

CHARLES ANDREWS

THE FATHERS OF NEW
ENGLAND: A
CHRONICLE OF THE
PURITAN
COMMONWEALTHS

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Charles M. Andrews

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CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE PILGRIMS

The Pilgrims and Puritans, whose migration to the New World marks the beginning of permanent settlement in New England, were children of the same age as the enterprising and adventurous pioneers of England in Virginia, Bermuda, and the Caribbean. It was the age in which the foundations of the British Empire were being laid in the Western Continent. The "spacious times of great Elizabeth" had passed, but the new national spirit born of those times stirred within the English people. The Kingdom had enjoyed sixty years of domestic peace and prosperity, and Englishmen were eager to enter the lists for a share in the advantages which the New World offered to those who would venture therein. Both landowning and landholding classes, gentry and tenant farmers alike, were clamoring, the one for an increase of their landed estates, the other for freedom

from the feudal restraints which still legally bound them. The land-hunger of neither class could be satisfied in a narrow island where the law and the lawgivers were in favor of the maintenance of feudal rights. The expectations of all were aroused by visions of wealth from the El Dorados of the West, or of profit from commercial enterprises which appealed to the cupidity of capitalists and led to investments that promised speedy and ample returns. A desire to improve social conditions and to solve the problem of the poor and the vagrant, which had become acute since the dissolution of the monasteries, was arousing the authorities to deal with the pauper and to dispose of the criminal in such a way as to yield a profitable service to the kingdom. England was full of resolute men, sea-dogs and soldiers of fortune, captains on the land as well as the sea, who in times of peace were seeking employment and profit and who needed an outlet for their energies. Some of these continued in the service of kings and princes in Europe; others conducted enterprises against the Spaniards in the West Indies and along the Spanish Main; while still others, such as John Smith and Miles Standish, became pioneers in the work of English colonization.

But more important than the promptings of land-hunger and the desire for wealth and adventure was the call made by a social and religious movement which was but a phase of the general restlessness and popular discontent. The Reformation, in which this movement had its origin, was more than a revolt from the organization and doctrines of the mediæval church; it voiced the

yearning of the middle classes for a position commensurate with their growing prominence in the national life. Though the feudal tenantry, given over to agriculture and bound by the conventions of feudal law, were still perpetuating many of the old customs, the towns were emancipating themselves from feudal control, and by means of their wealth and industrial activities were winning recognition as independent and largely self-sufficing units. The gild, a closely compacted brotherhood, existing partly for religious and educational purposes and partly for the control of handicrafts and the exchange of goods, became the center of middle-class energy, and in thousands of instances hedged in the lives of the humbler artisans. Thus it was largely from those who knew no wider world than the fields which they cultivated and the gilds which governed their standards and output that the early settlers of New England were recruited.

Equally important with the social changes were those which concerned men's faith and religious organization. The Peace of Augsburg, which in 1555 had closed for the moment the warfare resulting from the Reformation, not only recognized the right of Protestantism to exist, but also handed over to each state, whether kingdom, duchy, or principality, full power to control the creed within its borders. Whoever ruled the state could determine the religion of his subjects, a dictum which denied the right of individuals or groups of individuals to depart from the established faith. Hence arose a second revolt, not against the mediæval church and empire but against the authority

of the state and its creed, whether Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, or Calvinist, a revolt in which Huguenot in France battled for his right to believe as he wished, and Puritan in England refused to conform to a manner of worship which retained much of the mediæval liturgy and ceremonial. Just as all great revolutionary movements in church or state give rise to men who repudiate tradition and all accretions due to human experience, and base their political and religious ideals upon the law of nature, the rights of man, the inner light, or the Word of God; so, too, in England under Elizabeth and James I, leaders appeared who demanded radical changes in faith and practice, and advocated complete separation from the Anglican Church and isolation from the religious world about them. Of such were the Separatists, who rejected the Anglican and other creeds, severed all bonds with a national church system, cast aside form, ceremony, liturgy, and a hierarchy of church orders, and sought for the true faith and form of worship in the Word of God. For these men the Bible was the only test of religious truth.

