

**A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE
PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL
AMONG THE INDIANS OF
NEW ENGLAND, 1670**

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A brief narrative of the progress of the gospel among the Indians of New England, 1670 by John Eliot

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JOHN ELIOT

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ELIOT'S
BRIEF NARRATIVE.

1670.



A
BRIEF NARRATIVE
OF THE
Progress of the Gospel
AMONG THE
INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND.
1670.

By Rev. JOHN ELIOT.

WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES,
BY W. T. R. MARVIN.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



Boston:
JOHN K. WIGGIN & WM. PARSONS LUNT,
1868.



PREFATORY NOTE.



THIS "Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel," is believed to be the only one of this class of Eliot's publications, which has not been reprinted. It is not known that a copy of it is to be found in any American collection. It is named by its full title, in Stevens's "Nuggets;" in Mr. Whitmore's note on Eliot's writings in "John Dunton's Letters," published by the Prince Society (p. 206); and by Rev. Dr. Francis, in his "Life of Eliot."

It was the last of Eliot's publications, relating to the progress of Christianity among the Indians, so far as is now known, though it is possible others may exist, as he was engaged in the work of preaching the Gospel to them until his

his increasing years obliged him to rest from his labors, but a short time before his death in 1690. In the Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, 1st Series, Vol. iii,* are nine letters from Eliot, on the same general topic; the first, dated Sept. 30, 1670,—shortly after the issue of this Tract,—and the last, July 7, 1688, not long before Eliot's decease. They were addressed to "the Honorable Robert Boyle," who was deeply interested in this work, and was for a time governor of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, as well as a generous contributor to the funds which were used by Eliot and his associates in prosecuting their labors, and who is styled by Eliot a "nursing father." These letters perhaps filled the place which the publications had previously supplied, serving as reports of the progress of the work.

The work of Christianizing the Indians continued to attract attention in England after Eliot's death. In the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society is a small Tract, published by the Corporation for Propagating the Gospel in 1705, fifteen years after Eliot deceased. It is signed by Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and Nehemiah Walter, and shows the veneration with which Eliot's memory was still regarded by the Indians, and the state of religion among them at that time. The title of this Tract I have cited in full on a following page.

Dr.

* Page 177 et seq.

Dr. Francis, in his valuable memoir of Eliot, speaking of the following Tract, says he had not been able to find it, and states that "It was probably the first publication of the Corporation, after their Charter was confirmed or renewed by Charles the Second. I presume it to be the same account of which Hutchinson makes so much use in his note concerning the Praying Indians, Vol. I: p. 156."* This supposition will be found to be correct, upon comparing that note with this reprint.

After some inquiry, the editor was unable to find a copy of this Tract in this country, and the following pages are printed from a manuscript copy which was kindly made by Joseph L. Chester, Esq., from an original in the British Museum.

Mr. Chester, who is so well known for his antiquarian tastes, especially on matters pertaining to the early history of New England, describes the original thus:—"The dimensions of the page from top of the first line to the bottom of the catch-word, are six and one-half inches; breadth of page, four and one-eighth inches. The pagination is exactly the distance of a line above the page, and inclosed in marks of parenthesis. The ornamental lines at top of page 3 are about as rough as the specimen I give, [of which those in this

* Life of Eliot, p. 350.

this reprint are a fac-simile,] and extend across the page." It is a tract of eleven pages, the last being blank. The original "was a small quarto," but "the copy in the Museum has been trimmed and cut away considerably." The lines average about twelve words in length.

The style of the original has been followed in capitalizing, italics, &c., making as close a fac-simile as possible, and the pages of the copy in the Museum, are designated by figures in brackets. It is believed that it will not be devoid of interest, as it gives a more complete account of many of the towns of "praying Indians" than can be found elsewhere, and as it is perhaps the only one of the publications in regard to Christianizing the Indians of New England, previous to the year 1705, which has not been before reprinted.

W. T. R. M.





BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE.



T may not be uninteresting to give here some notice of the various Tracts on the subject of Christianizing the Indians of New England. The Prince Society's edition of "John Dunton's Letters," in a note by Mr. Whitmore, previously quoted, gives the following list, which is more perfect than any other I have met with. They have all been reprinted except this. With the title is given the reference to the reprint.

I. (*Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, 1st S. Vol. viii., and 2d S. Vol. ix.*) Good Newes from New-England: or, A True Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of Plimouth in New-England. Shewing the wondrous providence and goodness of GOD, in their preservation and continuance, being delivered from many apparent deaths and dangers. Together with a Relation of such religious and civil laws and customs, as they are in practice amongst the Indians adjoining to them at this day. As also what commodities are there to be raised for the maintenance of that and other Plantations in the said country. Written by E. W., who hath borne a part in the fore-named troubles, and there lived since their first arrival. Whereunto is added by him a brief Relation of a credible intelligence of the present state of Virginia. London: Printed by J. D., for William Bladen and John Pellamie, and are to be sold at their shops at the Bible in Paul's Church-yard, and at the Three Golden Lions, in Corn-hill, near the Royal Exchange. 1624.

II. (*Sabin's*