . . .³⁴⁸ For one in Sewall's position a widow was to be preferred to a "thornback," the name borne by the Puritan woman who remained a spinster. Of widows there was a plentiful supply. During one of his calls on the reluctant Madam Winthrop, for example, the two of them "had a pleasant discourse about 7 Single persons sitting in the Fore-seat [on the women's side of the aisle at the South Church] . . . viz. Madam Rebekah Dudley, Catharine Winthrop, Bridget Usher, Deliverance Legg, Rebekah Loyd, Lydia Colman, Elizabeth Bellingham. She propounded one and another for me; but none would do, said Mrs. Loyd was about her Age [fifty-six]."³⁴⁹ The idea of making a convenient marital bargain with one of these gentlewomen of the foreseat constituted no slur on the memory of his dead wife, of whom he continued to think and speak in the most affectionate terms.³⁵⁰ These are the sympathetic facts in the case. It is unfair to ignore them in dealing with a record in which Sewall left himself exposed to the enquiring eyes of posterity as few men have ever done. Recognizing such facts need not, indeed cannot, spoil our enjoyment of it.

Sewall's first approaches to Madam Winthrop were broken off by the appearance of another prospect in the person of

³⁴⁸Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," p. 592, citing Cotton's A Meet Help (Boston, 1699).

³⁴⁹Diary, III, 262, entry for September 30, 1720.

³⁵⁰See ibid., p. 292, entry for September 16, 1721, and ibid., p. 392, entry for October 19, 1728.

Widow Denison, the funeral of whose husband he attended on March 26, 1718. Next day: "Mr. Danforth gives the widow Denison a high Commendation for her Piety, Prudence, Diligence, Humility."³⁵¹ A few days later she brought her husband's will to Sewall to be probated, and again he was reminded, this time by Mr. Dorr, that she was "one of the most dutifull Wives in the world." Mr. Boydell, "smiling," remarked that the will looked as if it had been written by Sewall. Sewall told him "yes, but there was not a tittle of it mine but the form."³⁵² Mr. Boydell's smiling was not beside the point, however, for when the widow came again on April 17, Sewall presented her with "a Widow's Book Bound, having writ her Name in it."³⁵³ This, as we shall see, was a typical opening gesture. On June 3, a seemly two and a half months after Mr. Denison had been laid away, Sewall journeyed to Roxbury, where the widow lived, and there took counsel with Mr. Walter, her minister.

Talk with him about Mrs. D_____n. He advises me not to see her then, lest should surprise her undress'd. Told him I came on purpose; yet finally submitted to his Advice[.] . . . spake of her Coming to Town on Thursday.

June, 5th No body came, I writ to Mr. Walter.

June, 9. . . . Mrs. D_____n came in the morning about 9 aclock, and I took her up into my Chamber and discoursed

³⁵¹Ibid., pp. 178-179, entries for March 26 and 27.

³⁵²Ibid., p. 180, entries for April 7 and 8, 1718.

³⁵³Ibid., p. 182.

thorowly with her; She desired me to provide another and better Nurse. I gave her the two last News-Letters--told her I intended to visit her at her own house next Lecture-day. She said, 'twould be talked of. I answer'd, In such Cases, persons must run the Gantlet. Gave her Mr. Whiting's Oration for Abijah Walter, who brought her on horseback to Town. I think little or no Notice was taken of it.³⁵⁴

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June, 17. Went to Roxbury Lecture, visited Mr. Walter. . . . Visited Governour Dudley, Mrs. Denison, gave her Dr. Mather's Sermons very well bound; told her we were in it invited to a Wedding. She gave me very good Curds.³⁵⁵

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July, 7. . . . I give Mrs. Denison her Oath to the Inventory [of her late husband's estate]; gave her a Catalogue superscrib'd to her. Her Brother brought her. . . . At night, when all were gone to bed; Cousin Moodey went with me into the new Hall, read the history of Rebekah's Courtship, and pray'd with me respecting my Widowed Condition.³⁵⁶

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July, 15. . . . Governour Warns a Council, which hinders my going to Roxbury Lecture, though had bespoke before.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴Ibid., p. 136.

³⁵⁵Ibid., p. 137.

³⁵⁶Ibid., p. 138.

³⁵⁷Ibid., p. 139.

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16. . . . Went to Woodell's and rode in his Coach to Meers's, from thence went and visited Mrs. Denison; Gave her K. George's effigies in Copper; and an Engl. Crown of K. Charles 2^d 1677. Eat Curds with her; I craved a Blessing, and Returned Thanks; came home. . . . 358

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25. 6. [Friday, July 25.] I go in the Hackny Coach to Roxbury. Call at Mr. Walter's who is not at home; nor Governour Dudley, nor his Lady. Visit Mrs. Denison: she invites me to eat. I give her two Cases with a knife and fork in each; one Turtle shell tackling; the other long, with Ivory handles, Squar'd, cost 4^s 6^d; Pound of Raisins with proportionable Almonds. . . . Came home by Day-light in the Coach, which staid for me at the Gray-Hound. 359

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August, 1. 6. . . . visit Mrs. Denison. Madam Rogers and Leverett much congratulated me upon my Courting her.

August 6. 4. Visited Mrs. Denison, Carried her, her sister Weld, the Widow, and Mrs. Weld to her Brother Mr. Samuel Weld, where we were Courteously entertained. . . . Gave Mrs. Denison a Psalm-Book neatly bound in England with Turkey-Leather. 360

During the next three months, many visits, many little presents, much dining out with relatives and friends. 361 Finally,

358 Ibid., p. 189.

359 Ibid., p. 190.

360 Ibid., p. 191.

361 Ibid., p. 192, entries for August 15, 22, 27, 28, and

on the first of November:

My Son from Brooklin being here I took his Horse, and visited Mrs. Denison. Sat in the Chamber next Major Bowls. I told her 'twas time now to finish our Business: Ask'd her what I should allow her; she not speaking; I told her I was willing to give her Two and Fifty pounds per annum during her life, if it should please God to take me out of the world before her. She answer'd she had better keep as she was, than give a Certainty for an uncertainty; She should pay dear for dwelling at Boston. I desired her to make proposals, but she made none. I had Thoughts of Publication next Thursday the 6th. But I now seem to be far from it. May God, who has the pity of a Father, Direct and help me!³⁶²

.

Friday, 9^r [November] 28. 1718. Having consulted with Mr. Walter after Lecture, he advised me to goe and speak with Mrs. Denison. I went this day in the Coach; had a fire made in the Chamber where I spake with her before, 9^r the first: I enquired how she had done these 3 or 4 weeks; Afterwards I told her our Conversation had been such when I was with her last, that it seem'd to be a direction in Providence, not to proceed any further; She said, It must be what I pleas'd, or to that purpose. Afterward

September 4; ibid., p. 197, entry for September 26 (interruption caused by weeks on the circuit); ibid., pp.199-200, entries for October 11, 15, 24, and 29.

³⁶²Ibid., p. 202.

she seem'd to blame [me] that I had not told her so 9^r 1.
. . . I repeated her words of 9^r 1. She seem'd at first
to start at the words of her paying dear, as if she had
not spoken them. But she said she thought twas Hard to
part with All, and have nothing to bestow on her Kindred.
I said, I did not intend any thing of the Movables, I
intended all the personal Estate to be to her. She said
I seem'd to be in a hurry on Saterdag, 9^r 1., which was
the reason she gave me no proposals. Whereas I had ask'd
her long before to give me proposals in Writing; and she
upbraided me, That I who had never written her a Letter,
should ask her to write. She asked me if I would drink,
I told her Yes. She gave me Cider, Apples and a Glass of
Wine: gathered together the little things I had given
her, and offer'd them to me; but I would take none of them.
Told her I wish'd her well, should be glad to hear of her
welfare. She seem'd to say she should not again take in
hand a thing of this nature. Thank'd me for what I had
given her and Desired my Prayers. . . . Mr. Stoddard and
his wife came in their Coach to see their Sister which
broke off my Visit. Upon their asking me, I dismiss'd my
Coach, and went with them to see Mr. Danforth, and came
home by Moon-shine. Got home about 9. at night. Laus
Deo.

My bowels yern towards Mrs. Denison; but I think God
directs me in his Providence to desist.³⁶³

³⁶³Ibid., pp. 204-205.

Two days later, however--

In the evening . . . about 7 a-clock Mrs. Dorothy Denison comes in, her Cousin Weld coming first, saying she desired to speak with me in privat. I had a fire in the new Hall, and was at prayer; was very much startled that she should come so far a-foot in that exceeding Cold Season; She enter'd into discourse of what pass'd between us at Roxbury last Friday; I seem'd to be alter'd in my affection; ask'd pardon if she had affronted me. Seem'd to incline the Match should not break off, since I had kept her Company so long. Said Mr. Denison spake to her after his Signing the Will, that he would not [have] her put all out out of her Hand and power, but reserve somewhat to bestow on his Friends that might want. I told her She might keep all. She excus'd, and said 'twas not such an all. I commended the estate. I could not observe that she made me any offer of any part all this while. She mention'd two Glass Bottles she had. I told her they were hers, and the other small things I had given her, only now they had not the same signification as before. I was much concern'd for her being in the Cold, would fetch her in a plate of something warm: (for I had not sup'd), she refus'd. However I Fetched a Tankard of Cider and drank to her. She desired that no body might know of her being here. I told her they should not. . . . She went away in the bitter Cold, no Moon being up, to my great pain. I Saluted her at parting.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 206-207, entry for November 30.