The Separatists organized themselves into small religious groups, as independent communities or companies of Christians, covenanted with God and keeping the Divine Law in a Holy Communion. They consisted in the main of men and women in the humbler walks of life – artisans, tenant farmers, with some middle-class gentry. Sufficient to themselves and knit together in the fashion of a gild or brotherhood, they believed in a church system of the simplest form and followed the Bible, Old and New

Testaments alike, as the guide of their lives. Desiring to withdraw from the world as it was that they might commune together in direct relations with God, they accepted persecution as the test of their faith and welcomed hardship, banishment, and even death as proofs of righteousness and truth. Convinced of the scriptural soundness of what they believed and what they practised, and confident of salvation through unyielding submission to God's will as they interpreted it, they became conspicuous because of their radical thought and peculiar forms of worship, and inevitably drew upon themselves the attention of the authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical.

The leading centers of Separatism were in London and Norfolk, but the seat of the little congregation that eventually led the way across the sea to New England was in Scrooby in Nottinghamshire. There – in Scrooby manor-house, where William Brewster, the father, was receiver and bailiff, and his son, the future elder of the Plymouth colony, was acting postmaster; where Richard Clayton preached and John Robinson prayed; and where the youthful William Bradford was one of its members – there was gathered a small Separatist congregation composed of humble folk of Nottinghamshire and adjoining counties. They were soon discovered worshipping in the manor-house chapel, by the ecclesiastical authorities of Yorkshire, and for more than a year were subjected to persecution, some being "taken and clapt up in prison," others having "their houses besett and watcht night and day and hardly escaped their hands." At

length they determined to leave England for Holland. During 1607 and 1608 they escaped secretly, some at one time, some at another, all with great loss and difficulty, until by the August of the latter year there were gathered at Amsterdam more than a hundred men, women, and children, "armed with faith and patience."

But Amsterdam proved a disappointing refuge. And in 1609 they moved to Leyden, "a fair and bewtifulle citie," where for eleven years they remained, pursuing such trades as they could, chiefly weaving and the manufacture of cloth, "injoying much sweete and delightful societie and spiritual comfort together in the ways of God, under the able ministrie and prudente governmente of Mr. John Robinson and Mr. William Brewster." But at last new and imperative reasons arose, demanding a third removal, not to another city in Holland, but this time to the New World called America. They were breaking under the great labor and hard fare; they feared to lose their language and saw no opportunity to educate their children; they disapproved of the lax Dutch observance of Sunday and saw in the temptations of the place a menace to the habits and morals of the younger members of the flock, and, in the influences of the world around them, a danger to the purity of their creed and their practice. They determined to go to a new country "devoyd of all civill inhabitants," where they might keep their names, their faith, and their nationality.

After many misgivings, the fateful decision was reached by

the "major parte," and preparations for departure were made. But where to go became a troublesome problem. The merits of Guiana and other "wild coasts" were debated, but finally Virginia met with general approval, because there they might live as a private association, a distinct body by themselves, similar to other private companies already established there. To this end they sent two of their number to England to secure a patent from the Virginia Company of London. Under this patent and in bond of allegiance to King James, yet acting as a "body in the most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord," an independent and absolute church, they became a civil community also, with governors chosen for the work from among themselves. But the dissensions in the London Company caused them to lose faith in that association, and, hearing of the reorganization of the Virginia Company of Plymouth,¹ which about this time obtained a new charter as the New England Council, they turned from southern to northern Virginia – that is, to New England – and resolved to make their settlement where according to reports fishing might become a means of livelihood.

