

[The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.]

## DOYLE'S PURITAN COLONIES.\*

MR. DOYLE'S concern with American history is an affair of long standing. It began as far back as 1869, when he won the Arnold Historical Prize at Oxford, by an essay, which he published in that year on the English colonies in America previous to independence. Following up a department of historical work to which our English cousins have given surprisingly little attention, he produced later an admirable little text-book upon the history of the United States, and then began the work upon which he is now engaged, a general history of the English colonies in America. The first volume of this, covering the history of Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas, down to about 1700 or 1720, appeared in 1882. The two volumes before us relate the history of New England down to the peace of Utrecht.

As a fellow of All Souls, a college without students, Mr. Doyle has, we suppose, no other duties than those of historical investigation and composition. It is pleasing to see how well he has used his time. The present volumes are in a marked degree superior to that of 1882, and, what is still better, the improvement is mainly on the side of maturity and depth of thought. The former book was a good one; but sometimes it showed an unpracticed hand, and sometimes its judgment was not of the soundest or most mature. Doubtless much lies in the nature of the two subjects. A colonizing enterprise which is undertaken with the conscious purpose of founding a mighty state, must necessarily be more deeply interesting, must call out more thoroughly the best powers of the narrator's mind, than one which is not. Mr. Doyle has in his introductory chapter some very good remarks on the difference between the two, as well as on the general character of the materials which, by reason of the vigorous political, intellectual and religious life of early New England, are in so abundant measure at the disposal of the historian. He rightly remarks the self-conscious sense of narrating great beginnings, the self-deceiving enthusiasm which make many an early New England writing, as he says, "not a history, but a hagiology." He maintains his excellent practice of giving, in a note at the beginning of each chapter, a summary discussion of the sources upon which it rests. With the British Museum and the Bodleian, a writer is certainly not badly off for materials on American colonial history; but we incline to think that sometimes in these volumes, as in the former one, the narrative is built up too exclusively on the *leading* sources. In particular, there is a lack of reference to records of histories of towns. So strong was the local life in old New England that such books would often afford needed help, especially in respect to background or setting. As an instance of corrections they might furnish in matters of fact, if Mr. Doyle had had the Boston Town Records for May, 1637, before him, he would have avoided the error of saying (I, 132) that Vane, Coddington and Dummer, having been "turned down" by the General Court, Boston retaliated by choosing the three as its deputies to the court. "Att a generall meeting upon publique notice," the town records run, "Mr. Henry Vane, Mr. Willyam Coddington, and Mr. Ather-ton Haulgh, are chosen for the service of this Generall Corte as Deputyes or Comitees." But much better things than correction of minor errors could be drawn from the local records. We think Mr. Doyle has sometimes a little too much of the national independence in the matter of admitting sources. The paucity of dates, which was so annoying in

\* THE ENGLISH COLONIES IN AMERICA: THE PURITAN COLONIES. In Two Volumes. By J. A. DOYLE, M.A., Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1887.

the previous volume, has been remedied in this. But why, oh why, does Mr. Doyle spell familiar names of authorities so carelessly sometimes? Dr. Charles Deane's name appears twice at the outset of the work as *Dean* (I, 11, 12).

But after all, the first question the reader will ask is, What is Mr. Doyle's attitude toward the Puritans? We think that his expressions of opinion respecting them are worthy of the highest commendation and likely to do a world of good. It is a very difficult thing for those of us who have any Puritan blood in our veins not to have an undue prepossession in their favor; for, as Mr. Lowell has just been telling us in "Fitz-Adam's Story,"

"For Pilgrim's offshoot never 'scapes control  
Of those old instincts that have shaped his  
soul."

It is well for some one to correct our ancestor-worship by a just presentation of both the evil and the good of the Puritan character and policy. And substantially this we think our author has done. Once in a while he is too severe upon the Massachusetts government, as when (I, 231) he characterizes as an "outburst of fanatical malignity" their ignoring the advances toward union made by the Rhode Islanders in 1640, declaring them to be men "not to be capitulated withal either for themselves or the people of the isle where they inhabit." Nothing more is here implied than a reasonable enough distrust of the unsteady politics of the islanders. But in general Mr. Doyle is very just, disclosing, often with much indignation, the faults of the Puritan régime, the intolerance and occasional cruelty which we have been too long defending, yet presenting clearly the high qualities which distinguished both the public and the private life of the Puritan commonwealths. And this result is achieved, not by balancing or by canceling off misrepresentation against misrepresentation, but by real insight into character, and close thought upon this particular phase of it. For instance, no one could ask for a better presentation of the nobility and sweetness of John Winthrop's character, and yet the portrait is a thoroughly discriminating one.