Finally, on December 22--

Mrs. Dorothy Denison brings an additional Inventory. I give her her Oath; ask'd her Brother Brewer and her to dine with me: She said she needed not to eat; Caus'd her to sit by the fire, and went with her to the door, at her going away. She said nothing to me, nor her Brother Brewer.³⁶⁵

Three months after this, God's providence, which he felt had directed him to desist in his courting of Mrs. Denison, once again took a hand. On the first day of April a messenger brought him a package bearing his name. In it he found "a pair of very good white Kid's Leather Gloves, and a Gold Ring." The ring bore the motto "Lex et Libertas" and the initials "A. T."³⁶⁶ This was obviously from his old friend Abigail Tilley, whom he had long known as a member of his Wednesday night prayer-meeting. Twice married, she was now again widowed and alone; apparently she was also willing.³⁶⁷ Sewall, who was quite as willing as she, made a proposal of marriage on his third visit to her house. "She expresse[d] her Unworthiness of such a thing with much Respect."³⁶⁸ This was a good start,

³⁶⁵Ibid., p. 208.

³⁶⁶Ibid., p. 217.

³⁶⁷Ibid., p. 86, entry for June 5, 1716; ibid., p. 158, entry for January 1, 1717/18; ibid., p. 255, editors' note. She had been a member of the South Church since 1704. When Sewall married her she was fifty-four years old (Letter-Book, II, 109, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated February 23, 1719/20).

³⁶⁸Ibid., p. 226, entry for September 2, 1719. See also the entry for the preceding August 29.

and after several pleasant weeks of the usual visits, congratulations from friends, and gifts (no talk about a property settlement this time),³⁶⁹ they were married on Thanksgiving Day, 1719.

. . . between 6 and 7. Brother Moodey and I went to Mrs. Tilley's; and about 7, or 8, were married by Mr. J[oseph] Sewall, in the best room below stairs. Mr. Prince pray'd the 2^d time. Mr. Adams the Minister of Newington was there, Mr. Oliver and Mr. Timothy Clark Justices, and many more. Sung the 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. verses of the 90th Psalm. Cous. S. Sewall [his nephew] set Low-dutch Tune in a very good Key, which made the Singing with a good number of Voices very agreeable. Distributed Cake. Mrs. Armitage introduced me into my Bride's Chamber after she was a-bed. I thank'd her that she had left her room in that Chamber to make way for me, and pray'd God to provide for her a better Lodging: So none saw us after I went to bed [it was not unusual for the bridal chamber to be the scene of the drinking of healths and the saying of prayers].³⁷⁰ Quickly after our being a-bed my Bride grew so very bad she was fain to sit up in her bed; I rose to get her Petit Coats about her. I was exceedingly amaz'd, fearing lest she should have dy'd. Through the favour of God she recover'd

³⁶⁹Ibid., p. 228, entries for September 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, and 25; ibid., p. 232, entry for October 15 and 26 or 27.

³⁷⁰Calhoun, I, 64, comments thus on this passage.

in some considerable time of her Fit of the Tisick, spitting, partly blood. She her self was under great Consternation.³⁷¹

The marriage had not got off to a very promising start, but for as long as it lasted Sewall at least was quite satisfied, finding his new wife "very helpfull," "very kind."³⁷² Unfortunately, however, she was wracked by fits of the ague and suffered from extreme shortness of breath.³⁷³ One night, seven months after they were married, she was "oppress'd with a rising of Flegm that obstructed her Breathing." Sewall hurried out of bed, "lighted a Candle, made Scipio give me a Eason of Water (he was asleep by the fire) Call'd . . . Mr. Cooper, Mayhew [ministers]. About midnight my dear wife expired to our great astonishment, especially mine. May the Sovereign Lord pardon my Sin, and Sanctify to me this very Extraordinary, awfull Dispensation."³⁷⁴ Next day (May 27, 1720) there were numerous sympathetic callers, one of whom, Mr.

³⁷¹Diary, III, 233, entry for October 29, 1719.

³⁷²Letter-Book, II, 104, letter to Timothy Woodbridge dated February 1, 1719/20; ibid., p. 108, letter to John Storke dated February 20, 1719/20. She was given a favorable character by Jeremiah Dummer, who wrote to Sewall, May 13, 1720: "I heartily congratulate you upon your second marriage, with Mrs. Tilley. I have had an esteem for her character ever since my being at Cambridge, where I was a witness of her great goodness in pleading with her Father for an unfortunate brother, getting him restored to favour, though by that means she knew how much she must lose in her own fortune." (Letter-Book, II, 147.)

³⁷³Diary, III, 233, entry for October 30, 1719; ibid., p. 238, entry for December 29, 1719.

³⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 254-255, entry for May 26, 1720.

Williams of Hatfield, remarked that what had happened to Sewall "was what befell the Prophet Ezekiel."³⁷⁵ On the following Sunday afternoon Mr. Prince spoke from the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, sixth verse: "At midnight behold a Cry was made."³⁷⁶ Two days later she was laid in the tomb, and Sewall was once more alone.³⁷⁷

After three months had passed Sewall began paying his attentions to Madam Winthrop again, this time in full earnest. He was now in his sixty-ninth year, she in her fifty-sixth. Both had now been twice married.³⁷⁸ The story of their relationship during the two months that followed Sewall's sending her a sermon in September, 1720, is completely contained in the diary entries and deserves to be so presented. On September 5 he sent her the sermon.³⁷⁹ On September 30:

Daughter Sewall [Joseph's wife] acquaints Madam Winthrop that if she pleas'd to be within at 3. p.m. I would wait on her. She answer'd she would be at home.

8th [October] 1. Saterdag, I dine at Mr. Stoddard's: from thence I went to Madam Winthrop's just at 3. Spake to

³⁷⁵Ibid.

³⁷⁶Ibid., entry for May 29. Cotton Mather preached a funeral sermon which was published under the title: "Undoubted Certainties. Of Piety Enlivened from the View of what the Living do certainly know of Death approaching. In a Sermon preached on the Death of Mrs. Abigail Sewall, who expired 26d. 3m. 1720, Aetatis 54. By Cotton Mather, D.D. and F.R.S." (Boston, 1720).

She left an estate of approximately one hundred pounds (Letter-Book, II, 115, letter to Jonathan Dickinson dated August 1, 1720).

³⁷⁷Diary, loc. cit., entry for May 31.

³⁷⁸Ibid., p. 262, editors' note.

³⁷⁹Ibid., p. 260.

her, saying, my loving wife died so soon and suddenly, 'twas hardly convenient for me to think of Marrying again; however I came to this Resolution, that I would not make my Court to any person without first Consulting with her. [At this point they have the exchange, earlier noted, about the numerous widows sitting in the fore-seat at the South Church.]

October 3.2. Waited on Madam Winthrop again; 'twas a little while before she came in. Her daughter Noyes being there alone with me, I said, I hoped my Waiting on her Mother would not be disagreeable to her. She answer'd she should not be against that that might be for her Comfort. I Saluted her, and told her I perceiv'd I must shortly wish her a good Time; (her mother had told me, she was with Child and within a Moneth or two of her Time). By and by in came Mr. Airs, Chaplain of the Castle [the military installation at Castle Island in the bay], and hang'd up his Hat, which I was a little startled at, it seeming as if he was to lodge there. At last Madam Winthrop came too. After a considerable time, I went up to her and said, if it might not be inconvenient I desired to speak with her. She assented, and spake of going into another Room; but Mr. Airs and Mrs. Noyes presently rose up, and went out, leaving us there alone. Then I usher'd in Discourse from the names in the Fore-seat; at last I pray'd that Katharine [Mrs. Winthrop] might be the person assign'd for me. She instantly took it up in the way of Denyal, as if she had catch'd

at an Opportunity to do it, saying she could not do it before she was asked. Said that was her mind unless she should Change it, which she believed she should not; could not leave her Children. I express'd my Sorrow that she should do it so Speedily, pray'd her Consideration, and ask'd her when I should wait on her agen. She setting no time, I mention'd that day Sennight. Gave her Mr. Willard's Fountain open'd . . . saying, I hop'd if we did well read that book, we should meet together hereafter, if we did not now. She took the Book, and put it in her Pocket. Took Leave.

8^r 5. . . . Although I had appointed to wait upon her, Madam Winthrop, next Monday, yet I went from my Cousin Sewall's thither about 3. p.m. The Nurse told me Madam dined abroad at her daughter Noyes's, they were to go out together. I ask'd for the Maid, who was within. Gave Katee [the grandchild] a penny and a Kiss, and came away. . . .

8^r 6th . . . A little after 6. p.m. I went to Madam Winthrop's. She was not within. I gave Sarah Chickering the Maid 2^s, Juno, who brought in wood, 1^s. Afterward the Nurse came in, I gave her 18^d, having no other small Bill. After awhile Dr. Noyes came in with his Mother; and quickly after his wife came in: They sat talking, I think, till eight a-clock. I said I fear'd I might be some Interruption to their Business: Dr. Noyes reply'd pleasantly: He fear'd they might be an Interruption.

to me, and went away. Madam seem'd to harp upon the same string. Must take care of her Children; could not leave that House and Neighbourhood where she had dwelt so long. I told her she might doe her children as much or more good by bestowing what she laid out in Hous-keeping, upon them. Said her Son would be of Age the 7th of August. I said it might be inconvenient for her to dwell with her Daughter-in-Law, who must be Mistress of the House. I gave her a piece of Mr. Belcher's Cake and Ginger-Bread wrapped up in a clean sheet of Paper; told her of her Father's kindness to me when Treasurer, and I Constable. My Daughter Judith was gon from me and I was more Lonesom--might help to forward one another in our Journey to Canaan. Mr. Eyre [Madam Winthrop's twenty year old son by her first husband] came within the door; I saluted him . . . and he went away. I took leave about 9 aclock. I told [her] I came now to refresh her Memory as to Monday-night; said she had not forgot it. In discourse with her, I ask'd leave to speak with her Sister [Madam Mico]; I meant to gain Madam Mico's favour to persuade her Sister [Madam Winthrop]. She seem'd surpris'd and displeas'd, and said she was in the same condition!³⁸⁰

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8^r 10th . . . In the Evening I visited Madam Winthrop, who treated me with a great deal of Curtesy; Wine, Marmalade.

