

William Bradford

OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION



Bibliographical Note

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Introduction

A FEW WORDS as to the vicissitudes of the precious manuscript of this book.

As the author tells us, he began to write down this record of the affairs of the New Plymouth Settlement in the year 1630, ten years after their arrival, continuing the writing of it from time to time up to the year 1650, when he compiled the Register of Passengers on the *Mayflower*, their marriages, the birth of their descendants, and their deaths. In form, the original manuscript is a parchment-bound folio, measuring about 11 inches high, 8 inches wide, and 1½ inches thick.

Some inscriptions on fly leaves in it, give, tersely, its ownership up to 1728. "This book was writ by Governor William Bradford, and given by him to his son Major William Bradford, and by him to his son Major John Bradford: writ by me, Samuel Bradford, March 20th, 1705."

An entry by Thomas Prince, dated June 4th, 1728, intimates that Major John Bradford turned over the manuscript to him for the New England Library of Prints and Manuscripts, which he had been collecting since 1703, when he entered Harvard College. Since then it is supposed that sundry authors have drawn upon its material, and that Governor Hutchinson had access to it when he wrote the second volume of his History, published in 1767.

From this time all traces of its presence in New England disappear, and it was not until almost a century later that it was discovered and identified in the Library of the Bishop of London, at Fulham Palace. It is supposed that the manuscript found its way to England some time between the years 1768 and 1785, being deposited under the title of "The Log of the *Mayflower*," at Fulham Palace as the Public Registry for Historical and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to the Diocese of London, and to the Colonial and other Possessions of Great Britain beyond the seas—New Plymouth being, ecclesiastically, attached to the Diocese of London.

When compiling his "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America," published in 1844, Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford,

and later of Winchester, delved into the archives of Fulham Palace, and brought under contribution a number of unpublished manuscripts, from which he gave extracts. In 1855 this work fell into the hands of John Wingate Thornton, and, through him, came under the eye of Barry, the author of "The History of Massachusetts," who recognized that the passages quoted in Wilberforce's work must come from none other than Bradford's long-lost annals. Charles Deane was consulted and communicated with Joseph Hunter in England, who visited Fulham Palace Library, and established incontestably the identity of "The Log of the Mayflower" with Bradford's History. It is still unknown exactly how it found its way to London—but in all probability it was brought over during the War of Independence.

From time to time, after its discovery, representations were made to the custodians of the manuscript that it should be restored to America, where its value was inestimable, as one of the earliest records of her National History—in the words of Senator Hoar: "The only authentic history of what we have a right to consider the most important political transaction that has ever taken place on the face of the earth." Ultimately, the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard, the first United States Ambassador to England, instigated by Senator Hoar, put the matter before the Bishop of London—Creighton—at Fulham, with the result that, after due legal sanction by the Constitutional and Episcopal Court in London, the manuscript was conveyed by Mr. Bayard to America, and formally handed over to Governor Roger Wolcott, on July 12th, 1897, for the State Archives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, subject to the production of a photographic facsimile being deposited at Fulham, and to the original manuscript being reasonably accessible for investigation. Its present resting place is the Massachusetts State Library.

No words could more vividly depict the feelings in the hearts of Bradford's descendants, on the return to American soil of this precious relic by the free gift of England, than those of Senator Hoar, which I now quote:

"I do not think many Americans will gaze upon it without a little trembling of the lips and a little gathering of mist in the eyes, as they think of the story of suffering, of sorrow, of peril, of exile, of death, and of lofty triumph, which that book tells,—which the hand of the great leader and founder of America has traced on those pages. There is nothing like it in human annals since the story of Bethlehem. These English men and English women going out from their homes in beautiful Lincoln and York, wife separated from husband and mother from child in that hurried embarkation for Holland, pursued to the beach by English horsemen; the thirteen years of exile; the life at Amsterdam 'in alley foul and lane obscure'; the dwelling at Leyden; the embarkation at Delfthaven;

the farewell of Robinson; the terrible voyage across the Atlantic; the compact in the harbour; the landing on the rock; the dreadful first winter; the death roll of more than half the number; the days of suffering and of famine; the wakeful night, listening for the yell of the wild beast and the war-whoop of the savage; the building of the State on those sure foundations which no wave nor tempest has ever shaken; the breaking of the new light; the dawning of the new day; the beginning of the new life; the enjoyment of peace with liberty,—of all these things this is the original record by the hand of our beloved father and founder."

After its discovery and identification, an edition was published in the year 1856, under the editorship of Charles Deane, by the Massachusetts Historical Society, based on a transcript made from the original document in London. A photographic facsimile of the manuscript was issued in 1896, in both London and Boston; and upon receipt of the original by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1897, a resolution was passed providing for the printing and publication of a carefully collated edition, together with a report of the proceedings connected with its return from England to America. This edition was duly issued in 1901, and it is from that as a basis that I have prepared the present modernization. My purpose is obvious. To many, the reading of the mediæval English of the original, to which all preceding editions have adhered, would be so laborious as to preclude them from becoming acquainted with it. I have endeavoured to preserve, as far as possible, the atmosphere of the time, while accurately rendering the thought in current language.

As for the writer himself, William Bradford, who, on the death of John Carver, the first Governor of the colony, a few months after their arrival, succeeded him in the Governorship, and remained the guiding genius of its destinies for over thirty years—his character, despite his utter self-repression throughout his writings, can be clearly read between the lines; his marvellous breadth of charity and tolerance; his strong, simple piety; his plain, unselfconscious goodness—all the grandest characteristics of the best traditions of puritanism seem concentrated in him.

