

ROGER WILLIAMS

(c. 1604–1683)

FROM

A Key into the Language of America

The Courteous *Pagan* shall condemne
Uncourteous Englishmen,
Who live like Foxes, Beares and Wolves.
Or Lyon in his Den.

Let none sing *blessings* to their soules,
For that they Courteous are:
The wild *Barbarians* with no more
Then Nature, goe so farre:

If Natures Sons both *wild* and *tame*,
Humane and Courteous be:
How ill becomes it Sonnes of God
To want Humanity?

Course *bread* and *water's* most their fare,
O *Englands* diet fine;
Thy *cup* runs ore with plenteous store
Of wholesome *beare* and *wine*.

Sometimes *God* gives them *Fish* or *Flesh*,
Yet they're *content* without;
And what comes in, they *part* to *friends*
And *strangers* round about.

Gods *providence* is rich to his,
Let none *distrustfull* be;
In *wildernesse*, in great *distresse*,
These *Ravens* have fed me.

Boast not proud *English*, of thy birth & blood,
Thy brother *Indian* is by birth as Good.
Of one blood God made Him, and Thee & All,
As wise, as faire, as strong, as personall.

By nature wrath's his portion, thine no more
Till Grace *his* soule and *thine* in Christ restore,
Make sure thy second birth, else thou shalt see,
Heaven ope to *Indians* wild, but shut to thee.

—

Adulteries, Murthers, Robberies, Thefts,
Wild *Indians* punish these!
And hold the Scales of Justice so,
That no man farthing leese.

When *Indians* heare the horrid filths,
of *Irish*, *English* Men,
The horrid Oaths and Murthers late,
Thus say these *Indians* then:

We weare no Cloaths, have many Gods,
And yet our sinnes are lesse:
You are Barbarians, Pagans wild,
Your Land's the Wildernesse.

—

The *Indians* prize not *English* gold,
Nor *English* *Indians* shell:
Each in his place will passe for ought,
What ere men buy or sell.

English and *Indians* all passe hence,
To an eternall place,
Where shels nor finest gold's worth ought,
Where nought's worth ought but Grace.

This Coyne the *Indians* know not of,
Who knowes how soon they may?
The *English* knowing, prize it not,
But fling't like drosse away.