³⁸⁰ Diary, III, 262-265.

I gave her a News-Letter . . . Proposals [his Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies]. . . .

8^r 11th I writ a few Lines to Madam Winthrop to this purpose: 'Madam, These wait on you with Mr. Mayhew's Sermon, and Account of the state of the Indians on Martha's Vinyard. I thank you for your Unmerited Favours of yesterday; and hope to have the Happiness of Waiting on you to-morrow before Eight aclock after Noon. I pray GOD to keep you, and give you a joyfull entrance upon the Two Hundred and twenty ninth year of Christopher Columbus his Discovery; and take Leave, who am, Madam, your humble Servant.

S. S.

Sent this by Deacon Green, who deliver'd it to Sarah Chickering, her Mistress not being at home.

8^r 12. . . . At Madam Winthrop's . . . Mrs. Anne Cotton came to door (twas before 3.) said Madam Winthrop was within, directed me into the little Room, where she was full of work behind a Stand; Mrs. Cotton came in and stood. Madam Winthrop pointed to her to set me a Chair. Madam Winthrop's Countenance was much changed from what 'twas on Monday, look'd dark and lowering. At last, the work, (black stuff or Silk) was taken away, I got my Chair in place, had some Converse, but very Cold and indifferent to what 'twas before. Ask'd her to acquit me of Rudeness if I drew off her Glove. Enquiring the reason, I told her twas great odds between handling a dead Goat, and a living

Lady. Got it off. I told her I had one Petition to ask of her, that was, that she would take off the Negative she laid on me the third of October; She readily answer'd she could not, and enlarg'd upon it; She told me of it so soon as she could; could not leave her house, children, neighbours, business. I told her she might do som Good to help and support me. [She] . . . said I had visited Mrs. Denison. I told her Yes! Afterward I said, If after a first and second Vagary she would Accept of me returning, Her Victorious Kindness and Good Will would be very Obliging. She thank'd me for my Book, (Mr. Mayhew's Sermon), But said not a word of the Letter. When she insisted on the Negative, I pray'd there might be no more Thunder and Lightening, I should not sleep all night. I gave her Dr. Preston, The Church's Marriage and the Church's Carriage, which cost me 6^s at the Sale. The door standing open, Mr. Airs came in, hung up his Hat, and sat down. After awhile, Madam Winthrop moving, he went out. John Eyre [Madam Winthrop's son] look'd in, I said How do ye, or, your servant Mr. Eyre: but heard no word from him. Sarah fill'd a Glass of Wine, she drank to me, I to her, She sent Juno home with me with a good Lantern, I gave her 6^d and bid her thank her Mistress. In some of our Discourse, I told her I had rather go to the Stone-House adjoining to her, than to come to her against her mind. Told her the reason why I came every other night was lest I should drink too deep draughts of Pleasure. She had

talk'd of Canary, her Kisses were to me better than the best Canary. Explain'd the expression Concerning Columbus.

8^f 13. I tell my Son and daughter [Joseph] Sewall, that the Weather was not so fair as I apprehended.³⁸¹

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8^f 15. I dine on Fish and Oyle at Mr. Stoddard's. Capt. Hill wish'd me Joy of my proceedings i.e. with M_____ Winthrop; Sister Cooper applauded it, spake of Visiting her: I said her Complaisance of her Visit would be obliging to me.

8^f 16. L. Day, I upbraided my self that could be so solicitous about Earthly things; and so cold and indifferent as to the Love of Christ. . . .

8^f 17. Monday. . . . In the Evening I visited Madam Winthrop, who Treated me Courteously, but not in Clean Linen as somtimes. She said, she did not know whether I would come again, or no. I ask'd her how she could so impute inconstancy to me. (I had not visited her since Wednesday night being unable to get over the Indisposition received by the Treatment received that night. . . .) Gave her this day's Gazett. Heard David Jeffries [a grandson] say the Lord's Prayer, and some other portions of the Scriptures. He came to the door, and ask'd me to go into the Chamber, where his Grandmother was tending Little Katee, to whom she had given Physick; but I chose to sit below. Dr. Noyes and his wife came in, and sat a

³⁸¹ Diary, III, 265-268.

Considerable time. . . . Juno came home with me.

8^r 18. Visited Madam Mico, who came to me in a splendid Dress. I said, It may be you have heard of my Visiting Madam Winthrop, [your] Sister. She answered, if her Sister were for it, she should not hinder it. I gave her Mr. Homes's Sermon. She gave me a Glass of Canary, entertain'd me with good Discourse, and a Respectfull Remembrance of my first Wife. I took Leave.

8^r 19. Midweek, Visited Madam Winthrop; Sarah told me she was at Mr. Walley's [Madam Winthrop's son-in-law], would not come home till late. . . . Was ready to go home: but said if I knew she was there, I would go thither. Sarah seem'd to speak with pretty good Courage, She would be there. I went and found her there, with Mr. Walley and his wife in the little Room below. At 7 a-clock I mentioned going home; at 8. I put on my Coat, and quickly waited on her home. She found occasion to speak loud to the servant, as if she had a mind to be known. Was Courteous to me; but took occasion to speak pretty earnestly about my keeping a Coach: I said 'twould cost £100. per annum: she said twould cost but £40. . . . Mr. Eyre [the son] came in and sat awhile; I offer'd him Dr. Incr. Mather's Sermons, whereof Mr. Appleton's Ordination Sermon was one; said he had them already. I said I would give him another. Exit. Came away somewhat late.

8^r 20. . . . Madam Winthrop not being at Lecture, I went thither first; found her very Serene with her dater

Noyes, Mrs. Dering, and the widow Shipreev sitting at a little Table, she in her arm'd Chair. She drank to me, and I to Mrs. Noyes. After awhile pray'd the favour to speak with her. She took one of the Candles, and went into the best Room, clos'd the shutters, sat down upon the Couch. She . . . said the Coach must be set on Wheels, and not by Rusting. She spake somthing of my needing a Wigg. Ask'd me what her Sister said to me. I told her, She said, If her Sister were for it, She would not hinder it. But I told her, she did not say she would be glad to have me for her Brother. Said, I shall keep you in the Cold, and asked her if she would be within to morrow night, for we had had but a running Feat. She said she could not tell whether she should, or no. I took Leave. As were drinking at the Governour's, he said: In England the Ladies minded little more than that they might have Money, and Coaches to ride in. I said, And New-England brooks its name. At which Mr. Dudley smiled. Governour [Shute] said they were not quite so bad here.

8th 21. Friday, My Son, the Minister, came to me p.m. by appointment and we pray one for another in the Old Chamber; more especially respecting my Courtship. About 6. a-clock I go to Madam Winthrop's; Sarah told me her Mistress was gon out, but did not tell me whither she went. She presently order'd me a Fire; so I went in, having Dr. Sibb's Bowels [Bowels opened; or a Discovery of the Union betwixt Christ and the Church] with me to

read. I read the two first Sermons, still no body came in: at last about 9. a-clock Mr. John Eyre came in; I took the opportunity to say to him as I had done to Mrs. Noyes before, that I hoped my Visiting his Mother would not be disagreeable to him; He answered me with much Respect. When twas after 9. a-clock He of himself said he would go and call her, she was but at one of his Brothers: A while after I heard Madam Winthrop's voice, enquiring somthing about John. After a good while and Clapping the Garden door twice or thrice, she came in. I mention'd somthing of the lateness; she banter'd me, and said I was later. She receiv'd me Courteously. I ask'd when our proceedings should be made publick: She said They were like to be no more publick than they were already. Offer'd me no Wine that I remember. I rose up at 11 a-clock to come away, saying I would put on my Coat, She offer'd not to help me. I pray'd her that Juno might light me home, she open'd the Shutter, and said twas pretty light abroad; Juno was weary and gon to bed. So I came hōm by Star-light as well as I could. At my first coming in, I gave Sarah five Shillings. I writ Mr. Eyre his Name in his book with the date October 21, 1720. It cost me 8^s.
Jehovah jireh!

October 22. . . . Little David Jeffries saw me, and looking upon me very lovingly, ask'd me if I was going to see his Grandmother? I said, Not to-night. Gave him a peny, and bid him present my Service to his Grandmother.

October 24. I went in the Hackny Coach through the Common, stop'd at Madam Winthrop's (had told her I would take my departure [for Salem] from thence). Sarah came to the door with Katee in her Arms: but I did not think to take notice of the Child. Call'd her Mistress. I told her, being encourag'd by David Jeffries loving eyes, and sweet Words, I was come to enquire whether she could find in her heart to leave that House and Neighbourhood, and go and dwell with me at the South-end; I think she said softly, Not yet. I told her It did no ly in my Lands to keep a Coach. If I should, I should be in danger to be brought to keep company with her Neighbour Brooker, (he was a little before sent to prison for Debt). Told her I had an Antipathy against those who would pretend to give themselves; but nothing of their Estate. I would a proportion of my Estate with my self. And I suppos'd she would do so. As to a Perriwig, My best and greatest Friend, I could not possibly have a greater, began to find me with Hair before I was born, and had continued to do so ever since; and I could not find in my heart to go to another. She commended the book I gave her, Dr. Preston, the Church Marriage; quoted him saying 'twas inconvenient keeping out of a Fashion commonly used. I said the Time and Tide did circumscribe my Visit. She gave me a Dram of Black-Cherry Brandy, and gave me a lump of the Sugar that was in it. She wish'd me a good Journy. I pray'd God to keep her and came away. . . .