But little is known of his life in England. He was born at the village of Austerfield, near Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, and the baptismal entry in the registers of the church is dated March 19th, 1590. His family was of yeoman stock. The first Mrs. Bradford (Dorothy May) was drowned in the harbour soon after the arrival of the *Mayflower*, by falling overboard. The second wife was a Mrs. Alice Southworth, a widow, to whom it is supposed Bradford had been attached before his and her first marriage. He wrote his proposal of marriage to her in England, and she came out to him, with two Southworth children. William Bradford died, May 9th, 1657, at 69 years of age.

His dealings in the external affairs of the colony were largely with that class of hypocritical charlatan which successfully turns to perverse account the generous religious impulses of those with whom they hold intercourse. Yet his firm hold on faith, hope, and charity never failed him; he always ascribed to them, until clear proof of dishonour was revealed, the best of motives; taking account of the possibility of misunderstanding; or, in the last resort, making allowance for human weakness in the face of temptation, and forgiving unto seventy times seven. His was the spirit given to Newton, who as he watched a murderer being led to the gallows, exclaimed: "There goes John Newton, but for the Grace of God!"; or to Cromwell, in his typical exhortation,—“I beseech you, in the name of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.”

The reverse side of the picture shows us, indeed, the horrible hypocrisy of the pseudo-puritans of the Weston-Sherley type, who whenever ill-fortune overtook them called upon the name of the Lord in true Pharisaic fashion,—as if to bribe by flattery a frivolous Providence,—playing upon the finest qualities of forbearance and disinterestedness of such men as Bradford and his colleagues, to get advantage of them and rob them usuriously. Such parasites on the true growth of puritanism brought it into disrepute with the indiscriminating of those times,—nor have the results of their evil work (in very truth, the Sin against the Holy Ghost!) yet disappeared; for we find it in the supercilious and suspicious attitude of the orthodox towards dissent in any form, to this day.

The strong grasp of the intellectual and practical side of his and the other Pilgrims' ideals of religious liberty,—for which, no doubt, they owed a deep debt to that splendid apostolic figure, their old pastor at Leydon, John Robinson,—is evidenced by the clear exposition of their claims, in the answer they gave to charges against them of dissembling in their declaration of conformity to the practices of the French Reformed Churches, and of undue license in differing from those professed forms of worship:

“In attempting to tie us to the French practices in every detail, you derogate from the liberty we have in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul would have none follow him but wherein he followed Christ; much less ought any Christian or Church in the world do so. The French may err, we may err, and other Churches may err, and doubtless do in many circumstances. That honour of infallibility belongs, therefore, only to the word of God and pure testament of Christ, to be followed as the only rule and pattern for direction by all Churches and Christians. It is great arrogance for any man or Church to think that he or they have so sounded the word of God to the bottom as to be able to set down precisely a Church's practices without error in substance or circumstance,

and in such a way that no one thereafter may digress or differ from them with impunity."

On the other hand, it is interesting to mark Bradford's disparagement of Utopian schemes of communal, or socialistic, forms of government. Here is his conservative argument, based on the experience of the first few years of their colonization:

"The failure of this experiment of communal service, which was tried for several years, and by good and honest men, proves the emptiness of the theory of Plato and other ancients, applauded by some of later times,—that the taking away of private property, and the possession of it in community by a commonwealth, would make a state happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For in this instance, community of property (so far as it went) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much employment which would have been to the general benefit and comfort. . . . If (it was thought) all were to share alike, and all were to do alike, then all were on an equality throughout, and one was as good as another; and so, if it did not actually abolish those very relations which God himself has set among men, it did at least greatly diminish the mutual respect that is so important should be preserved amongst them. Let none argue that this is due to human failing rather than to this communistic plan of life in itself. I answer, seeing that all men have this failing in them, that God in His wisdom saw that another plan of life was fitter for them."

Thus in civil as in religious matters, Bradford's sure instinct led him always to follow the guidance of a wise and benevolent Providence, working for the rational and natural evolution of mankind, which humanity could expedite only by a plain, unsophisticated reliance upon truth and goodness, as incarnate in the divine character and life of Christ.

If we of to-day, whether American or British, fail to appreciate the almost unearthly value of Bradford's History, it is because we ourselves are still too close to the opening of that era in modern civilization,—yet in its early stages of development,—with which it is concerned. I believe that, among the world's archives of contemporary chronicles of the human race, future generations will attribute to his annals a value far higher than that which we at present ascribe to any similar historic record except the Gospels themselves.

Certainly it is fitting in the present communion of interests of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, that we should refresh ourselves at the glorious founts of freedom which constitute their common heritage.

HAROLD PAGET.

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HAROLD PAGET.

BOOK I
1608-1620

PERSECUTION AND FLIGHT FROM ENGLAND—SETTLEMENT IN
HOLLAND (AT AMSTERDAM AND LEYDEN)—
CROSSING TO ENGLAND AND VOYAGE TO AMERICA—
LANDING AT CAPE COD AND NEW PLYMOUTH

**I. Suppression of Religious Liberty in England—First Cause
of the Foundation of the New Plymouth Settlement.**

First I will unfold the causes that led to the foundation of the New Plymouth Settlement, and the motives of those concerned in it. In order that I may give an accurate account of the project, I must begin at the very root and rise of it; and this I shall endeavour to do in a plain style and with singular regard to the truth,—at least as near as my slender judgment can attain to it.