But their plans could not be executed without assistance; and,

¹ In 1606 King James had granted a charter incorporating two companies, one of which, made up of gentlemen and merchants in and about London, was known as the Virginia Company of London, the other as the Virginia Company of Plymouth. The former was authorized to plant colonies between thirty-four and forty-one degrees north latitude, and the latter between thirty-eight and forty-five, but neither was to plant a colony within one hundred miles of the other. Jamestown, the first colony of the London Company, was now thirteen years old. The Plymouth Company had made no permanent settlement in its domain.

coming into touch with a London merchant, Thomas Weston, who promised to aid them, they entered into what proved to be a long and wearisome negotiation with a group of adventurers – gentlemen, merchants, and others, seventy in number – for an advance of money to finance the expedition. The Pilgrims entered into a partnership with the merchants to form a voluntary joint-stock company. It was understood that the merchants, who purchased shares, were to remain in England; that the colonists, who contributed their personal service at a fixed rating, were to go to America, there to labor at trade, trucking, and fishing for seven years; and that during this time all profits were to remain in a common stock and all lands to be left undivided. The conditions were hard and discouraging, but there was no alternative; and at last, embarking at Delfthaven in the *Speedwell*, a small ship bought and fitted in Holland, they came to Southampton, where another and larger vessel, the *Mayflower*, was in waiting. In August, 1620, the two vessels set sail, but the *Speedwell*, proving unseaworthy, put back after two attempts, and the *Mayflower* went on alone, bearing one hundred and two passengers, two-thirds of the whole, picked out as worthy and willing to undertake the voyage. The *Mayflower* reached the waters of New England on the 11th of November after a tedious course of sixty-five days from Plymouth to Cape Cod; but they did not decide on their place of landing until the 21st of December. Four days later they erected on the site of the town of Plymouth their first building.

The coast of New England was no unknown shore. During

the years from 1607 to 1620, while settlers were founding permanent colonies at Jamestown and in Bermuda, explorers and fishermen, both English and French, had skirted its headlands and penetrated its harbors. In 1614, John Smith, the famous Virginia pioneer, who had left the service of the London Company and was in the employ of certain London merchants, had explored the northern coast in an open boat and had given the region its name. These many voyages and ventures at trading and fishing served to arouse enthusiasm in England for a world of good rivers and harbors, rich soil, and wonderful fishing, and to spread widely a knowledge of the coasts from Newfoundland to the Hudson River. Of this knowledge the Pilgrims reaped the benefit, and the captain of the *Mayflower*, Christopher Jones, against whom any charge of treachery may be dismissed, guided them, it is true, to a region unoccupied by Englishmen but not to one unknown or poorly esteemed. The miseries that confronted the Pilgrims during their first year in Plymouth colony were not due to the inhospitality of the region, but to the time of year when they landed upon it; and insufficiently provisioned as they were before they left England, it is little wonder that suffering and death should have accompanied their first experience with a New England winter.

This little group of men and women landed on territory that had been granted to the New England Council and they themselves had neither patent for their land nor royal authority to set up a government. But some form of government was

absolutely necessary. Before starting from Southampton, they had followed Robinson's instructions to choose a governor and assistants for each ship "to order the people by the way"; and now that they were at the end of their long voyage, the men of the company met in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, and drew up a covenant in accordance with which they combined themselves together into a body politic for their better ordering and preservation. This compact, signed by forty-one members, of whom eleven bore the title of "Mister," was a plantation covenant, the political counterpart of the church covenant which bound together every Separatist community. It provided that the people should live together in a peaceable and orderly manner under civil authorities of their own choosing, and was the first of many such covenants entered into by New England towns, not defining a government but binding the settlers to unite politically as they had already done for religious worship. John Carver, who had been chosen governor on the *Mayflower*, was confirmed as governor of the settlement and given one assistant. After their goods had been set on shore and a few cottages built, the whole body "mette and consulted of lawes and orders, both for their civil and military governmente, still adding therunto as urgent occasion in severall times, and as cases did require."