8^r 25. Sent a Letter . . . to my Son by Wakefield, who delivered it not till Wednesday; so he visited her not till Friday p.m. and then presented my Service to her.³⁸²

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31. 2. [Monday. He had arrived back from Salem the Saturday before] . . . At night I visited Madam Winthrop about 6. p.m. They told me she was gon to Madam Mico's. I went thither and found she was gon; so return'd to her house, read the Epistles to the Galations, Ephesians in Mr. Eyre's Latin Bible. After the Clock struck 8. I began to read the 103. Psalm. Mr. Wendell [a relative by marriage to Madam Winthrop] came in from his Warehouse. Ask'd me if I were alone? Spake very kindly to me, offer'd me to call Madam Winthrop. I told him, She would be angry, had been at Mrs. Mico's; he help'd me on with my Coat and I came home: left the Gazett in the Bible, which told Sarah of, bid her present my Service to Mrs. Winthrop, and tell her I had been to wait on her if she had been at home.

November 1. I was so taken up that I could not go if I would.

November 2. Midweek, went again, and found Mrs. Alden there, who quickly went out. Gave her about ½ pound of Sugar Almonds, cost 3^s per £ She seem'd pleas'd with them, ask'd what they cost. Spake of giving her a Hundred pounds per annum if I dy'd before her. Ask'd her what sum she would give me, if she should dy first?

³⁸²Ibid., pp. 268-272.

Said I would give her time to Consider of it. She said she heard as if I had given all to my Children by Deeds of Gift. I told her 'twas a mistake, Point-Judith was mine &c. That in England, I own'd, my Father's desire was that it should go to my eldest Son; 'twas 20 ~~£~~ per annum; she thought 'twas forty. I think when I seem'd to excuse pressing this, she seem'd to think twas best to speak of it; a long winter was coming on. Gave me a Glass or two of Canary.

November 4th Friday, Went again about 7. a-clock; found there Mr. John Walley and his wife: sat discoursing pleasantly. I shew'd them Isaac Moses's Writing [Isaac Moses was an Indian]. Madam W. serv'd Confeits to us. After a-while a Table was spread, and Supper was set. I urg'd Mr. Walley to Crave a Blessing; but he put it upon me. About 9. they went away. I ask'd Madam what fashioned Neck-lace I should present her with, She said, None at all. I ask'd her Whereabout we left off last time; mention'd what I had offer'd to give her; Ask'd her what she would give me; She said she could not Change her Condition: She had said so from the beginning; could not be so far from her Children, the Lecture. Quoted the Apostle Paul affirming that a single Life was better than a Married. I answer'd That was for the present Distress. Said she had not pleasure in things of that nature as formerly: I said, you are the fitter to make me a Wife. If she held in that mind, I must go home and bewail my Rashness in

making more haste than good Speed. However, considering the Supper, I desired her to be within next Monday night, if we liv'd so long. Assented. She charg'd me with saying, that she must put away Juno, if she came to me: I utterly deny'd it, it never came in my heart; yet she insisted upon it; saying it came in upon discourse about the Indian woman that obtained her Freedom this Court. About 10. I said I would not disturb the good orders of her House, and came away. She not seeming pleas'd with my Coming away. . . .

Monday, November 7th. My Son pray'd in the Old Chamber. . . . Twas on the Account of my Courtship. I went to Mad. Winthrop; found her rocking her little Katee in the Cradle. I excus'd my Coming so late (near Eight). She set me an arm'd Chair and Cusheon; and so the Cradle was between her arm'd Chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my Almonds; She did not eat of them as before; but laid them away; I said I came to enquire whether she had alter'd her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, Thereabouts. I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think that she loved me: She said she had a great respect for me. I told her, I had made her an offer, without asking any advice; she had so many to advise with, that twas a hindrance. The Fire was come to one short Brand besides the Block, which Brand was set up in end; at last it fell to pieces, and no Recruit was made: She gave me a Glass of Wine. I think I repeated again that I would go home

and bewail my Rashness in making more haste than good Speed. I would endeavour to contain myself, and not go on to solicit her to do that which she could not Consent to. Took leave of her. As came down the steps she bid me have a Care. Treated me Courteously. Told her she had enter'd the 4th year of her Widowhood. I had given her the News-Letter before: I did not bid her draw off her Glove as sometime I had done. Her Dress was not so clean as somtime it had been. Jehovah jireh!

Midweek, 9^r 9th Dine at Brother Stoddard's: were so kind as to enquire of me if they should invite Madam Winthrop; I answer'd No. Thank'd my Sister Stoddard for her Courtesie. . . . Had a noble Treat. At night our Meeting was at Widow Belknap's. . . . She sent her servant home with me with a Lantern. Madam Winthrop's Shutters were open as I pass'd by.³⁸³

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November 11th Went not to Madam Winthrop's. This is the 2^d Withdraw.³⁸⁴

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[no date] About the middle of December [1720] Madam Winthrop made a Treat for her Children; Mr. [Joseph] Sewall, Prince, Willoughby: I knew nothing of it; but the same day abode in the Council Chamber for fear of the Rain, and din'd alone upon Kilby's Pyes and good Beer.³⁸⁵

³⁸³Ibid., pp. 273-276.

³⁸⁴Ibid., p. 276.

³⁸⁵Ibid., p. 277.

The story is not quite ended. He still noted her absence at lecture³⁸⁶ and was sensitive to imagined slights where she was concerned.³⁸⁷ In the summer of 1725 she fell ill and Sewall came to the sick chamber: "I told her I found my Son coming to her [Joseph, that is, on a ministerial visit] and took the Opportunity to come with him. She thank'd me kindly. . . . At coming I said, I kiss your hand Madame (her hand felt very dry)."³⁸⁸ Two months later she died. Sewall was one of the bearers at her funeral.

Shortly after the break-down in his negotiations with Madam Winthrop, Sewall wrote to his friend Jeremiah Dummer asking his "Prayers that GOD would . . . yet again provide such a good Wife for me [as the recently departed Abigail], that I may be able to say, I have obtained Favour of the LORD. . . ."³⁸⁹ A few months later (June, 1721) he wrote to the Rev. Mr. Woodbridge at Hartford:

My dater Hannah is grievously fetter'd by Lameness; has not gon out of doors since last December was two years: So that I am left with my House-keeper, Mrs. Lydia Kay; which is disagreeable to me. I remember when I was going from school at Newbury, I have sometime met your Sisters Martha, and Mary, at the end of Mrs. Noyes's Lane, coming

³⁸⁶Ibid., p. 281, entry for February 16, 1720/1.

³⁸⁷Ibid., p. 345, entry for December 6, 1724: ". . . Deacon Cheekly Deliver'd the [communion] Cup first to Madam Winthrop, and then gave me a Tankard. 'Twas humiliation to me. . . ."

³⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 360-361, entry for June 15, 1725.

³⁸⁹Letter-Book, II, 122-123.

from their Schoole at Chandler's lane, in their Hanging Sleeves; and have had the pleasure of Speaking with them: And I could find in my heart to speak with Mrs. Martha again, now I my self am reduc'd to my Hanging Sleeves [i.e., "now that I am in my second childhood"]. The truth is, I have little Occasion for a Wife, but for the sake of Modesty, and to cherish me in my advanced years (I was born March 28, 1652) Methinks I could venture to lay my Weary head in her Lap, if it might be brought to pass upon Honest Conditions. You know your Sister's Age, and Disposition, and Circumstances, better than I doe. I should be glad of your Advice in my Fluctuations.³⁹⁰

Nothing arriving from this quarter, he set upon the Widow Ruggles at Brookline, one of those who had entered into his speculations three years before.³⁹¹ She expressed her "inability to be Servicable," however, and when Sewall pressed his case finally told him that she would entertain him only if he would "solicit her no more; or to that effect."³⁹² This was in the summer. The following January (1721/22) he made an "Epistolary Visit" to Widow Gibbs at Newton, asking her at once if she would be willing to marry him.³⁹³ Upon receiving a reply which seemed to suggest that the climate at Newton was favorable, he arranged for a coach and set out. On this first visit he

³⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 133-134, letter dated June 1.

³⁹¹Diary, III, 174-175, entry for March 7, 1717/18.

³⁹²Ibid., pp. 290, 291, entries for July 15 and August 3, 1721.

³⁹³Ibid., p. 299, letter dated January 12.

limited himself to compliments (" . . . told her . . . she writ incomparably well . . .") and gifts ("a Quire of Paper to write upon . . . a good Leather Inkhorn, a stick of Sealing Wax . . . 200. Wafers in a little Box," shillings to the servants, cakes to the children).³⁹⁴ On the second--

Spake of the proposals I had intimated per Mr. H. Gibbs; for her Sons to be bound to save me harmless as to her Administration; and to pay me £100. provided their Mother died before me: I to pay her £50. per annum during her Life, if I left her a Widow. She said 'twas hard, she knew not how to have her children bound to pay that Sum; she might dye in a little time. Mr. [John] Cotton [her son-in-law, minister at Newton],³⁹⁵ whom she call'd, spake to the same purpose. . . . I said I was peremptory as to the indemnifying Bond; Offer'd to take up with that alone, and allow her £40. per annum. . . . She said she would consider of it: I said, I would also Consider. Afterward she excus'd her speaking to me. I suppose she meant the word Hard. Carried her a pound of Glaz'd Almonds, and a Duz. Meers['] Cakes; Two bottles of Canary. . . . Had a very good Legg of Pork, and a Turkey for Dinner. Mrs. Gibbs help'd me on with my Coat at Coming away; and stood in the Front door till the Coach mov'd, then I pull'd

³⁹⁴Ibid., p. 300, entry for January 19, 1721/22.

