



Editorial

THIS number of the *NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY* focuses upon challenges in New England history. Too often as the British historian T.H. Aston once advised us, historians like to look for crises in the past; and too often, the narratives we develop from our study of them favor why survivors survived or victors succeeded. Yet if, as Oscar Handlin, one of the *QUARTERLY*'s former editors, also told us, that knowing the truth about the past is a means to warn the present, history should probably recognize failures more frequently. Each of our authors chronicle the less successful, and in the process, we discern the utility of knowing the past, of the fragility of enterprises, of fateful choices, of the messiness of human experiences, of unanticipated consequences, and of the arrogance of certitude. In our 2018 Whitehill Prize winning essay, David Como looks at a New England colony that failed, the Company of Husbandmen, and teaches us that Puritan zeal alone was insufficient cause for successful settlement. Strother Roberts's essay on the rise and fall of turpentine production reveals the complicated elements needed for economic success in New England and the Atlantic world. Questioning antebellum scientific assumptions, Madeline Bourque Kearin teaches us to approach the treatment of the mentally ill cautiously and humbly. Finally, lest this issue of the *QUARTERLY* be seen as too preoccupied with failure, Stephen Foster helps us recover the intellectual coherence of late seventeenth-, early eighteenth-century Anglophone Liberals and, in the process, lays bare alternatives to an established New England Way.

Recent scholarship has pointed the way in which we can derive insights from examinations into the contexts and factors

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that doomed colonial projects. David Como and Strother Roberts explore examples of failure that complicate our understandings of early New England settlement. An example of how a significant story can be wrung from fragmentary evidence, our Whitehill Prize essay, David Como's "City on the Other Hill," examines the failed Plough Patent Company of Husbandmen's efforts to settle on a portion of the Ferdinando Gorges grant. Reconstructing the composition of the early settlers and placing them in context, he reveals a community of radical Puritans whose zeal proved insufficient to the task of creating a permanent colony. The essay adds with its discussion of the Plough Patent's interaction with John Winthrop and Massachusetts Bay to our understanding of the complicated nature of Puritan settlement and reminds us of the potential for internal theological division. Strother Roberts in "The Fight for a New England Turpentine Trade" offers us another example of failed enterprise. The vast expanse of pine forests in New England would seem to suggest the limitless resources of the New World and the fulfillment of the promise of a mercantilist system: an essential commodity, turpentine products, that would reduce Britain's dependence upon the Balkans while providing colonists with the means to purchase consumer goods. Like Como, Roberts brings together a range of interrelated factors—the study of global and local markets, the need for specific forms of technical expertise, the environment—to explain the challenges to a viable turpentine industry. In the process, Roberts points out the difficulties of producing various turpentine products and the colonists' early realization of the limited nature of the resources of New England's forests.

That a building's form should follow its function is an architectural concept generally attributed to Louis Sullivan; however, Madeline Bourque Kearin shares with us the way in which the concept predates Sullivan in a story of the construction of the Worcester State Hospital for the Insane. Kearin demonstrates how theories about treating the insane during the nineteenth century rested upon producing a salubrious environment that then was embedded into the physical construction of the hospital. Kearin also shows how form and

theory founded upon assumptions about normative social environments, the complexities of practicing psychiatry, and the reality of overcrowding and having to minimize costs.

One of the ironies of the study of early American religion is that despite the demise of the Puritan hegemony of the Mathers, their critics seemed to have disappeared. In our RECONSIDERATIONS section Stephen Foster, in “Re-reading Liberalism: Omission, Ambiguity, and Anomaly in New England Sermonic Literature,” recovers the thought of the liberal Puritan clergy, the late-seventeenth, early eighteenth-century critics of the New England way, through a more expansive consideration of the coherence of their thought. By expanding his focus beyond the mere printed text of sermons, that is by widening the context in which he reads the sermons of liberals like Benjamin Coleman and Ebenezer Gay, Foster reveals their core theology. Through a close reading of the form and structure of preaching and especially through what he sees as the flouting of sermonic conventions, Foster finds a degree of coherent, principled criticism of the very idea of orthodoxy.

September marks our annual academic transitions. We wish Eduardo Souza, our most able editorial assistant of the past two years, our best wishes as he moves on with his studies. Eduardo has been like our previous assistants a center of calm and excellence in helping the editors shepherd the QUARTERLY into print. Andrew Lucibella assumes the role of senior editorial assistant. Keen observers will note the addition of Taleisha Tomaso as an editorial intern. Taleisha spent last semester working under Eduardo’s careful mentoring and has agreed to help us with the QUARTERLY for the coming academic year. We are grateful for all their contributions during the past academic year and for our friends and colleagues who have supported the QUARTERLY with their reading of submissions, writing of book reviews, and generally through the editorial process.

—Jonathan M. Chu