Of this courageous but sorely stricken community more than half died before the first winter was over. But gradually the people became acclimated, new colonists came out, some from the community at Leyden, in the *Fortune*, the *Anne*, the *Charity*,

and the *Handmaid*, and the numbers steadily increased. The settlers were in the main a homogeneous body, both as to social class and to religious views and purpose. Among them were undesirable members – some were sent out by the English merchants and others came out of their own accord – who played stool-ball on Sunday, committed theft, or set the community by the ears, as did one notorious offender named Lyford. But their number was not great, for most of them remained but a short time, and then went to Virginia or elsewhere, or were shipped back to England by the Pilgrims as incorrigibles. The life of the people was predominantly agricultural, with fishing, salt-making, and trading with the Indians as allied interests. The partners in England sent overseas cattle, stock, and laborers, and, as their profits depended on the success of the settlement, did what they could to encourage its development. The position of the Pilgrims was that of sharers and partners with the merchants, from whom they received directions but not commands.

But under the agreement of 1620 with their partners in London, which remained in force for seven years, the Plymouth people could neither divide their land nor dispose of the products of their labor, and so burdensome became this arrangement that in 1623 temporary assignments of land were made which in 1624 became permanent. As Bradford said, and his comment is full of wisdom:

The experience that was had in this commone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly

and sober men, may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Platos and other ancients, applauded by some of later times; that the taking away of propertie, and bringing in communitie into a comone wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser then God. For this comunitie (so farr as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much imployment that would have been to their benefite and comfote. For the yong-men that were most able and fitte for labour and service did repine that they should spend their time and streingth to worke for other mens wives and children, with out any recompence. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in devisision of victails and cloaths, than he that was weake and not able to doe a quarter the other could; this was thought injuestice. The aged and graver men to be ranked and equalised in labours, and victails, cloaths, etc., with the meaner and yonger sorte, thought it some indignitie and disrespect unto them. And for mens wives to be commanded to doe servise for other men, as dresing their meate, washing their cloaths, etc., they deemd it a kind of slaverie, neither could many husbands well brooke it.

During the two years that followed, so evident was the failure of the joint undertaking that efforts were made on both sides to bring it to an end; for the merchants, with no profit from the enterprise, were anxious to avoid further indebtedness; and the colonists, wearying of the dual control, wished to reap for themselves the full reward of their own efforts. Under the new arrangement of small private properties, the settlers began "to

prise corne as more pretious than silver, and those that had some to spare begane to trade one with another for small things, by the quart, pottle, and peck, etc., for money they had none." Later, finding "their corne, what they could spare from ther necessities, to be a commoditie, (for they sould it at 6s. a bushell) [they] used great dilligence in planting the same. And the Gov[erno]r and shuch as were designed to manage the trade, (for it was retained for the generall good, and none were to trade in particuler,) they followed it to the best advantage they could; and wanting trading goods, they understoode that a plantation which was at Monhigen, and belonged to some marchants of Plimoth [England] was to breake up, and diverse usefull goods was ther to be sould," the governor (Bradford himself) and Edward Winslow "tooke a boat and some hands and went thither... With these goods, and their corne after harvest they gott good store of trade, so as they were enabled to pay their ingagements against the time, and to get some cloathing for the people, and had some comodities beforehand." Though conditions were hard and often discouraging, the Pilgrims gradually found themselves self-supporting and as soon as this fact became clear, they sent Isaac Allerton to England "to make a composition with the adventurers." As a result of the negotiations an "agreement or bargen" was made whereby eight leading members of the colony bought the shares of the merchants for £1800 and distributed the payment among the settlers, who at this time numbered altogether about three hundred. Each share carried with it a

certain portion of land and livestock. The debt was not finally liquidated until 1642.