As is well known, ever since the breaking out of the light of the gospel in England, which was the first country to be thus enlightened after the gross darkness of popery had overspread the Christian world, Satan has maintained various wars against the Saints, from time to time, in different ways,—sometimes by bloody death and cruel torment, at other times by imprisonment, banishment, and other wrongs,—as if loth that his kingdom should be overcome, the truth prevail, and the Church of God revert to their ancient purity, and recover their primitive order, liberty, and beauty. But when he could not stifle by these means the main truths of the gospel, which began to take rooting in many places, watered by the blood of martyrs and blessed from heaven with a gracious increase, he reverted to his ancient stratagems, used of old against the first Christians. For when, in those days, the bloody and barbarous persecutions of the heathen Emperors could not stop and subvert the course of the gospel, which speedily overspread the then best known parts of the world, he began to sow errors, heresies, and discord amongst the clergy themselves, working upon the pride and ambition and other frailties to which all mortals, and even the Saints themselves in some measure, are subject. Woful effects followed; not only were there bitter contentions, heartburnings, and schisms, but Satan took advantage of them to foist in a number of vile ceremonies, with many vain canons and decrees, which have been snares to many poor and peaceable souls to this day.

So, in the early days, Christians suffered as much from internal dissension as from persecution by the heathen and their Emperors, true and orthodox Christians being oppressed by the Arians and their heretical accomplices. Socrates bears witness to this in his second book. His words are these: "Indeed, the violence was no less than that practised of old towards the Christians when they were compelled to sacrifice to idols; for many endured various kinds of torment—often racking and dismemberment of their joints, confiscation of their goods, or banishment from their native soil."

Satan has seemed to follow a like method in these later times, ever since the truth began to spring and spread after the great defection of that man of sin, the Papal Antichrist. Passing by the infinite examples throughout the world as well as in our country, when that old serpent found that he could not prevail by fiery flames and the other cruel torments which he had put in use everywhere in the days of Queen Mary and before, he then went more closely to work, not merely to oppress but to ruin and destroy the kingdom of Christ by more secret and subtle means, and by kindling flames of contention and sowing seeds of strife and bitter enmity amongst the reformed clergy and laity themselves.

Mr. Fox records, that besides those worthy martyrs and confessors who were burned and otherwise tormented in Queen Mary's days, as many as 800 students and others fled out of England, and formed separate congregations at Wesel, Frankfort, Basel, Emden, Marburg, Strasburg, Geneva, etc.

Amongst these bodies of protestant reformers—especially amongst those at Frankfort,—arose a bitter war of contention and persecution about the ceremonies and the service book and other such popish and anti-Christian stuff, the plague of England to this day. Such practises are like the high places in Israel, which the prophets cried out against; and the better part of the reformers sought to root them out and utterly abandon them, according to the purity of the gospel; while the other part, under veiled pretences, sought as stiffly to maintain and defend them, for their own advancement. This appears in the account of these contentions published in 1575—a book that deserves to be better known.

The one party of reformers endeavoured to establish the right worship of God and the discipline of Christ in the Church according to the simplicity of the gospel and without the mixture of men's inventions, and to be ruled by the laws of God's word dispensed by such officers as Pastors, Teachers, Elders, etc., according to the Scriptures.

The other party,—the episcopal,—under many pretences, endeavoured to maintain the episcopal dignity after the popish manner,—with

all its courts, canons, and ceremonies; its livings, revenues, subordinate officers, and other means of upholding their anti-Christian greatness, and of enabling them with lordly and tyrannous power to persecute the poor servants of God. The fight was so bitter, that neither the honour of God, the persecution to which both parties were subjected, nor the mediation of Mr. Calvin and other worthies, could prevail with the episcopal party. They proceeded by all means to disturb the peace of this poor persecuted church of dissenters, even so far as to accuse (very unjustly and ungodly, yet prelate-like) some of its chief members with rebellion and high-treason against the Emperor, and other such crimes.

And this contention did not die with Queen Mary, nor was it left beyond the seas. At her death the episcopal party of the Protestants returned to England under gracious Queen Elizabeth, many of them being preferred to bishoprics and other promotions, according to their aims and desires, with the result that their inveterate hatred towards the holy discipline of Christ in his church, represented by the dissenting part, has continued to this day; furthermore, for fear it should ultimately prevail, all kinds of devices were used to keep it out, incensing the Queen and State against it as a danger to the commonwealth; arguing that it was most needful that the fundamental points of religion should be preached in these ignorant and superstitious times, and that in order to win the weak and ignorant it was necessary to retain various harmless ceremonies; and that though reforms were desirable, this was not the time for them. Many such excuses were put forward to silence the more godly, and to induce them to yield to one ceremony after another, and one corruption after another. By these wiles some were beguiled and others corrupted, till at length they began to persecute all the zealous reformers in the land, unless they would submit to their ceremonies and become slaves to them and their popish trash, which has no ground in the word of God, but is a relic of that man of sin. And the more the light of the gospel grew, the more they urged subjection to these corruptions,—so that, notwithstanding all their former pretences, those whose eyes God had not justly blinded easily saw their purpose. In order the more to cast contempt upon the sincere servants of God, they opprobriously gave them the name of "Puritans," which it is said the novations assumed out of pride. It is lamentable to see the effects which have followed. Religion has been disgraced, the godly grieved, afflicted, persecuted, and many exiled, while others have lost their lives in prisons and other ways; on the other hand, sin has been countenanced, ignorance, profanity, and atheism have increased, and the papists have been encouraged to hope again for a day.