³⁹⁵Ibid., p. 306, editors' note. Widow Gibbs' first husband was the son of Robert Gibbs, a wealthy Boston merchant, which no doubt accounts for there once more being the dickering over terms.

off my Hat, and she Curtesied. I had moved to be published next Thursday; to carry in our names to Col. Checkley [town clerk of Boston].³⁹⁶

Though publication of the banns was delayed a week while the parties dickered over terms of the settlement,³⁹⁷ agreement was finally reached (children to be responsible for her former debts, she to receive forty pounds a year in case she outlived him); on March 1 "S. S. and M.G. were Out-published"³⁹⁸ (i.e., the necessary fourteen days had expired); and on March 29, 1722, they were married by the Rev. William Cooper.³⁹⁹

Sewall was very happy in his third wife, finding her "a great Blessing," especially in caring for his daughter Hannah, "whoes Legg she dress'd once a day at least; To do which required a great deal of diligence, Skill, and Courage."⁴⁰⁰

When Hannah's painful, calamity-ridden life finally came to an end in the summer of 1724, the next patient requiring

³⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 300-301, entry for January 26, 1721/22. Ibid., p. 305, editors' note: "The law required publication by asking banns at three public meetings, or by public posting for fourteen days, besides the entering of the parties' names with the town clerk at least fifteen days before the marriage, and procuring a certificate of publication."

³⁹⁷Ibid., p. 301, entry for January 31; ibid., pp. 302, 303, 304, 305, entries for February 2, 6, 10, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, and 26 or 27.

³⁹⁸Ibid., p. 305.

³⁹⁹Ibid., p. 306. For the business of their getting settled, see ibid., entries for April 1, 2, 3, and 15.

⁴⁰⁰Letter-Book, II, 146, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated November 20, 1722; ibid., p. 160, letter to Jonathan Dickinson dated February 22, 1723/24; ibid., p. 162, memorandum of letter to Solomon Stoddard dated March 14, 1723/4; ibid., p. 180, letter to Alice Dummer dated December 14, 1724.

nurse's care was Sewall himself, who began now to find his "locomotive faculty . . . very much enfeebled."⁴⁰¹ He had lost "many . . . Organs of Music . . . Fore-Teeth, both upper and nether,"⁴⁰² a fact which, he says, "does . . . give me warning that I must shortly resign my Head: the Lord help me to do it cheerfully."⁴⁰³ The "Lisping Language" of his grandchildren likewise told him that he "had need to provide to remove to a better Country."⁴⁰⁴ He who had so rarely known infirmity and sickness was now burdened with "disorders of [the] Back . . . weak Hands, and . . . feeble Knees."⁴⁰⁵ One by one, against the protests of colleagues and friends, he resigned his public offices, quickened in his resolve to do so by an "Extraordinary Sickness of Flux and Vomiting the night after the 27. July [1728]. . . ."⁴⁰⁶

In one capacity or another he had spent half a century in the public life of Massachusetts. Now, he said, "it is high time for me to be favoured with some Leisure, that I

⁴⁰¹Ibid., p. 211, letter to Edward Taylor dated August 27, 1726

⁴⁰²Ibid., p. 105, letter to Edward Taylor dated February 16, 1719/20.

⁴⁰³Diary, III, 283, entry for March 5, 1720/1.

⁴⁰⁴Letter-Book, II, 213, letter to Samuel Storke dated September 30, 1726.

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., p. 262, letter to Samuel Mather dated March 6, 1728/9

⁴⁰⁶Ibid., p. 249, memorandum of letter to Rev. Mr. Moody dated August 16, 1728. The process of resignation took several years. See, for example, the Diary, III, 357-358, entries for May 27, 28, 29, 31, 1725; ibid., p. 359, entry for June 3, 1725; Letter-Book, II, 183-184, letter to Lt. Gov. William Dummer and the Council dated June 4, 1725; Diary, III, 382, entry for March 11, 1726; Letter-Book, II, 247, letter to Governor Burnet dated July 29, 1728; ibid., pp. 257-258, letter to Samuel Partridge dated November 5, 1728.

may prepare for the entertainments of another World.⁴⁰⁷ The next year (1729) he felt himself "mouldering down apace,"⁴⁰⁸ and in December he took to his bed.

As the end drew near, his son Joseph made the following entries in his own diary:

Dec 26. My father seems to grow weaker. At different times He repeated to me the Creed and the Lord's prayr. Mention'd that text, If any man Sin, we have an advocate with the Father. When ask'd what wee should Pray for-- Answer, to this Effect, that he might follow the Captain of his Salvation. In general, he speaks but little.

Dec 29. I read to him 11 John 23-27 &c. My Father took notice and spake of what was read--that we were beholden to Martha. Spake of the brazen Serpent--of looking to Jesus--He the only remedy.

Jan 1. I was call'd up about 4 cl. (or something before) found my Father dying. He seem'd to enjoy the use of his reason. I pray'd with him, then Mr. Cooper. C[ousin] Chauncy came in and Pray'd. My Honoured and dear Father Expir'd about 35 minutes after 5 A.M. Near the time in which 29 year agoe, He was so affected upon the Beginning of the Century, when he made those Verses to usher in the New Year, Once more our God vouchsafe to shine.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷Letter-Book, II, 247, letter to Governor Burnet dated July 29, 1728.

⁴⁰⁸Ibid., p. 268, letter to Samuel Browne dated May 26, 1729.

⁴⁰⁹I quote from Hill, History of the Old South Church, I, 443. the manuscript of this diary having been destroyed by fire. See the comment in Sibley, V, 390.

On January 7, "a fair cold Day,"⁴¹⁰ he was "honourably Inter'd" in the tomb whither he had accompanied so many in life.⁴¹¹ Next day at the South Church, Mr. Prince took the text for his Thursday lecture from the seventh chapter of first Samuel, verses fifteen through seventeen: "And Samuel judged Israel all the Days of his Life; And he went from Year to Year in Circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mispah, and judged Israel in all those Places: And his Return was to Ramah, for there was his House, and there He judged Israel, and there He built an Altar to the LORD."⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰The son's diary, loc. cit.

⁴¹¹See the obituary notice in the News-Letter for January 8, 1730. He was the thirty-first occupant of this tomb that had originally been built for John Hull in 1683 (Letter-Book, II, 310-312, entries from Sam junior's Memorandum Book). According to Crawford, Old Boston, p. 280, "he sleeps in death in the Old Granary Burying Ground almost on the very spot where he long ago had his home."

⁴¹²Quoted from the published sermon.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

For many years after his death fame was unusually kind to Samuel Sewall. Entering into popular legend, he lived in men's minds as one who in his youth had married great fortune and who, in his old age, became a figure of venerable and almost godlike mien. The fortunate youth was presented in Hawthorne's story of "The Pine-Tree Shillings," the venerable old man in Whittier's "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall"—

Stately and slow, with thoughtful air,
His black cap hiding his whitened hair,
Walks the Judge of the Great Assise,
Samuel Sewall, the good and wise.
His face with lines of firmness wrought,
He wears the look of a man unbought,
Who swears to his hurt and changes not;
Yet touched and softened nevertheless
With the grace of Christian gentleness;
The face that a child would climb to kiss;
True and tender and brave and just,
That man might honor and woman trust.¹

How firmly established was this Sewall of flattering legend is shown in the fact that a century and a half after the all-too-human creature which was the actual man had been laid

¹Vol. I of Works.

in his tomb, so distinguished a critic as Moses Coit Tyler wrote in these glowing terms: "A strong, gentle, and great man was Samuel Sewall, great by almost every measure of greatness,--moral courage, honor, benevolence, learning, eloquence, intellectual force and breadth and brightness. . . . He was a man built, every way, after a large pattern. By his great wealth, his great offices, his learning, his strong sense, his wit, his warm human sympathy, his fearlessness, his magnanimity, he was a visible potentate among men. . . ." ² It is significant that this estimate was written shortly before the diary appeared in print.

The reason of the Sewall legend is not difficult to understand. Though hardly "a visible potentate among men," he was, in the twilight years of the theocracy, a visible embodiment of what he admiringly termed "the first ways of N. E.," antiquis moribus, prisca fide. ³ The sermon which the Reverend Mr. Prince preached on the occasion of his death contains, as we should expect, much of the usual exaggeration of praise, but he doubtless described what Sewall had come to represent to the men of his day when, in his closing words, he referred to him as "this venerable Judge of our Country whom the God of our Fathers was pleased to raise up and con-

²History, II, 99.

³See the Letter-Book, I, 215, letter to Nathaniel Higginson dated November 18, 1699; Diary, II, 56, entry for May 28, 1702; ibid., p. 410, entry for December 9, 1713; ibid., III, 147, entry for November 15, 1717.

tinue to the present Generation, as a memorable Instance of our primitive Glory. . . ."⁴ Last of the old Charter magistrates, last of those originally appointed to the Council of the Province, respected member of the highest court in the land for as long almost as anyone then living could remember, he was as one from a more heroic time, a legend while he was yet alive.