By 1630, the Plymouth colony was fairly on its feet and beginning to grow in "outward estate." The settlers increased in number, prospered financially, and scattered to the outlying districts; and Plymouth the town and Plymouth the colony ceased to be identical. Before 1640, the latter had become a cluster of ten towns, each a covenanted community with its church and elder. Though the colony never obtained a charter of incorporation from the Crown, it developed a form of government arising naturally from its own needs. By 1633 its governor and one assistant had become a governor and seven assistants, elected annually at a primary assembly held in Plymouth town; and the three parts, governor, assistants, and assembly, together constituted the governing body of the colony. In 1636, a revision of the laws and ordinances was made in the form of "The Great Fundamentals," a sort of constitution, frequently interspersed with statements of principles, which was printed with additions in 1671. The right to vote was limited at first to those who were members of the company and liable for its debt, but later the suffrage was extended to include others than the first-comers, and in 1633 was exercised by sixty-eight persons altogether. In 1668, a voter was required to have property, to be "of sober and peaceable conversation," and to take an oath of fidelity, but apparently he was never required to take the oath of allegiance to the Crown. So rapidly did the

colony expand that, by 1639, the holding of a primary assembly in Plymouth town became so inconvenient that delegates had to be chosen. Thus there was introduced into the colony a form of representative government, though it is to be noted that governor, assistants, and deputies sat together in a common room and never divided into two houses, as did the assemblies in other colonies.

The settlement of Plymouth colony is conspicuous in New England history because of the faith and courage and suffering of those who engaged in it and because of the ever alluring charm of William Bradford's *History of Plimouth Plantation*. The greatness of the Pilgrims lay in their illustrious example and in the influence they exercised upon the church life of the later New England colonies, for to the Pilgrims was due the fact that the congregational way of organization and worship became the accepted form in Massachusetts and Connecticut. But in other respects Plymouth was vastly overshadowed by her vigorous neighbors. Her people, humble and simple, were without importance in the world of thought, literature, or education. Their intellectual and material poverty, lack of business enterprise, unfavorable situation, and defenseless position in the eyes of the law rendered them almost a negative factor in the later life of New England. No great movement can be traced to their initiation, no great leader to birth within their borders, and no great work of art, literature, or scholarship to those who belonged to this unpretending company. The Pilgrim Fathers stand rather as an emblem of virtue than a moulding

force in the life of the nation.

CHAPTER II

THE BAY COLONY

While the Pilgrims were thus establishing themselves as the first occupants of the soil of New England, other men of various sorts and motives were trying their fortunes within its borders and were testing the opportunities which it offered for fishing and trade with the Indians. They came as individuals and companies, men of wandering disposition, romantic characters many of them, resembling the rovers and adventurers in the Caribbean or representing some of the many activities prevalent in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Thomas Weston, former ally of the Pilgrims, settled with a motley crew of rude fellows at Wessagusset (Quincy) and there established a trading post in 1622. Of this settlement, which came to an untimely end after causing the Pilgrims a great deal of trouble, only a blockhouse and stockade remained. Another irregular trader, Captain Wollaston, with some thirty or forty people, chiefly servants, established himself in 1625 two miles north of Wessagusset, calling the place Mount Wollaston. With him came that wit, versifier, and prince of roysterers, Thomas Morton, who, after Wollaston had moved on to Virginia, became "lord of misrule." Dubbing his seat Merrymount, drinking, carousing, and corrupting the Indians, affronting the decorous Separatists

at Plymouth, Morton later became a serious menace to the peace of Massachusetts Bay. The Pilgrims felt that the coming of such adventurers and scoffers, who were none too scrupulous in their dealings with either white man or Indian and were given to practices which the Puritans heartily abhorred, was a calamity showing that even in the wilds of America they could not escape the world from which they were anxious to withdraw.

The settlements formed by these squatters and stragglers were quite unauthorized by the New England Council, which owned the title to the soil. As this Council had accomplished very little under its patent, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, its most active member, persisted in his efforts to found a colony, brought about a general distribution of the territory among its members, and obtained for himself and his son Robert, the section around and immediately north of Massachusetts Bay. An expedition was at once launched. In September, 1623, Robert Gorges with six gentlemen and a well-equipped and well-organized body of settlers reached Plymouth, – the forerunners, it was hoped, of a large number to come. This company of settlers was composed of families, the heads of which were mechanics and farmers, and with them were two clergymen, Morrell and Blackstone, the whole constituting the greatest enterprise set on foot in America by the Council. Robert Gorges, bearing a commission constituting him Governor-General over all New England, made his settlement at Weston's old place at Wessagusset. Here he built houses and stored his goods and began the founding of Weymouth,