This made that holy man, Mr. Perkins, cry out in his exhortation to repentance, upon Zeph. ii. "Religion," said he, "has been amongst us

these thirty-five years; but the more it is disseminated, the more it is condemned by many. Thus, not profanity or wickedness, but Religion itself is a byword, a mocking stock, and a matter of reproach; so that in England at this day the man or woman who begins to profess religion and to serve God, must resolve within himself to sustain mocks and injuries as though he lived among the enemies of religion." Common experience has confirmed this and made it only too apparent.*

But to come to the subject of this narrative. When by the zeal of some godly preachers, and God's blessing on their labours, many in the North of England and other parts become enlightened by the word of God and had their ignorance and sins discovered to them, and began by His grace to reform their lives and pay heed to their ways, the work of God was no sooner manifest in them than they were scorned by the profane multitude, and their ministers were compelled to subscribe or be silent, and the poor people were persecuted with apparators and pursuants and the commissary courts. Nevertheless, they bore it all for several years in patience, until by the increase of their troubles they began to see further into things by the light of the word of God. They realized not only that these base ceremonies were unlawful, but also that the tyrannous power of the prelates ought not to be submitted to, since it was contrary to the

*Note (written by the author at a later date than the passage to which it refers).—Little did I think that the downfall of the Bishops, with their courts, canons, and ceremonies had been so near, when first I began these scribbled writings,—which was about the year 1630, and continued as leisure permitted,—or that I should have lived to see and hear it. But it is the Lord's doing, and ought to be marvellous in our eyes. . . . Do you not now see the fruits of your labours, O all ye servants of the Lord that have suffered for his truth, and have been faithful witnesses of it, and ye little handful amongst the rest, the least among the thousands of Israel? You have not only had a seed-time, but many of you have seen the joyful harvest. Should you not rejoice, then, yea, and again rejoice, and say Hallelujah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power be to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments (Rev. xix., 1, 2) . . . The tyrannous bishops are ejected, their courts dissolved, their canons forceless, their service cashiered, their ceremonies useless and despised; their plots for Popery are prevented, all their superstitions discarded and returned to Rome, whence they came, and the monuments of idolatry rooted out of the land. Their proud and profane supporters and cruel defenders (the bloody papists and wicked atheists and their malignant consorts) are marvellously overthrown. And are not these great things? Who can deny it?

But who has done it? Who, even He that sitteth on the white horse, Who is called faithful and true, and judgeth and fighteth righteously (Rev. xix., 11), Whose garments are dipped in blood, and His name was called the Word of God, for He shall rule with a rod of iron; for it is He that treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God Almighty. And He hath upon His garment, and upon His thigh, a name written: The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Anno Domini, 1646.

Hallelujah.

freedom of the gospel and would burden men's consciences and thus profane the worship of God.

On this subject a famous author thus writes in his Dutch commentaries: "At the coming of King James into England, the new King found established there the reformed religion of Edward VI., but retaining the spiritual office of the bishops,—differing in this from the reformed churches in Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Emden, Geneva, etc., whose reformation is shaped much nearer to the first Christian churches of the Apostles' times."

Those reformers who saw the evil of these things, and whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his truth, shook off this yoke of anti-Christian bondage and as the Lord's free people joined themselves together by covenant as a church, in the fellowship of the gospel to walk in all His ways, made known, or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavours, whatever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something, the ensuing history will declare.

These people became two distinct bodies or churches and congregated separately; for they came from various towns and villages about the borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire. One of these churches was led by Mr. John Smith, a man of able gifts, and a good preacher, who was afterwards made pastor; but later, falling into some errors in the Low Countries, most of its adherents buried themselves,—and their names! To the other church, which is the subject of this discourse, belonged besides other worthy men, Mr. Richard Clifton, a grave and reverend preacher, who by his pains and diligence had done much good, and under God had been the means of the conversion of many; also that famous and worthy man, Mr. John Robinson, who was afterwards their pastor for many years, till the Lord took him away; also Mr. William Brewster, a reverend man, who was afterwards chosen an Elder of the church, and lived with them till old age. But after the events referred to above, they were not long permitted to remain in peace. They were hunted and persecuted on every side, until their former afflictions were but as fleabittings in comparison. Some were clapped into prison; others had their houses watched night and day, and escaped with difficulty; and most were obliged to fly, and leave their homes and means of livelihood. Yet these and many other even severer trials which afterwards befell them, being only what they expected, they were able to bear by the assistance of God's grace and spirit. However, being thus molested, and seeing that there was no hope of their remaining there, they resolved by consent to go into the Low Countries, where they heard there was freedom of religion for all; and it was said that many from London and other parts of the country, who had been exiled and persecuted for the same

cause, had gone to live at Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands. So after about a year, having kept their meeting for the worship of God every Sabbath in one place or another, notwithstanding the diligence and malice of their adversaries, seeing that they could no longer continue under such circumstances, they resolved to get over to Holland as soon as they could—which was in the years 1607 and 1608. But of this, more will be told in the next chapter.

II. Flight to Holland (Amsterdam and Leyden): 1607–1608.

For these reformers to be thus constrained to leave their native soil, their lands and livings, and all their friends, was a great sacrifice, and was wondered at by many. But to go into a country unknown to them, where they must learn a new language, and get their livings they knew not how, seemed an almost desperate adventure, and a misery worse than death. Further, they were unacquainted with trade, which was the chief industry of their adopted country, having been used only to a plain country life and the innocent pursuit of farming. But these things did not dismay them, though they sometimes troubled them; for their desires were set on the ways of God, to enjoy His ordinances; they rested on His providence, and knew Whom they had believed.

But this was not all; for though it was made intolerable for them to stay, they were not allowed to go; the ports were shut against them, so that they had to seek secret means of conveyance, to bribe the captains of ships, and give extraordinary rates for their passages. Often they were betrayed, their goods intercepted, and thereby were put to great trouble and expense. I will give an instance or two of these experiences.

A large number of them had decided to take passage from Boston in Lincolnshire, and for that purpose had hired a ship wholly to themselves, and made agreement with the captain to be ready at a convenient place on a certain day to take them and their belongings. After long waiting and great expense—he had not kept day with them—he came at last and took them aboard at night. But when he had secured them and their goods he betrayed them, having arranged beforehand with the searchers and other officers to do so. They then put them in open boats, and there rifled and ransacked them, searching them to their shirts for money,—and even the women, further than became modesty,—and took them back to the town and made a spectacle of them to the multitude that came flocking on all sides to see them. Being thus rifled and stripped of their money, books, and other property, they were brought before the magistrates, and messengers were sent to inform the Lords of the Council about them. The magistrates treated them courteously, and

showed them what favour they could; but dare not free them until order came from the council-table. The result was, however, that after a month's imprisonment, the majority were dismissed, and sent back to the places whence they came; but seven of the leaders were kept in prison, and bound over to the Assizes.

