

VIII

ALONG THE CONNECTICUT RIVER AND AROUND THE NARRAGANSETT BAY: CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND

The foundation of authority is laid in the free consent of the people.—*Thomas Hooker.*

44. Connecticut.—Between 1630 and 1640 the Puritans came over so fast that all the best places along the coast of Massachusetts Bay were soon occupied. But back toward the west there was a whole continent lying idle and inviting settlers to come. So the Puritan colonists, when choosing a home, soon began to look westward. The first place to attract their attention was the valley of the Connecticut River. This river flowed through a charming and fertile region; on its shores were plenty of otters and beavers; in the stream were the finest kinds of fish. The Connecticut valley, therefore, was a good place for farming, for fur-trading, and for fishing, the three occupations upon which American colonists everywhere relied for a living.

We have learned (p. 41) how the Dutch began a fur trade in the Connecticut valley and how they were driven away by the English. In 1634 some persons from Watertown (near Boston) built a few huts on the Connecticut at Wethersfield. These huts were the beginnings of the State of Connecticut. In 1635 some men from Dorchester settled at Windsor. In 1636 Thomas Hooker,¹ the pastor of the church at Newton (now Cambridge), moved with his entire congregation to the banks of the Connecticut and founded the city of Hartford.

¹ Born at Markfield, Leicestershire, England, about 1586; died at Hartford, Connecticut, 1647.