the second permanent habitation in New England and the first on Massachusetts Bay. Unfortunately, famine, that arch-enemy of all the early settlers, fell upon his company, his father's resources in England proved inadequate, and he and others were obliged to return. Of those that remained a few stayed at Wessagusset; one of the clergymen, William Blackstone, with his wife went to Shawmut (Boston); Samuel Maverick and his wife, to Winnissimmet (Chelsea); and the Walfords, to Mishawum (Charlestown). Probably all these people were Anglicans; some later became freemen of the Massachusetts colony; others who refused to conform returned to England; but Blackstone remained in his little cottage on the south slope of Beacon Hill, unwilling to join any of the churches, because, as he said, he came from England to escape the "Lord Bishops," and he did not propose in America to be under the "Lord Brethren."

The colony of Massachusetts Bay began as a fishing venture with profit as its object. It so happened that the Pilgrims wished to secure a right to fish off Cape Ann, and through one of their number they applied to Lord Sheffield, a member of the Council who had shared in the distribution of 1623. Sheffield caused a patent to be drawn, which the Plymouth people conveyed to a Dorchester company desiring to establish a fishing colony in New England. The chief promoter of the Dorchester venture was the Reverend John White, a conforming Puritan clergyman, in whose congregation was one John Endecott. The company thus organized remained in England but sent some fourteen

settlers to Cape Ann in the winter of 1623-1624. Fishing and planting, however, did not go well together, the venture failed, and the settlers removed southward to Naumkeag (Salem). Though many of the English company desired to abandon the undertaking, there were others, among whom were a few Puritans or Nonconformists, who favored its continuance. These men consulted with others of like mind in London, and through the help of the Earl of Warwick, a nobleman friendly to the Puritan cause, a patent was issued by the Council to Endecott and five associates, for land extending from above the Merrimac to below the Charles. This patent, it will be noticed, included the territory already granted to Gorges and his son Robert, and was obtained apparently with the consent of Gorges, who thought that his own and his son's rights would be safely protected. Under this patent, the partners sent over Endecott as governor with sixty others to begin a colony at Salem, where the "old planters" from Cape Ann had already established themselves. Salem was thus a plantation from September, 1628, to the summer of 1630, on land granted to the associates in England; and the relations of these two were much the same as those of Jamestown with the London Company.

Endecott and his associates soon made it evident, however, that they were planning larger things for themselves and had no intention, if they could help it, of recognizing the claims of Gorges and his son. They wanted complete control of their territory in New England, and to this end they applied to the

Crown for a confirmation of their land-patent and for a charter of incorporation as a company with full powers of government. As this application was a deliberate defiance of Gorges and the New England Council, it has always been a matter of surprise that the associates were able to gain the support of the Crown in this effort to oust Gorges and his son from lands that were legally theirs. No satisfactory explanation has ever been advanced, but it is worthy of note that at this juncture Gorges was in France in the service of the King, whereas on the side of the associates and their friends was the Earl of Warwick, himself deeply interested in colonizing projects and one of the most powerful men in England. The charter was obtained March 4, 1629 – how, we do not know. It created a corporation of twenty-six members, Anglicans and Nonconformists, known as the Massachusetts Bay Company.

But if the original purpose of this company was to engage in a business enterprise for the sake of profit, it soon underwent a noteworthy transformation. In 1629, control passed into the hands of those members of the company in whom a religious motive was uppermost. How far the charter was planned at first as a Puritan contrivance to be used in case of need will never be known. It is equally uncertain whether the particular form of charter, with the place of the company's residence omitted, was selected to facilitate a possible removal of the company from England to America; but it is likely that removal was early in the minds of the Puritan members of the company. At this time

a great many people felt as did the Reverend John White, who expressed the hope that God's people should turn with eyes of longing to the free and open spaces of the New World, whither they might flee to be at peace. But, when the charter was granted, the Puritans were not in control of the company, which remained in England for a year after it was incorporated, superintending the management of its colony just as other trading companies had done.

