During the years of his childhood his father was clerk to his kinsman, the renowned Judge Nicolls, and all the educational advantages enjoyed by the youth of his time were his. During the later time, for several years before coming to America, Thomas Dudley was the steward of the Earl of Lincoln, and his son lived in the closest intimacy with the members of that great house and the numerous guests, embracing some of the brightest and best of English nobility and men of letters of his time. He had the advantage of the teaching of Rev. John Dod, the decalogueist, Rev. John Cotton, Dr. Preston and others among the eminent divines and theologians. He was born to the protestant faith and to a belief in the rights of the people. It was not allotted to Samuel Dudley to go through the period of doubt and difficulty in religious and political beliefs which were the inevitable part of the preceding generation. When he came to manhood his mind was clear and free from all doubts upon the questions which had been solved with so much difficulty by his immediate progenitors.

The fate of his kinsman, Lord Guilford Dudley and his lovely wife Lady Jane Grey, were then comparatively recent events, and the persecutions of other members of his family for opinion's sake were kept green in the memory of the young people of his day and generation. But it was not allotted to him to suffer as they had done. He took his place with his father, who had resolved all these doubts, as an adherent to the protestant faith, and of the theory that all men should have a voice in controlling the government in which they lived. He was not obliged to look back so far as we must to the great act of the Barons at Runymede by which King John was forced to concede the great charter which first gave to English-speaking people a recognition of their inalienable rights which had always belonged to them, and had never before been acknowledged by those who claimed a God-given right to rule their fellow men in their own way. But the day of persecution for opinion's sake, both religious and political, had not yet gone by, and Samuel Dudley ranged himself on the side of the people, and forsaking all that was dear to him in his native country, he came to America to become a simple member of a colony which was determined to establish their religious freedom and the right of the people to rule. His sentiments he inculcated during all his fifty-three years he lived in America, and to his teaching and example we may well attribute much of the intelligence of the people upon these questions when the time came.

Arriving at Salem with his father, Gov. Winthrop and the other members of the company, we soon find the young man settled with others at "Newtown", now Cambridge. We find him a lieutenant of Capt. Underhill's company, the first of our militia.