Next spring there was another attempt made by some of the same people, with others, to get over from a different place. They heard of a Dutchman at Hull who had a ship of his own belonging to Zealand, and they made an agreement with him, and acquainted him with their plight, hoping to find him more reliable than the English captain had been; and he bade them have no fear. He was to take them aboard between Grimsby and Hull, where there was a large common a good way from any town. The women and children, with all their effects, were sent to the place at the time arranged in a small bark which they had hired; and the men were to meet them by land. But it so happened that they all arrived a day before the ship came, and the sea being rough, and the women very sick, the sailors put into a creek hard by, where they grounded at low water. The next morning the ship came, but they were stuck fast and could not stir till about noon. In the meantime, the captain of the ship, seeing how things were, sent his boat to get the men aboard whom he saw were ready walking about the shore. But after the first boatful was got aboard and she was ready to go for more, the captain espied a large body of horse and foot, armed with bills and guns and other weapons,—for the country side had turned out to capture them. The Dutchman, seeing this, swore his country's oath, "sacramente," and having a fair wind, weighed anchor, hoist sail, and away! The poor men already aboard were in great distress for their wives and children, left thus to be captured, and destitute of help,—and for themselves, too, without any clothes but what they had on their backs, and scarcely a penny about them, all their possessions being aboard the bark, now seized. It drew tears from their eyes, and they would have given anything to be ashore again. But all in vain, there was no remedy; they must thus sadly part. Afterwards they endured a fearful storm at sea, and it was fourteen days or more before they reached port, in seven of which they saw neither sun, moon, nor stars, being driven near the coast of Norway. The sailors themselves often despaired, and once with shrieks and cries gave over all, as if the ship had foundered and they were sinking without hope of recovery. But when man's hope and help wholly failed, there appeared the Lord's power and mercy to save them; for the ship rose again, and gave the crew courage to manage her. If modesty permitted, I might declare with what fervent prayers the voyagers cried to the Lord in their great distress,—even remaining fairly collected when the water ran into their mouths and ears; and when the sailors called out, "We sink, we sink,"

they cried (if not with miraculous, yet with sublime faith): "Yet Lord, Thou canst save; yet Lord, Thou canst save!" Upon which, the ship not only righted herself, but shortly afterwards the violence of the storm began to abate, and the Lord filled their afflicted minds with such comfort as but few can understand, and in the end brought them to their desired haven, where the people came flocking, astonished at their deliverance, the storm having been so long and violent.

But to return to the rest where we left them. The other men, who were in greatest danger, made shift to escape before the troops could surprise them, only sufficient staying to assist the women. But it was pitiful to see these poor women in their distress. What weeping and crying on every side: some for their husbands carried away in the ship; others not knowing what would become of them and their little ones; others again melted in tears, seeing their poor little ones hanging about them, crying for fear and quaking with cold! Being thus apprehended, they were hurried from one place to another, till in the end the officers knew not what to do with them; for to imprison so many innocent women and children only because they wished to go with their husbands, seemed unreasonable and would cause an outcry; and to send them home again was as difficult, for they alleged, as was the truth, that they had no homes to go to,—for they had sold or otherwise disposed of their houses and livings. To be short, after they had been thus turmoiled a good while, and conveyed from one constable to another, they were glad to be rid of them on any terms; for all were wearied and tired of them. Though in the meantime, they, poor souls, endured misery enough. So in the end, necessity forced a way for them.

But not to be tedious, I will pass by other troubles which they endured in their wanderings and travels, both on land and sea. I must not omit, however, to mention the fruit of it all. For by these public afflictions, their cause became famous, and led many to inquire into it; and their Christian behaviour left a deep impression on the minds of many. Some few shrank from these first conflicts, and no wonder; but many more came forward with fresh courage and animated the rest. In the end, notwithstanding the storms of opposition, they all got over, some from one place, some from another, and met together again with no small rejoicing.

III. Settlement at Leyden: 1607–1608.

Having reached the Netherlands, they saw many fine fortified cities, strongly walled, and guarded with troops of armed men; and they heard a strange and uncouth language, and beheld the different manners and

customs of the people, with their strange fashions and attire—all so far differing from their own plain country villages wherein they were bred and had lived so long, that it seemed they had come into a new world. But these were not the things they gave much attention to. They had other work in hand, and another kind of war to wage. For though they saw fair and beautiful cities, flowing with abundance of all sorts of wealth and riches, it was not long before they saw the grim and grisly face of poverty coming upon them like an armed man, with whom they must buckle and encounter, and from whom they could not fly; but they were armed with faith and patience against him and all his encounters; and though they were sometimes foiled, yet, by God's assistance, they prevailed and got the victory.

When Mr. Robinson, Mr. Brewster, and the other principal members had arrived,—they were among the last, having stayed to help the weakest over,—such things were deliberated as were necessary for their settling and for the best ordering of the church affairs. When they had lived at Amsterdam about a year, Mr. Robinson, their pastor, together with the most discerning of the others, seeing that Mr. John Smith and his followers had already fallen out with the church which was there previously, and that nothing could avail to end the quarrel, and also that the flames of contention were likely to break out in the parent church itself (as afterwards, alas, came to pass); they thought it best to move, before they were in any way involved, though they knew it would be to their worldly disadvantage, both at present and probably in the future,—as indeed it proved to be.