But events were moving rapidly in England. Between March, 1629, and March, 1630, Parliament was dissolved under circumstances of great excitement, parliamentary privileges were set aside, parliamentary leaders were sent to the Tower, and the period of royal rule without Parliament began. The heavy hand of an autocratic government fell on all those within reach who upheld the Puritan cause, among whom was John Winthrop, a country squire, forty-one years of age, who was deprived of his office as attorney in the Court of Wards. Disillusioned as to life in England because of financial losses and family bereavements, and now barred from his customary employment by act of the Government, he turned his thoughts toward America. Acting with the approval of the Earl of Warwick and in conjunction with a group of Puritan friends – Thomas Dudley, Isaac Johnson, Richard Saltonstall, and John Humphrey, – he decided in the summer of 1629 to leave England forever, and in September he joined the Massachusetts Bay Company. Almost immediately he showed his capacity for leadership, was soon elected governor,

and was able during the following winter to obtain such a control of affairs as to secure a vote in favor of the transfer of charter and company to New England. The official organization was remodeled so that only those desiring to remove should be in control, and on March 29, 1630, the company with its charter, accompanied by a considerable number of prospective colonists, set sail from Cowes near the Isle of Wight in four vessels, the *Arabella*, the *Talbot*, the *Ambrose*, and the *Jewel*, the remaining passengers following in seven other vessels a week or two later. The voyages of the vessels were long, none less than nine weeks, by way of the Azores and the Maine coast, and the distressed Puritans, seven hundred altogether, scurvy-stricken and reduced in numbers by many deaths, did not reach Salem until June and July. Hence they moved on to Charlestown, set up their tents on the slope of the hill, and on the 23rd of August, held the first official meeting of the company on American soil; but finding no running water in the place and still pursued by sickness and death, they again removed, this time to Boston, where they built houses against the winter. With the founding of this colony – the colony of Massachusetts Bay – a new era for New England began.

This grant of territory to the Massachusetts Bay Company and of the charter confirming the title and conveying powers of government put a complete stop to Gorges's plans for a final proprietorship in New England. Gorges had acquiesced in the first grant by the New England Council because he thought it a sub-grant, like that to Plymouth, in no way injuring his own

control. But when in 1632, he learned the true inwardness of the Massachusetts title and discovered that Warwick and the Puritans had outwitted him by obtaining royal confirmation of a grant that extinguished his own proprietary rights, he turned on Warwick, declared that the charter had been surreptitiously obtained, and demanded that it be brought to the Council board. Learning that it had gone to New England, he forced the withdrawal of Warwick from the Council, and from that time forward for five years bent all his efforts to overthrow the Puritan colony by obtaining the annulment of its privileges.

In this attempt, he was aided by Captain John Mason, an able, energetic promoter of colonizing movements who had already been concerned with settlements in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and who was zealous to begin a plantation in the province of Maine. Mason had received grants from the Council, both individually and in partnership with Gorges, and had visited New England in the interest of his claims. Through the influence of Gorges, he was now made a member of the Council and joined in the movement to break the hold of the Puritans upon New England. He and Gorges found useful allies in three men who had been driven out of Massachusetts by the Puritan leaders soon after their arrival at Boston – Thomas Morton of Merrymount, Sir Christopher Gardiner, a picturesque, somewhat mysterious personage thought to have been an agent of Gorges in New England, with methods and morals that gave offense to Massachusetts, and Philip Ratcliffe, a much less worthy

character given to scandal and invective, who had been deprived of his ears by the Puritan authorities. These men were bitter in their denunciation of the Puritan government.

