

Cotton Mother.

In the form of Cotton Mother we find the man, who at once represents the highest aspiration of the Slaveocracy, and also its downfall. Could we but study the life of his father Increase Mather, and his grandfather John Cotton, or his paternal grandfather Richard Mather, we could trace with considerable accuracy the development of the Slaveocracy, and its final convulsive effort to retain the position of influence it once held.

Austin Mather, was born Feb. 12. 1662-3. He was a very pockecked youth, and resounded, ^{very readily} to the influence of his early life. Late in his own life he wrote for his son Samuel some account of his early life. "I desire to hewayl unto the very end of my life, the early & bullition of Urgivval Sin, which appeared at the very beginning of it. Indeed your grandfather, tho' he were a wise and strict

parent, would from the observations of some dis-
positions in me, comfort himself with
an opinion of my being sanctified by the
Holy Spirit of God in my very infancy. But
he knew not how vile I was, he saw not
the instances of my going astray, even
while I was yet an infant. However,
there were some ^{good} things in my childhood,
in which I wish my child may do better
than I. I began to pray, even when I began
to speak. I learned myself to write before
my going to school for it. I used secret
prayer, not confining myself to Forms in it; and
yet I confused Forms of prayer for my school-
mates (I suppose when I was about seven or
eight years old), and obliged them to pray.
Before I could write letters in the public
Assemblies, I commonly wrote what I
remembered when I came home.

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I rebuked my play mates for their wicked words and ways; and sometimes I suffered from them, the persecution of not only Scoffs but Blows also, for my Rebukes."

Wendell Collier's Writings P. 33.

His worried consciousness of sin, and regard sin at that, is shown in the following lamentation of the sins of his youth, "If the manifold sins which then I was guilty of, were so stickler upon me as that, being very young, I was whittling on the Sabbath-day; and for fear of being seen, I did it behind the door. A great reproach of God! a specimen of that atheism that I brought into the world with me" Wendell's C. M. P. 87.

The supreme conceit of the worn, and his most apparent self consciousness appear in the following forcible mirthless for his son. "The specific fault of my childhood

(against which I would have you my son be
cautious) was idleness. And one thing that
occurred me very much idle time, or
the distance of my Father Hobart from
the School; which caused him out of compassion
for my tender and weakly constitution
to keep me at home in the Winter. However
I then much employed myself in Church
History, and when summer had arrived
I confided my business, that through the
Blessing of God upon my endeavor, at the
age of a little more than eleven years
I had composed many Latin exercises, both
in prose and verse, and recited them
so readily, that I could name most of
several of the English Preacher in it. I
had conversed with Col^r Corderius, Lemaire
Lully, Buid, and Virgil.. I had wrote Epistles
and Rimes; presenting my first theme
to my Master, without his requiring

or expecting or yett any such thing of me; 5
whereupon the complimented me "Praudabilitis
diligentia tua" I had gone through a great
part of the New Testament in Greek, I had
read considerably in Socrates and Homer
and I had made some entrance in my
Hebrew grammar. And I think that before
I come to Fourteen, I conford Hebrew
exercises and Run thro' the othe Sciences,
that academicol Students ordinarily foll
wom" Wendell. P. 35.

Such was Cotton Wothers estimate of his
own powers as a youth, at the age of 12 he
entered Howard, and graduated in due time.
At commencement President Coker in presenting
the members of the class said, "The next is
named Cotton Wothers, How matchable a
name! I am sorry, my friends; Ismael
sother have said, what matchable names!
I will say nothing of his name and

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father, the most watchful of guardians,
the most distinguished Fellow of the College;
I dare not feare him here to his very
face. But if this youth bring back with
him the fidelity, the learning, the elegant ac-
complishment, the sound sense, the prudence
and the gravity of his very reverend
grandfather, John Cotton and Richard
Wether, he may be said to have done
~~the~~ his highest duty. Nor is my life swoll
that in this youth, Cotton and Wether
should in fort, as well as in name, join
together and once more appear in life.

Sibley II. 6. 7. cited in Wendell. P. 35.

In 1681 he was called to assist his father
as pastor of the Second Church of Boston the
largest, and perhaps the most influential
Church in New England. This came after he
had studied medicine, thinking that he
was not designed ~~for~~ for the ministry

on account of our infidelity in his ⁷
speech. On May 13th 1685, he was ordained
On May 4th Prior to his ordination the following is
recorded in his Diary, a passage that throws
considerable light on his character "I
renounce all the Vanities and Cursed
Idols and Evil Courses of this world. I
engoge that I will ever have the Great God
my best Good, my fort End, and my
only fort. That I will ever be rendering
of acknowledgement unto th Lord Jesus
Christ in all the relations which he bears
unto me. That I will ever be studying
what is my duty in these things; and
wherein I find myself to fall short, I
will ever wake it my grief, my shame
and for pardon let take myself unto
the blood of the everlasting Covenant.
Now, & humbly beseeching th grace

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of the Mediator, to be sufficient for me
I do as a further Solemnity, hereto sub-
scribe my name with both Hand and Heart."

The work quotation from his diary, together
with what occurs later will give a fair idea
of the man. at this time of his life, age 23
His record of his days work is as follows.