Nineteenth-century America, more generally interested in the cultivation of national legend in the name of patriotism than in the examination of it in the name of science, was content, for the most part, to assign Sewall to a minor but exalted place in its mythology of early New England. This was ended by the publication of the diary (1878-82); for here were the facts, in the face of which the Sewall of romantic legend disappeared, perforce. Among New England's

⁴A Sermon, p. 35. In the obituary notice which appeared in the News-Letter for January 8, 1750, his character was summed up "in this Epitome":

. . . He was universally and greatly reverenc'd, esteemed, and beloved among us for his eminent Piety, Learning and Wisdom; his grave and venerable Aspect and Carriage; his instructive, affable and chearful Conversation; his strict Integrity and regard to Justice; his extraordinary tender and compassionate Heart; his neglect of the World; his abundant Liberality; his catholick and publick Spirit; his critical acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures in their inspir'd Originals; his Zeal for the Purity of instituted Worship; his constant, diligent, and reverent Attendance on it, both in the Church and Family; his Love for the Churches, People and Ministers; the civil and religious Interests of this Country; his tender Concern for the aboriginal Natives; and as the Crown of all, His Moderation, Peacableness and Humility; which being all united in the same Person, and in an high Degree and Station, rendered Him one of the most shining Lights and Honours of the Age and Land wherein He lived, and worthy of a very distinguishing regard in the New English histories.

fonder sons, however, he continued to be dealt with in a manner more often reverential than realistic.⁵ It remained, appropriately enough, for the iconoclastic twenties of the present century to produce an estimate in which not only is the last shred of any lingering myth removed but a fresh one--Sewall the "embodiment of Defoe's merchant ideal"--is put in its place.

As is well known, Professor Parrington is provocative even when the facts are not with him, and when, in his chapter on Sewall just referred to, he engages in remarks not concerned with the demonstration of his thesis, he is both illuminating and apt. Speaking, for example, of the diary,

⁵Goddard, "The Press and Literature of the Provincial Period," in Winsor ed., Memorial History of Boston (Boston, 1882), II, 417, declares him to have been "the light of his generation. His strong intellect and noble soul would have won distinction in any age." Ellis, An Address (Boston, 1865), p. 5, says that "not a line nor a word in [the] records reveals anything but a pure and unstained soul, a most tender and scrupulous conscience, a loving and childlike heart, a walk in life spent and consecrated as under the All-Seeing and Holy Eye." There are numerous such statements to be found in the writings of the time. See, for example, Hubbard's statement in his review of the first volume of Sewall's Letter-Book, Nation, XLIII (1886), 119; Weeden, Economic and Social History (New York, 1890), I, 427; and Chamberlain, Samuel Sewall and the World He Lived in (Boston, 1897), passim. The last named work, despite its pious author's honest intent, partakes largely of the nature of a sentimental genuflection.

I find two statements of the time that are surprisingly, even exaggeratedly, antagonistic in tone. Winsor, in an editorial note to the Memorial History (Boston, 1882), I, 540, says: "It must be confessed that it is not easy to read this diary without pity and disgust mingling with amusement and with interest. . . . There seems to have been in Sewall a concentration of all that there was in his age repulsive to our modern education." Davis, History of the Judiciary (Boston, 1900), p. 61, finds himself "impressed . . . with the conviction that he, Sewall, was a narrow, bitter and unrelenting theologian to whom can be accorded only the justification and defence which the inquisition of Spain might have claimed."

he says: ". . . [It] is a fascinating book . . . the one among all the books of the time that is still quick with life after these two hundred years and more. In it . . . we can trace the change that was coming to Massachusetts in the transition from a theocracy to a royal colony; and we can feel the strong emotions which that change aroused. The dry facts of history take on flesh and blood; forgotten names become living men walking the streets of Boston or arguing in the Council Chamber; Samuel Sewall himself becomes more real to us than our own contemporaries."⁶ These words are very right. If one were to add to them, it would be to say that what Sewall was, in terms of either fact or myth, is much less important than one thing which he did, namely keep a diary. Whatever else he did, whatever else he wrote, whatever has been said or written about him --all are significant primarily as they illuminate this unique record of life in Puritan New England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

⁶Colonial Mind, p. 38.

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III. Items by Sewall, printed and in manuscript.

A. Poetry. Though the items have all been freshly checked and minor additions and corrections made, this section is substantially the bibliography of Sewall's poetry which Harold Jantz has included in "The First Century of New England Verse." Trivial as much of it is, the whole affords an idea of the character and extent of Sewall's activity as a maker of verses. In order that it may better do so, explanatory and de-

scriptive matter has frequently been inserted.

"The Humble Springs of Stately Sandwich Beach." 6 lines. Diary, I, 27, entry for October 23, 1676. Revised version in the Boston News-Letter for March 23, 1723; repr. in the Diary, III, 329, editors' note.

"O great Menasseh, were it not for thee." 2 lines. Diary, I, 37, entry for March 6, 1677.

"Mrs. Mehitable Holt. A Person of Early Piety." (An aunt of Sewall's who died in England, September 30, 1677.) 6 lines. Broadside at the Mass. Hist. Soc. (probably printed at Boston, 1689-90) and in the Sewall Memorandum Book at the N. Y. Hist. Soc.

"Si Christum Discis, nihil est si caetera discis." 2 lines Latin. Printed book plate of around 1690. At the Mass. Hist. Soc. and in the Memorandum Book at the N. Y. Hist. Soc.

"Mrs. Judith Hull." On Sewall's mother-in-law, who died at Boston, June 22, 1695. 1. 10 line broadside at the Boston Public Library. 2. 12 line broadside at the Am. Antiq. Soc. Repr. in Am. Antiq. Soc., Trans., III (1857), 272.

"Causa parata mihi est, et vitae, et mortis, ibidem." 4 lines Latin. Diary, I, 426, entry for May 18, 1696. Lines written on being "grievously stung to find a sweet desirable Son dead [the thirteenth child, stillborn]. . . ."

"To be engraven on a Dial." 4 lines. Commonplace Book at Mass. Hist. Soc., fol. 112. 1690's. Printed in Jantz'

"The First Century of New England Verse," p. 311.

"To horses, swine, neat cattle, sheep, and deer." 2 lines. Diary, I, 479, entry for May 10, 1698. Printed in Joshua Coffin, The History of Newbury (Boston, 1845), p. 166.

"Ecce q̄ antiphrasin vocitaris, Ductor Arundel." 4 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 245, letter to Josias Crow dated October 18, 1700. He sends to his friend "a Taste of my Daughters Bride-Cake, wrapt up in two or three Latin Verses."

"Upon Mr. Samuel Willard, his first coming into the Assembly, and Praying, after a long and dangerous Fit of Sickness; November 21. 1700." 1. 8 lines. Diary, II, 26, entry for November 21, 1700. 2. 3 four-line stanzas. Broadside printed 1700 and 1720. Repr. in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, II (1885), 42-43.

"Wednesday, January 1. 1701. A little before Break-a-day, at Boston of the Massachusetts." 1. 3 four-line stanzas. Diary, II, 23, entry for January 2, 1700/1, and broadside at Mass. Hist. Soc. 2. 6 four-line stanzas. Broadside at the Boston Public Library and Am. Antiq. Soc.; appended to Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies (Boston, 1713). Repr. in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, I (1884-85), 14.

Epitaph on his granddaughter Sarah Sewall. Apparently lost. Mentioned in the Diary, II, 69, entry for December 8, 1702, as having been sent to Richard Henchman.

"Superannuated Squier, Wigg'd and powder'd with pretence." 4 lines. Diary, II, 79, entry for June 8, 1703. Satire against John Saffin, opponent of Sewall in the anti-slavery issue, not Governor Dudley as indicated in the index to the Diary, III, 568

"Mitto tibi Psaltem CHRISTUM et sua Regna canentem."

1. 4 lines Latin. Diary, II, 136, entry for August 24, 1705.
2. 6 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 314, memorandum and editors' note. The verses were sent to Richard Henschman with a copy of Calvin on the Psalms.

"Oceani Fluctus Anna moderante superbos." 2 lines Latin. Diary, II, 137, entry for September 10, 1705, and Letter-Book, I, 314, letter to Cotton Mather dated September 10, 1705. An English version in the Diary, II, 140, entry for October 25, 1705, substitutes Christ for Anna.

"Roma simul coelebsque ruunt in tempore Petrus." 2 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 318, letter to Richard Henschman dated October 13, 1705. Sent to Henschman for "examination and censure."

"Roma inhonesta jacet, Sanctae gaudete puellae." 2 lines Latin. Diary, II, 140, entry for October 15, 1705. Revised and included in a letter to Governor Saltonstall, Letter-Book, II, 139, letter dated July 16, 1722.

"Desine Belshazzar Temple Omnipotentis abuti." 2 lines Latin. Diary, II, 141, first week of November, 1705.

"Sound! Sound! the Jubilean Trumpet sound." 2 lines English. Diary, II, 141, first week of November, 1705.

"On the burning of the Quebec Cross." 1. 2 lines Latin and 4 line English paraphrase, Diary, II, 143, entry for November 25, 1705. 2. 4 lines Latin. Diary, II, 150, entry for December 24, 1705. Printed in the Boston News-Letter, December 24, 1705, titled "In Obitum Crucis."

"Tom Child had often painted Death." 4 lines English. Diary, II, 170, entry for November 10, 1706, the day of Child's death.

"Feria Septima, Martij 8^o 1707. Anno Regni Annae Reginae Angliae &c. Sexto." 2 lines Latin, 4 lines English. Diary, II, 181, entry for March 8, 1707.

"Feria Sexta; Quintilis quarto, 1707." Broadside, apparently lost. See the Diary, II, 191, entry for July 4, 1707.

"Deo Servatori." 4 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 350, memorandum for July 14, 1707. Written in "Thankfull Remembrance" of Ipswich "and out of Respect to Mr. Jaffrey's Memory."

"Upon the Reverend Mr. Francis Goodhue, who . . . was surprised with a Fever at Rehoboth, and there died Sept. 15, 1707, Aetatis 29." 8 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter, February 28, 1723. Repr. Diary, III, 321, editors' notes.

"Verses on Mr. Clap." Mentioned, Diary, II, 243, entry for November 20, 1708. No copy known; possibly not by Sewall.