For these and other reasons, then, they removed to Leyden, a fair and beautiful city, of a sweet situation, made famous by its university, in which recently there had been so many learned men. However, lacking seafaring trades, which Amsterdam enjoys, it was not so favourable in providing means of livelihood. But being settled here, they fell to such trades and employments as they best could, valuing peace and their spiritual comfort above any other riches whatever; and at length they came to raise a competent and comfortable living, though only by dint of hard and continual labour.

Thus, after numerous difficulties, they continued many years in good circumstances, enjoying together much sweet and delightful intercourse and spiritual comfort in the ways of God, under the able ministry and prudent government of Mr. Robinson, and Mr. William Brewster, who before had been his assistant in place of an Elder, to which position he was now called and chosen by the church. So they grew in knowledge and other gifts and graces of the spirit of God, and lived together in peace and love and holiness; and many came to them from different parts of England, so that there grew up a great congregation. And if any dif-

ferences arose or offences broke out,—as cannot but be even amongst the best of men,—they were always so met with and nipped in the head betimes, that love, peace, and communion continued; or, in some instances, the church was purged of those who were incurable and incorrigible, when, after much patience used, no other means would serve. Indeed, such was the love and respect that this worthy man, Mr. John Robinson, had to his flock, and his flock to him, that it might be said of them, as it once was of the famous Emperor Marcus Aurelius and the people of Rome, that it was hard to judge whether he was more delighted in having such a people or they in having such a pastor. His love was great towards them, and his care was always bent to their best good both for soul and body; for, besides his singular ability in divine things (wherein he excelled), he was also very able in directing their civil affairs and foreseeing dangers and troubles; so he was very helpful to their material well-being, and was in every way a common father to them. None offended him more than those who kept apart from the rest, and neglected the common good; or those who were rigid in matters of outward order and would inveigh against the evil of others, and yet were remiss themselves and not too careful to maintain virtuous conversation. The congregation, too, ever had a reverent regard for him and held him in precious estimation, as his worth and wisdom deserved; and highly as they esteemed him whilst he lived and laboured amongst them, it was even more so after his death, when they came to feel the want of his help, and saw by woful experience what a treasure they had lost. But to return. I know not but it may be spoken to the honour of God, and without prejudice to any, that such was the true piety, the humble zeal, and fervent love, of this people, whilst they thus lived together, towards God and His ways, and the single-heartedness and sincere affection of one towards another, that they came as near the primitive pattern of the first churches as any other church of these later times has done.

It is not my purpose to treat of what befell them whilst they lived in the Low Countries,—which would require a large treatise of itself,—but to show the beginnings of the New Plymouth Settlement. But since some of their adversaries, upon their departure from Leyden of their own free will, uttered slanders against them, as if the country had been weary of them and had driven them out, as the heathen historians asserted of Moses and the Israelites when they went out of Egypt, I will mention a particular or two to show the contrary, and the good acceptation they had in the place where they lived.

First, though many of them were poor, there were none so poor but that if they were known to be of that congregation, the Dutch (either bakers or others) would trust them to any reasonable extent when they lacked money to buy what they needed. They found by experience how

careful they were to keep their word, and saw how diligent they were in their callings, that they would even compete for their custom, and employ them in preference to others.

Again, about the time of their departure, or a little before, the magistrates of the city, gave this commendable testimony of them in the public place of justice in reproof to the Walloons, who were of the French church there. "These English," said they, "have lived among us these twelve years, and yet we never had any suit or accusation against any of them; but your strifes and quarrels are continual."

At this time occurred the great trouble with the Arminians, who molested the whole state, and this city in particular, where the chief university was situated. So there were daily hot disputes in the schools thereabouts, and the students and other learned people were divided in their opinions between two professors of divinity, the one daily teaching in favour of the Arminian faction, and the other against it. Things grew to such a pass, that few of the followers of the one professor would hear the other teach. But Mr. Robinson, though he preached thrice a week himself and wrote several books, besides his many other duties, went constantly to hear their readings, the one as well as the other; so he became well-grounded in their controversy and saw the force of all their arguments, and knew the shifts of the opponent, and being himself very able, none was fitter to buckle with them than himself,—as appeared by various disputes. In fact, he began to be a terror to the Arminians, so that Episcopius, the Arminian professor, put forth his best strength and advanced various Theses which he asserted he would defend against all comers in public dispute.

Now Poliander, the other professor, and the chief preachers of the city, requested Mr. Robinson to take up his challenge, but he was loth to do so, being a stranger. However the others importuned him, and told him that such was the ability and nimbleness of the opponent, that the truth would suffer if he did not help them. So he acquiesced and prepared himself accordingly; and when the day came, the Lord so helped him to defend the truth and foil his adversary, that he put him to an apparent nonplus in public audience. And he did the same thing two or three times upon similar occasions. This, while it made many praise God that the truth had so famous a victory, procured him much honour and respect from those learned men and others who loved the truth. So far from being weary of him and his people, or desiring their absence, had it not been for fear of giving offence to the government of England, they would have conferred upon him some public honour. Indeed, when there was talk of their departure to America, several men of prominence in the country tried to induce them to become naturalized, and even made them large offers to do so. Though I might mention many other

similar examples to show the untruth of this slander, these suffice, for it was believed by few and was raised in malice.

IV. Reasons which led the Congregation at Leyden to decide upon Settlement in America.

After they had lived here for some eleven or twelve years,—the period of the famous truce between the Low Countries and Spain,—several of them having died, and many others being now old, the grave mistress, Experience, having taught them much, their prudent governors began to apprehend present dangers and to scan the future and think of timely remedy. After much thought and discourse on the subject, they began at length to incline to the idea of removal to some other place; not out of any new-fangledness or other such giddy humour, which often influences people to their detriment and danger, but for many important reasons, the chief of which I will here briefly touch upon.