"Read Exodus, etc; Prayed; Examined the
children; read Descartes; read Commentaries, etc.
Break fasted; prepared sermon; took part in
family prayer; heard pupils recite; read Solon
on Medicine; dined; visited many friends;
read various books; prepared sermon; heard
pupils recite; meditated etc; prayed; suffed;
prepared sermon; took part in family prayer;"

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Thus we see him at the beginning of
his ministry, Educated, a great reader
and worker, consecrated, consecrated to

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his work, and as will appear later, a man
who clung with tremendous tenacity
to the old theocracy, even while he saw it
crumbling beneath his very hands.

There are several events which we have
already spoken of that Cotton Mather is
involved in,

① The amendment of the Charter took his
Father Increase to England and left him
at home to take charge of the work of the
Church. This amendment was the first great
blow to the theocracy, and the wretched
Charter that Increase Father was able to
rescue from the Home Government was but
a mite of what they wanted. But out
of the wreck they struggled to regain their
control by securing through their influence
in the political world the appointment of
Sir W^m. Phipps as colonial Governor.

This availed them nothing.

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(2) The second blow at the Mother came in their relations with Crookedge the Witchcraft persecutor. Cotton Mother was the leader of all the persecution of 1692-3, and the reaction of the people against it lost him much of his influence, especially one Mr. Colfe Robert Colfe published a book which puts the Mother in rather undesirable situations. Lemells diary describes the situation of one of the executors. "A very great number of spectators present. Mr. Cotton Mother was there. All of them said they were innocent. Mr. Mother said they all died by righteous sentence." Munday, 101.

Perhaps the following written at a time when he was accused of Witchcraft by alemented negro young man. He feared the loss of his influence should these ~~untrue~~ rumors be accepted. He writes. "I am fitt upon

Agonies, and Singular.... efforts of soul, in the
Resignation of my vowe unto the Lord;
too content that if he bid no further service
for my vowe, it shold be torn to pieces....
But I cried unto the Lord an for Delivrance
of my vowe from the woller of Hell,
so for the delivrance of the young woman
whom the power of Hell had seized of me.
And behold.... the forened fower... was
delivered.... on the very same day, and
the whole flott of the devil to Refresh a
poor Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ was
defeated." Wardell 120.

The Witchcraft prosecution brought him much
trouble, and cost him great loss of Power.

(3) - The Founding of the Brattle Street
Church in Cambridge, in 1698 under the
Leadership of Brattle and Lemerett, who
represented the Liberal or popular movement

that we gaining head way, were the third¹²
terrible blow to the Wothes. Concerning this
Cotton Wothes writes, "A company of backsliders
were in the town, the chief of whom are full
of malignity to the holy ways of the church
our churches have built in the town another
meeting house." Wm. Weld. 142.

In January of 1688-1700, he writes, "I
see Boston beginning a terrible stroke of
unto the church of New England, and
the innovators that have set up a new
church in Boston (a new one indeed!) have
made a day of Pestilence among us. The
men are ignorant, arrogant, obstinate,
and full of malice and slander, and
they fill the land with lies, in the mis-
representation whereof I am a very sing-
ular sufferer. Wherefore I set a fast
this day again for prayer in my study,

to cry unto mightly unto God." (13)
Worrell 43

The organization of this church was an outward sign of what was going on throughout New-England. The old were passing away, and the new were coming into power.

(4) The fourth event which marked the dawning of new things in New England likewise fell heavily upon the Wethers. Harvard college had been founded for the purpose of preparing men for the ministry in the orthodox theocracy. Breauly signs were not wanting to show that the heretics were finding their way into Harvard. Increase Wether had been President of Harvard for years, having been chosen in 1681, but declined, and accepted the second offer in 1685. He still retained his pastorate over the Second church, and could not be free-

wanted upon to take up his residence in '14
Cambridge, but finally after many efforts
he removed to Cambridge. Sept 2nd ¹⁷⁰⁰, he began
his work as he called it "of instructing to
40 or 50 children." This was in reality a
summons to the new fight. It was a bitter
fate, and he remained there just a month
and a few days. The fight of the Stoocoy
was won over. Oct 17th 1700, Increase ^{from}
Mother, on flea of ill health returned to
Cambridge, and expressed a desire by letter
that another President be chosen.

Harvard College the last stronghold of
the Puritan forced into other hands. The
Mother had to bear the burden, and it is
not an idle thought to imagine that
Cotton Mother had cherished the idea
of becoming its President.

(5). But such men take defeat with

for grace. In 1705 the ¹⁵ ~~Wothers~~ formulated
and sent out for approval ~~to~~ a document
known as 16 ~~geoforsols~~, which was a
gasp at a forcing straw in their efforts
to re-establish the influence of the
clergy, and maintain the Clergy.
These were defeated and dealt with
very severely, and their defeat marks
the final victory over the Clergy. The
refly to these ~~geoforsols~~ was made by
John Nine, whom we will take up
next Sunday.

Arog out in a certain sense, substitutions
about beyond comprehension, a man
whose prospects in life were bright at the
outset, Cotton Woother commands our
sympathy and respect, ~~to~~ for his

strict adherence to what he stood for.¹⁶
No avowal of defeat, no avowal of
private sorrow, could shake the
firmer and persistency of the
last of the Puritans.