"Stylo Juliano, Bostoniae Novanglorum Feria Septima, Decembris 17, 1709." 1. 2 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 387, memorandum. Written inside the cover of a Commentary on the Book of Job presented to Charles Sucre, Governor of Carthage, then resident in Boston. 2. 2 lines English "Upon the same Subject" (ibid.).

"In deditionem Castellii Portus Regalis Imperatori Excellentissimo Francisco Nicholsono Armigero, Octob. 2. 1710." 1. 16 lines Latin. Letter-Book, I, 399-400, inserted. 2. 20 lines Latin. See ibid., p. 400, editors' note.

3. 22 lines English, titled "Verses on the Capture of Port Royal." See ibid., p. 406, editors' note.

"Vive, doce, regna, semper, mihi CHRISTE Sacerdos."

2 lines Latin. Diary, II, 311, entry for May 16, 1711.

"Left Jonathan [a nephew at Salem] my Distich transcribed by him at my bidding." Appended to verses addressed to Sewall by Rev. Nehemiah Hobart. Broadside repr. in the Letter-Book, I, 315, editors' note.

"Auris, mens, oculus, manus, os, pes, menere fungi."

2 lines Latin. Diary, II, 389, entry for March 8, 1711/12.

". . . gave Capt. Tuthill Mr. Tompson's, Heaven the best Country, with my Distich." See ibid., III, 392, entry for September 10, 1728, in which he tells of dreaming that his watch was stolen, on which these lines were engraved.

"Erroresque meos mihi condonate perosos." 2 lines Latin.

Diary, II, entry for December 20, 1712. Lines added to the verses of Benjamin Larnell.

"To the Rev'd Mr. John Sparhawk on the Birth of his Son, August or September 1713." 12 lines English, 2 lines Latin. On an end page of the "Magunkaquog" Journal; printed by the editors of the Diary, III, 408.

"Imbres nocturni decorant Regalia Lucis." 2 lines Latin.

Diary, III, 22, entry for October 5, 1714. Distich left for Mr. Stanton "Gone a Gunning."

"Isaac's withdrawn; my Laughter's done." 5 lines English.

"Magunkaquog" Journal under date of March 31, 1715. On the death of his fellow judge and Councillor, Isaac Addington.

"Lines made to direct me in signing the Pound-plate."

3 lines Latin. Diary, III, 49, entry for July 5, 1715.

On the death of his sister, Mrs. Jane Gerrish, who died at Newbury, January 29, 1717. 4 lines Latin. In an interleaved almanac at the Mass. Hist. Soc. Printed in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, VIII (1893), 214.

"A small Vial of Tears brought from the Funeral of JOHN WINTHROP, a very goodly Child. 10 line broadside at Mass. Hist. Soc. Letter-Book, II, 70, letter to the father dated April 8, 1717.

"Anglica Jana jacet germanis flenda duobus." 6 lines Latin. Letter-Book, II, 84, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated January 25, 1717/18. He was moved by a consideration of the fact that "how my Brother, Mr. John Sewall, and Four Sisters and my Honoured Parents ly Buried at Newbury."

"What signify these Locks, and Bolts, and Bars?" 2 lines English. Letter-Book, II, 84, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated January 25, 1717/18. On the death of his wife Hannah.

"Salem, Dec. 13, 1717. A specimen of New English Celibacy." 6 lines English. Boston News-Letter for February 13, 1721. Repr. in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, III (1887), 380-381, and in N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg., XXIV (1870), 292.

"Nocte viatori comitem nix candida Lumen." 2 lines Latin. Letter-Book, II, 123, letter to Jeremiah Dummer dated December 13, 1720. Imitation of a distich of Ovid.

"Upon the drying up of that Ancient River, THE RIVER MERRYMAK." 36 line broadside at Mass. Hist. Soc., dated

January 15, 1719/20. Repr. in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., ser. 2, IX (1894), 8-10. See the Diary, III, 240, entry for January 17, 1719/20.

"Upon the downfall of the Papists at Black Friars, London, October the twenty sixth, 1683." 14 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter for October 24, 1723. Repr. in the Letter-Book, II, 141, editors' note.

"Upon the River Merrimack." 2 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter, February 21, 1723. Repr. in the Diary, III, 321, editors' note.

"Decembris 2. 1722." 2 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter, February 21, 1723. Repr. in the Diary, III, 321, editors' note. On Daniel Rogers, drowned in Black Rock Cove, December 1, 1722. See Sibley, III, 358-359.

"Januarii 14, 15, 16. [1722/23.]" 4 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter, February 21, 1723. Repr. in the Diary, III, 321, editors' note. On the recovery of Roger's body. See Sibley, loc. cit.

"Upon the Reverend Mr. Samuel Pierpont and Mr. Benjamin Gibson, learned and worthy Ministers, their dying in one and the same night." 8 lines Latin. Boston News-Letter, April 11, 1723. Repr. in the Diary, III, 322, editors' note.

"Boston, Feb. 1. 1723/4." 2 lines Latin. Diary, III, 330, entry for February 4, 1723/4, and Boston News-Letter for February, 6, 1723/4.

"Dum Cererem et Bacchum meditaris, Ralle Sacerdos." 2 lines Latin. Letter-Book, II, 174, letter to Governor Salton-

stall dated September 5, 1724. On Father Ralle and the defeat of the Kennebec Indians.

"Feria Quinta, Novembris duodecimo, 1724." 5 lines Latin. Letter-Book, II, 178, letter to Edmund Quincy dated November 12, 1724. A "short Epithalamium" on the marriage of Quincy's daughter.

"Nos simul occidimus, nostra recidente corona." 2 lines Latin. Letter-Book, II, 193, letter to John Winthrop dated January 4, 1725/6. On the death of his brother Stephen Sewall of Salem.

"Three Sams, two Johns, and one good Tom." 2 lines English. Diary, III, 375, second week of April, 1726. On the ball evers of Mary Coney.

"In Remembrance of Mr. Samuel Hirst." Sewall's grandson, who died January 14, 1726/7. 24 lines English. Broadside at Mass. Hist. Soc.

B. Prose. Including ledger accounts, memorandum books, etc.

Notes of sermons. 11 vols. (5 at Boston Public Library, 6 at Mass. Hist. Soc.). From May 1672. Small, 4 X 6 inch manuscript volumes, some bound in calf and some in vellum, with about 150 close-packed, double pages of notes in each.

Memoranda in interleaved almanacs. From 1673. The editors of the Diary, I, 292, note, state that "Sewall made notes in the Almanacs for each year, perhaps as aids to his more extended diary. . . ." The editors have included in notes to the regular diary "such extracts as served to increase [the] text." Some of these memoranda also appear in N. E. Hist. and

Gen. Reg., VII (1853), 205, VIII (1854), 314. Numerous of these slim 4 X 6 inch volumes at Mass. Hist. Soc.

Diary. From December 3, 1673 (first regular entry) to October 13, 1729 (last regular entry), lacking the years 1677-85 as the result of a volume's being lost. Printed in Sewall Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 5, V-VII (1878-82), of which it is the principal item. The manuscript diary is in four volumes, for 1672-77, 1685-1703, 1703-12, and 1715-20, respectively. The volumes are 6 X 9 inches and bound in calf, excepting the 1703-12 volume, which is approximately 9 X 14 inches and bound in vellum. Like all the Sewall manuscripts, their condition is excellent. At Mass. Hist. Soc. An abridged edition is Samuel Sewall's Diary, ed. Mark Van Doren, American Bookshelf Series (New York, 1927).

"Diary and Commonplace book, 1675--" (so listed at Mass. Hist. Soc.). 8 X 12 inches, bound in vellum. The thing that mainly distinguishes this miscellaneous volume is Sewall's record of meetings with the South Military Company, kept from April, 1661, to April, 1686. The first 26 fol. pages are his accounts for February 11, 1675, to November 26, 1677 (the period of his apprenticeship with John Hull). Other items in the volume are a first draft of the Phaenomena and one of Talitha Cumi, a careful hand copy of Nicholas Noyes' "Reasons Against Wearing of Periwigs," commonplace extracts from sources related to his prophetic inquiries, and copies of letters concerning the same.

"Commonplace Book, 1677 to--" (so listed at Mass. Hist. Soc.). 6 X 8 inches, bound in calf. Scattered diary entries for the years 1677-86 (arranged chronologically and printed, Diary, II, *12-*23), but mainly extracts from books arranged under appropriate heads-- "De Resurrectione mortuorum," "De Ministerio," "De Oratione," "De Sacramentes," "De Infantibus," etc., the diary entries being mostly under "De Omene." At the beginning of the book is written: "Samuel Sewall, his Booke, Decemb. 29, 1677."

Notes of meetings of the Old South Society. From January, 1681. 3 X 5 inches, calf bound, bearing the initials, "S. S." A note by the Rev. Samuel Sewall of Furlington, Mass., in the end pages and dated 1830, describes it as "a Record of Texts of Scriptures, and of Questions deduced therefrom, discussed . . . at Private or Conference Meetings of Members of the Old South Society, Boston . . . held at each others houses in turn; and generally on Wednesday evening of each week. . . ." At Mass. Hist. Soc.

Letter, "For the Reverend Mr. Increase Mather, in Boston," dated March 23, 1682/3. Mather Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls. ser. 4, VIII (1869), 516-517.

Bill of Ladings Book. 5 X 8 inches, bound in calf. Bills from December 6, 1693 (John Hull died the preceding October 1) through March 5, 1698, at which time the book, having pages still unused, was taken over by James Torten. At Mass. Hist. Soc.