First, they saw by experience that the hardships of the country were such that comparatively few others would join them, and fewer still would bide it out and remain with them. Many who came and many more who desired to come, could not endure the continual labour and hard fare and other inconveniences which they themselves were satisfied with. But though these weaker brethren loved the members of the congregation, personally approved their cause, and honoured their sufferings, they left them, weeping, as it were;—as Orpah did her mother-in-law, Naomi; or as those Romans did Cato at Utica, who desired to be excused and borne with, though they could not all be Catos. For, though many desired to enjoy the ordinances of God in their purity, and the liberty of the gospel, yet, alas, they preferred to submit to bondage, with danger to their conscience, rather than endure these privations. Some even preferred prisons in England to this liberty in Holland, with such hardships. But it was thought that if there could be found a better and easier place of living, it would attract many and remove this discouragement. Their pastor would often say, that if many of those who both wrote and preached against them were living where they might have liberty and comfortable conditions, they would then practice the same religion as they themselves did.

Secondly, they saw that though the people generally bore these difficulties very cheerfully, and with resolute courage, being in the best strength of their years; yet old age began to steal on many of them, and their great and continual labours, with other crosses and sorrows, hastened it before their time; so that it was not only probable, but certain, that in a few more years they would be in danger of scattering by the ne-

cessities pressing upon them. Therefore, according to the divine proverb (Prov. xxii, 3), that a wise man seeth the plague when it cometh, and hideth himself; they, like skillful and hardened soldiers, were wary of being surrounded by their enemies, so that they could neither fight nor flee, and thought it wiser to dislodge betimes to some place of better advantage and less danger, if any such could be found.

Thirdly, as necessity was a task-master over them, so they themselves were forced to be, not only over their servants, but in a sort over their dearest children; which not a little wounded the hearts of many a loving father and mother, and produced many sad and sorrowful effects. Many of their children, who were of the best disposition and who had learned to bear the yoke in their youth and were willing to bear part of their parents' burden, were often so oppressed with their labours, that though their minds were free and willing, their bodies bowed under the weight and became decrepit in early youth,—the vigour of nature being consumed in the very bud, as it were. But still more lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be borne, was that many of the children, influenced by these conditions, and the great licentiousness of the young people of the country, and the many temptations of the city, were led by evil example into dangerous courses, getting the reins off their necks and leaving their parents. Some became soldiers, others embarked upon voyages by sea and others upon worse courses tending to dissoluteness and the danger of their souls, to the great grief of the parents and the dishonour of God. So they saw their posterity would be in danger to degenerate and become corrupt.

Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations, or at least of making some way towards it, for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world, even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.

These, and some other similar reasons, moved them to resolve upon their removal, which they afterwards prosecuted in the face of great difficulties, as will appear.

The place they fixed their thoughts upon was somewhere in those vast and unpeopled countries of America, which were fruitful and fit for habitation, though devoid of all civilized inhabitants and given over to savages, who range up and down, differing little from the wild beasts themselves. This proposition when made public, found many different opinions, and raised many fears and doubts. The hopeful ones tried to encourage the rest to undertake it; others more timid, objected to it, alleging much that was neither unreasonable nor improbable. They argued that it was so big an undertaking that it was open to inconceivable perils and dangers. Besides the casualties of the seas, they asserted that the

length of the voyage was such that the women, and other weak persons worn out with age and travail, could never survive it. Even if they should, they contended that the miseries which they would be exposed to in such a country, would be too hard to endure. They would be liable to famine, nakedness, and want. The change of air, diet, and water would infect them with sickness and disease. Again, all those who surmounted these difficulties, would remain in continual danger from the savages, who are cruel, barbarous, and treacherous, furious in their rage, and merciless when they get the upper hand,—not content to kill, they delight in tormenting people in the most bloody manner possible; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting off the members and joints of others piecemeal, broiling them on the coals, and eating collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live,—with other cruelties too horrible to be related.

And the very hearing of these things could not but move the very bowels of men to grate within them and make the weak to quake and tremble. It was further objected that it would require greater sums of money to prepare for such a voyage, and to fit them with necessaries, than their diminished estates would amount to. Many precedents of ill success and lamentable miseries befallen others in similar undertakings were alleged,—besides their own experience in their removal to Holland, and how hard it was for them to live there, though it was a neighboring country and a civilized and rich commonwealth.

It was replied that all great and honourable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both met and overcome with answerable courage. It was granted the dangers were great, but not desperate; the difficulties were many, but not invincible. For, many of the things feared might never befall; others by provident care and the use of good means might in a great measure be prevented; and all of them, through the help of God, by fortitude and patience, might either be borne or overcome. True it was that such attempts were not to be undertaken without good ground and reason, rashly or lightly; or, as many had done, for curiosity or hope of gain. But their condition was not ordinary; their ends were good and honourable; their calling, lawful and urgent; therefore they might expect the blessing of God on their proceedings. Yea, though they should lose their lives in this action, yet might they have the comfort of knowing that their endeavour was worthy.

They were now living as exiles in poor circumstances; and as great miseries might befall them here as there, for the twelve years' truce was now over, and there was nothing but beating of drums and preparation for war. The Spaniard might prove as cruel as the savage of America, and the famine and pestilence as sore in Holland as across the seas. After many other things had been alleged on both sides, it was fully decided by

the majority to undertake the enterprise, and to prosecute it by the best means they could.

V. Decision to make New England the place of Settlement, in preference to Guiana or Virginia—Endeavour to obtain a Patent from the King of England: 1617–1620.

