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THE PURITAN LEGACY

FOR at least a century after the landing at Plymouth the intellectual life of the New England colonies was dominated by Puritan thought. Churches and schools followed the old patterns, and the leaders in all walks of life were at least professedly loyal to the teachings of the founding fathers. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the prejudices and mental habits of the colonists must have affected somehow the behavior and attitudes of later New Englanders, and more than one critic has detected in present-day New England signs of its Puritan inheritance. The matter is of more than local interest, since men from Massachusetts and Connecticut and Rhode Island followed the advancing frontier. Some of their ideas and standards took root and flourished far west of the Hudson, and it is pretty generally admitted that somewhere in America's total cultural heritage and the complex of qualities which make up the "American character" there are traces of Puritanism.

It is very difficult, however, to be sure just what these traces are, partly because the continuing influence in intellectual history of any past "state of mind" is always hard to assess, and partly because the special