Ledger. Marked on the cover, "Samuel Sewall His Ledger." Bound in vellum; 200 fol. pages. Loose pages at the beginning are by John Hull. Sewall entries begin after Hull's death in 1683 and continue until shortly before his own death almost half a century later. At N. E. Hist. and Gen. Soc. Library.

Letter, "For his much esteemed Friend, Mr. Cotton Mather, at Boston," dated December 25, 1684. Mather Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 4, VIII (1868), 516. Repr. in the Diary, I, 58, editors' note. Letter "under several heads" on "why the Heart of America may not be the seat of the New Jerusalem."

Letters to his uncle Stephen Dummer, dated simply 1684/5, and to his uncle Nathaniel Dummer, dated February 2, 1684/5, both in England. N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg., IX (1855), 287-288. Concerns his being an actual compositor of books for the press.

Letter-Book. One volume manuscript at Mass. Hist. Soc., 8 X 12 inches, vellum-bound, begun in February, 1685/6, and continued to September, 1729, a few months before his death. Miscellaneous matter at the beginning of the volume dates from as early as 1672. Printed in Sewall Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 5, I-II (1886-37).

Account Book. Entries for the period March 30, 1688, to April 28, 1692. Like the "Magunkaquog" Court Journal, it is a 4 X 6 inch, vellum-bound, pocket book with a clasp binding. Not ledger accounts, but individual items of "paid and rec'd." Extracts in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., LII (1919), 334-340. At Mass. Hist. Soc.

Letter, "For the Reverend Mr. Increase Mather, in London," dated July 24, 1688. Mather Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 4, VIII (1868), 517. Repr. in the Diary, I, 231-232, editors' note. Concerns Sewall's course in the matter of Andros' Writs of Intrusion.

Journal of Voyage to England. November 22, 1688, to November 29, 1689. 3 X 8 inches, bound in calf. Printed as a regular part of the Diary, I, 236-291. At Mass. Hist. Soc.

Letter of Sewall and Isaac Addington to Col. John Pincheon of Springfield about plans for raising troops against the "Maques and Sineques," dated May 2, 1690. In Pincheon Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc., Colls., ser. 2, VIII (1819), 238-243.

Letter to unnamed addressee dated May 21, 1690, concerning arrangements against the French and Indians. Diary, I, 320-321, editors' note.

Letter to Nehemiah Grew dated January, 1690/1, in "Letters of Samuel Lee and Samuel Sewall Relating to New England and the Indians," ed. G. L. Kittredge, Col. Soc. of Mass., Pubs., XIV (1913), 152-153.

"Memorandum Book." (So listed at N. Y. Hist. Soc.) 74 pp., 8vo. On the manuscript title page is written, "Samuel Sewall his book, August the 15. 1695," and the material bears dates in 1695-96. Some miscellaneous material (e.g., exercises in arithmetic), but notable for its collection of New England poetry of the period. The first part of this collection consists of eighteen "tributes of tears" and "lamentations" of the kind Sewall himself specialized in, by Benjamin Tompson, Thomas

Wally, William Adams, and unidentified authors. One, "Mrs. Mervitable Holt. A parson of early Piety," is by Sewall. The second part of the collection is secular and has a particular interest for that reason, though as poetry the pieces it contains are feeble enough.

Diary fragment of March 15, 1696/7, on the meaning and method of name-changing among the Indians. In Diary, III, 399, editors' note.

Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica Ad Aspectum Novi Orbis configurata. Or some few Lines towards a description of the New Heaven As it makes to those who Stand upon the New Earth . . ., Boston, 1697. 4to, 64 pp. Second edition, Boston, 1727.

The Selling of Joseph, Boston, 1700. 4to, 3 pp. Repr. in Benjamin Lay's All Slave Keepers that keep the Innocent in Bondage, Apostates, Philadelphia, 1757; G. H. Moore's Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts, New York, 1836; Diary, II, 16-20, editors' note, etc.

Diary fragment on a trip to Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard as a commissioner for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in April, 1702. In N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg., XIV (1860), 15-15, and Diary, III, 397-399, editors' note.

"Computation that the Importation of Negroes is not so possible as that of White Servants," Boston News-Letter, No. 112, June 12, 1706. Attributed to Sewall by E. A. J. Johnson, American Economic Thought in the Seventeenth Century (London,

1932), pp. 20-21. Attribution acceptable only as a reasonable speculation.

"Tuesday, Nov. 25. 1707. The Reasons of my withdrawing my Vote from what was Pass'd in Council, upon Saturday, November the First, relating to an Address offered to her Majesty . . . , "Boston, 1707. Broadside. Repr. in the Diary, II, *111-112. At N. Y. Hist. Soc.

Account book kept as disbursing agent for the Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America. Covers the years 1706-19. 80 page manuscript ledger at Mass. Hist. Soc.

Talitha Cumi, or an Invitation to Women to look after their Inheritance in the Heavenly Mansions. Exists only in unfinished manuscript (see above, "Diary and Commonplace book, 1675--"), but was apparently printed because in the Ledger there is an entry (fol. 182, date of January 15, 1711[?]) which reads: "For printing & folding . . . Talitha Cumi 2. 15. 0." A digest of the piece by George Ellis appears in Mass. Hist. Soc., Proc., XII (1873), 330-334.

Letter to the Reverend Edward Taylor at Westfield, dated June 14, 1712. Copied, say the editors of the diary, "from the fly-leaf of a manuscript volume of theology in the Library at Yale College," and printed, Diary, II, 351-353, editors' note.

Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prothesies . . ., Boston, 1713. 4to, 12 pp.

Journal of Journey to Martha's Vineyard and Circuit Court Journal (listed at Mass. Hist. Soc. as "Diary, Notes of Sermons

etc. 1714-1716 and account book, 1725-29"). 4 X 6 inch, vellum bound and fastened with a clasp, with the words "MAGUNKAQUOG. October 11, 1715" on the cover. It is apparently to this journal that Sewall refers in connection with his trip to the Vineyard, when he says, "See my Journal" (Diary, II, 425, entry for April 5, 1714). The portion that covers his circuit travels is for the period of March, 1714, to July, 1716, and has been partially printed in notes to the Diary, II, 426-440; III, 1-4, 24-25, 400-408. The sermon notes are for sermons heard on the circuit. Items in the "account book" section relate primarily to the handling of the estate of Madam Bridget Usher, for which Sewall was executor.

Probate Journal. Manuscript record of matters handled as judge of probate for the period December 5, 1715, to December 19, 1728. 6 X 8 inch, bound in calf. At Mass. Hist. Soc.

Journal of voyage to Arrowsick and Circuit Court Record, August 1, 1717, to August 17, 1727. 4 X 6 inch, bound in calf. It is to this journal that Sewall refers when he says, "For my Voyage to Arrowsick in Kennebeck River, see my Octavo Paper Book" (Diary, III, 135, entry for July 30, 1717), and, "See my Court-Journal" (ibid., p. 185, entry for May 17, 1718). The volume was acquired by the Mass. Hist. Soc. in 1869 but remained unidentified by the editors of the diary, who say of it: "Not among the books and papers now owned by the . . . Society." Nature of contents much like that of the "MAGUNKAQUOG" volume.

Letter to his son Samuel dated August 26, 1780. In N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg., I (1847), 111-113, and repr. in the Diary, I, xi-xv. Important genealogical information.

A Memorial Relating to the Kennebeck Indians, Boston, 1721. 4to, 3 pp.

Note: There are two items that have been mistakenly attributed to Sewall. The first of these is The Revolution in New England Justified, and the People there vindicated from the Aspersions cast upon them by Mr. John Palmer . . . (Boston, 1691). The fact that a preliminary "To the Reader" is signed by "E. R." and "S. S." has caused such authorities as Whitmore, Andros Tracts, I, 7; Sabin, XI, No. 46751; and Palfrey, III, 514, to ascribe it to Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewall. Except for the fact that it could have been written partly by Sewall, there is no evidence to support the ascription. Strong contrary evidence is as follows: 1. Sewall's role in the revolution against Andros, however sympathetic he may have been, was a passive one. 2. If he did have a hand in so important a piece of work, it is remarkable that nowhere in all his detailed records is there any suggestion of it, a fact which would make this work unique in this respect among the more substantial products of his pen. Washburn, Sketches, p. 123, attributes it to Edward Rawson and Samuel Shrimpton.

The second mistaken attribution is the piece on the question "Whether Trading for Negroes i.e. carrying them out of their own Country into perpetual Slavery, be in it self Unlawful,

and especially contrary to the great Law of CHRISTIANITY?" appearing in The Athenian Oracle, The Second Edition (London, 1704), I, 545-548. Sabin and Evans both ascribe this to Sewall, doubtless because a handwritten note in a contemporary hand at the top of the first page of the copy at the Mass. Hist. Soc. reads: "Capt. Sewall sent the following question over to the Athenian Society." But in the Letter-Book, I, 322-323, letter to Nathanael Byfield dated January 4, 1705/6, Sewall writes: "Sir, you may remember that Mr. Saffin Printed a Letter [of reply] to The Selling of Joseph. I did not trouble the Town with a Reply: but in stead . . . have now reprinted the Sentiments of the Athenian Society, which I had not seen nor heard of, till I saw it in a Book-Sellers Shop last Fall. . . ." See similarly, ibid., p. 326, letter to John Higginson dated April 13, 1706. An unpublished discussion of the matter is contained in a letter by Allyn B. Forbes, Director of the Mass. Hist. Soc., to Frederick P. Goff, Rare Book Collection, the Library of Congress, dated February 11, 1942, a copy of which accompanies the reprint at the Mass. Hist. Soc.

Finally, a reference in Tyler, History, II, 103, to an item by Sewall with the title, "Answers to Queries Respecting America, 1690," presumably refers to the letter to Nehemiah Grew dated January, 1690/1, noted above.