After humble prayers to God for His protection and assistance, and a general conference, they consulted what particular place to pitch upon. Some had thought of Guiana; some of those fertile places in hot climates; others were for some parts of Virginia, where the English had already made entrance. Those for Guiana alleged that the country was rich, fruitful, and blessed with a perpetual spring, where vigorous nature brought forth all things in abundance and plenty, without need of much labour, and that the Spaniards, having much more than they could possess, had not yet settled there, or anywhere very near.

To this it was objected that though the country was fruitful and pleasant, and might yield riches and easy maintenance to the possessors, other things considered, it would not be so fit for them. First, such hot countries are subject to horrible diseases and many noisome pests, which other more temperate places are free from, and they would not agree so well with our English bodies. Again, if they lived there and did well, the jealous Spaniards would never leave them in peace, but would dispossess them as they did the French in Florida,—and the sooner because they would have no protection, and their own strength would be insufficient to resist so potent an enemy and so near a neighbour.

On the other hand, against Virginia it was objected that if they lived among the English who had settled there, or so near them as to be under their government, they would be in as great danger of persecution for their religion as if they lived in England,—and it might be, worse; while, if they lived too far off, they would have neither help nor defence from them.

At length the conclusion was reached that they should live as a separate body, by themselves, under the general government of Virginia; and that through their friends they should sue his majesty to be pleased to allow them freedom of religion. That this might be granted they were led to hope by some prominent persons of rank and influence, who had become their friends.

Whereupon, two members of the congregation were sent to England at the expense of the rest, to arrange the matter. They found the Virginia

company anxious to have them, and willing to grant them a patent, with as ample privileges as they themselves had or could grant and to give them the best assistance they could. Some of the principal officers of the Virginia Company did not doubt that they could obtain the King's grant of liberty of religion, confirmed under his broad seal. But it proved a harder piece of work than they expected; and, though many means were used to accomplish it, it proved impossible. Many of high standing used their influence to obtain it,—though one of the King's chief secretaries, Sir Robert Nanton, was against them,—and others urged the Archbishop to give way to it; but it proved all in vain. They succeeded, however, in sounding his majesty's mind, and found that he would connive at them, and not molest them, provided they behaved peaceably. But to allow or tolerate their claim to religious freedom by his public authority, under his seal, was found to be impossible. This was all the leading officials of the Virginia Company or any of their best friends could do; though they persuaded the Congregation at Leyden to proceed with the undertaking, believing that they would not be troubled. With this answer the messengers returned.

This damped their enthusiasm, and caused some distraction. Many feared that if they should unsettle themselves and count upon these hopes, it might prove dangerous and be a sandy foundation. Indeed it was thought they might better have taken this understanding for granted, without making suit at all, than to have it thus rejected. But some of the chief members thought otherwise, and that they might well proceed, and that the King would not molest them, even though, for other reasons, he would not confirm it by any public act. And it was further contended that if there was no security in the promise thus intimated, there would be no great certainty in its further confirmation; for if, afterwards, there should be a desire to wrong them, though they had a seal as broad as the house floor, it would not serve their turn, for means would be found to reverse it. With this probability of success they urged that they should trust to God's providence for the outcome, as they had done in other things.

Upon this resolution other messengers were despatched to close with the Virginia Company as well as they could and to procure a patent with as good and ample conditions as possible; also to arrange with such merchants and other friends as had manifested interest, to participate in the accomplishment of this voyage. For these ends they were instructed upon what lines to proceed,—otherwise to conclude nothing without further orders.

Here it will be necessary to insert a letter or two bearing on these proceedings.

Sir Edwin Sandys in London to John Robinson and William Brewster at Leyden:

After my hearty salutations. . . . The agents of your congregation, Robert Cushman and John Carver, have been in communication with some of the more important members of his majesty's counsel for Virginia; and by presentation of the seven articles subscribed with your names have given them such satisfaction as has decided them to further your wishes as well as possible, for your own and the public good. Several particulars we will leave to the faithful report of your agents, who have carried themselves here with a discretion that is as creditable to themselves as to those they represent. Having requested time to confer with those who are interested in this undertaking, about several particulars, it has been very willingly assented to and so they now return to you. If, therefore, it may so please God to direct you that on your parts there occur no just impediments, I trust by the same direction it shall appear, that on our part all reasonable assistance will be given. And so I leave you, with your undertaking (which I hope is indeed the work of God), to the gracious protection and blessing of the Highest.

Your very loving friend,

London, Nov. 12th, 1617.

EDWIN SANDYS.

John Robinson and William Brewster at Leyden to Sir Edwin Sandys in London:

Right Worshipful,

Our humble duties, with grateful acknowledgment of your singular love, especially shown in your earnest endeavour for our good in this weighty business about Virginia. We have set down our request in writing, subscribed as you wished by the majority of the congregation and have sent it to the Council of the Virginia Company by our agent, John Carver, a deacon of our Church, whom a gentleman of our congregation accompanies.

We need not urge you to any more tender care of us, since, under God, above all persons and things in the world, we rely upon you, expecting the care of your love, the counsel of your wisdom, and the countenance of your authority. Notwithstanding, for your encouragement in the work we will mention these inducements to our enterprise:

1. We verily believe and trust that the Lord is with us, unto Whom and Whose service we have given ourselves in many trials; and that He will graciously prosper our endeavours according to the simplicity of our hearts therein.

2. We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange and hard land, which by patience we have largely overcome.

3. The people are for the most part as industrious and frugal, we think we may safely say, as any company of people in the world.

4. We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves straitly tied to all care of each other's good.

5. Lastly, we are not like some, whom small things discourage, or small discontents cause to wish themselves at home again. We know what we can expect both in England and in Holland, and that we shall not improve our material well-being by our departure; whereas, should we be forced to return, we could

William Bradford

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