Inevitably these volumes suggest comparison with those of the late Dr. Palfrey. We doubt whether Mr. Doyle has as full a command of the sources as his predecessor, but we feel sure that his views are more nearly right; they are conceived from a larger point of view, with a fuller appreciation of the varieties of human character and conduct, of which Puritanism is but one. On the other hand it must be confessed that his book is much less interesting reading than Dr. Palfrey's. His style is good, but it is not supremely attractive, and occasionally he seems to turn away from a really good opportunity for more color. One would not insist that all historians should be dramatic, and Mr. Doyle is especially a constitutional historian. But surely he might have allowed himself to make a little more of the witchcraft troubles, in the second volume. He says it is a twice-told tale; and so it is; but he should not regard himself as writing for the instructed only. At all events he might have said something to put the tragedy in its true light with reference to contemporary affairs of the sort elsewhere. We should think, too, that the constitutional question as to the legality of the commission which tried the witches would have an interest for him, if he has known of the recent debates about it; but he does not mention it. Perhaps it is a similar weariness of relating the known that prevents him, with all he tells us of the history of the Antinomians, from anywhere stating what their beliefs actually were. And, to make an end of minor fault-finding with a very good book, we do not think he is yet very well read in the sources of the history of New Netherland.

But, if we have done with notes, there is one beam that we would fain see extracted from Mr. Doyle's eye, and that is the imperfection of his geography. Sometimes one would think he was using maps on which the points of the compass had been marked wrongly. He speaks of Gardiner's Island (I, 225) as "lying off

the northwest end of Long Island," instead of northeast; and of Stamford, Conn., and Southold, L. I., as opposite each other (I, 196). It seems strange to see the chapter on the colonies in what are now Connecticut and Rhode Island, headed "Settlements south of Cape Cod," or the Connecticut coast alluded to as "the shore south of Narragansett Bay." But when the author says (I, 192-3): "Moreover the colony at Quinipiak might be of use to support Connecticut, and to link it to the older settlements," we must say we are puzzled. He must have got the "Quinipiak" or New Haven colony around on the other side of Connecticut in some mysterious way. And why does he always write this name *Newhaven*, as also (I, 51) *Barnstable*? The names of the English towns of similar designation are so spelled, but these are American towns, named New Haven and Barnstable. And while we are speaking of spelling, the name which Captain John Smith gave to what is now Cape Ann in memory of his fair patroness, he nowhere spells Tragabizanda, as Mr. Doyle does (I, 65), but everywhere save once Tragabizzanda. But to return to geography. Maverick's stockade is put (I, 80), "a few miles due north of what was afterwards Charlestown." The fact being that it was really on an island to the eastward, the phrase is quite misleading, giving one to understand an interior location. When Mr. Doyle notes (I, 160) that Winthrop describes an Indian attack on Agawam and the author of the "Wonder-working Providence" one on Lynn, and that he is not sure whether both refer to the same affair, he seems to be thinking of the Agawam of which he has just been speaking, the Agawam now called Springfield. Winthrop is speaking of the one now called Ipswich. The remoter portions of this Agawam were not far from those of Lynn. Other faults of geography might be noticed; but we will speak of only one more, which is surely of much consequence. Mr. Doyle alludes (I, 153) to the southern boundary of Massachusetts as "a line drawn east and west starting three miles south of the outlet of the Charles River," and uses a similar expression at an earlier point (I, 87). A glance at the map would have taught him better. What the charter said was, "and also all and singular those Landes and Hereditaments whatsoever, lying within the Space of three English Myles on the South Parte of the said Charles River, or of any or everie Parte thereof." Now the source of the river lying much farther south than its outlet, the territory of the Massachusetts patentees was a much larger one than Mr. Doyle is willing to allow them.

The publisher has made the volumes far too heavy, and their price far too high.