ROGER WILLIAMS
(c. 1604–1683)

FROM
A Key into the Language of America

The Courteous Pagan shall condemn
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 wildernes, 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.

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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 Wildernes.

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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.