The situation was perilous for the new colony, which was hardly yet firmly established. In direct violation of the royal commands, hundreds of men and women were leaving England – not merely adventurers or humble Separatists, but sober people of the better classes, of mature years and substantial characters. When, therefore, Gorges and the others meeting at Gorges's house at Plymouth brought their complaints to the attention of the Privy Council, they were listened to with attention, and instructions were sent at once to stop the Puritan ships and to bring the charter of the Massachusetts Company to the Council board. To check the Puritan migration and to institute further inquiry into the facts of the case a commission was appointed in 1634, with Archbishop Laud at its head, for the special purpose, among others, of revoking charters "surreptitiously and unduly obtained." Gorges and Morton appealed to Laud against the Puritans, and Morton wrote his *New England Canaan*, which he dedicated to Laud, in the hope of exposing the motives of the colony and of arousing the Archbishop to action. Warwick threw his influence on the side of Massachusetts, being always forward, as Winthrop said, "to do good to our colony"; and the colony itself, fearing attack, began to fortify Castle Island in the harbor and to prepare for defense. Endecott, in wrath, defaced the royal ensign at Salem, and so intense was the excitement and

so determined the attitude of the Puritans that, had the Crown attempted to send over a Governor-General or to seize the charter by force, the colony would have resisted to the full extent of its power.

Gorges, believing that he could work better through the King and the Archbishop than through the New England Council, brought about the dissolution of that body in 1635, thus making it possible for the King to deal directly with the New England situation. Before its dissolution the Council had authorized Morton, acting as its lawyer, to bring the case to the attention of the Attorney-General of England, who filed in the Court of King's Bench a complaint against Massachusetts, as a result of which a writ of *quo warranto* was issued against the Company.

The outlook was ominous for Puritanism, not only in New England but in old England as well. That year saw the flight of the greatest number of emigrants across the sea, for the persecution in England was at its height, the Puritan aristocracy was suffering in its estates, and Puritan divines were everywhere silenced or dismissed. Even Warwick was shorn of a part of his power. Young Henry Vane, son of a baronet, had already gone to America, and such men as Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke, and Sir Arthur Haslerigg were thinking of migrating and had prepared a refuge at Saybrook where they might find peace. But the turn of the tide soon came. The royal Government was bankrupt, the resistance to the payment of ship-money was already making itself felt, and disturbances in the central and

eastern counties were absorbing the attention and energies of the Government. Gorges, left alone to execute the writ against the colony, joined with Mason in building a ship for the purpose of carrying the *quo warranto* to New England, but the vessel broke in the launching, and their resources were at an end. Mason died in 1635, and Gorges, an old man of seventy, bankrupt and discouraged, could do no more. Though Morton continued the struggle, and though, in 1638, the Committee of the Council for Foreign Plantations (the Laud Commission) again demanded the charter, the danger was past: conditions in England had become so serious for the King that the complaints against Massachusetts were lost to view. At last in 1639 Gorges obtained his charter for a feudal propriety in Maine but no further attempts were made to overthrow the Massachusetts Bay colony.

During the years from 1630 to 1640, the growth of the colony was extraordinarily rapid. In the first year alone seventeen ships with two thousand colonists came over, and it is estimated that by 1641 three hundred vessels bearing twenty thousand passengers had crossed the Atlantic. It was a great migration. Inevitably many went back, but the great majority remained and settled in Boston and its neighborhood – Roxbury, Charlestown, Dorchester, Cambridge, and Watertown, where in 1643 were situated according to Winthrop "near half of the commonwealth for number of people and substance." From the first the colonists dispersed rapidly, establishing in favorable places settlements which they generally called plantations but sometimes towns.

In these they lived as petty religious and civil communities, each under its minister, with civil officials chosen from among themselves. In the decade following 1630 the number of such settlements rose to twenty-two. The inhabitants were almost purely English in stock, with here and there an Irishman, a few Jews, and an occasional negro from the West Indies. Nearly all the settlers were of Puritan sympathies, and of middle-class origin – tenants from English estates, artisans from English towns, and many indentured servants. A few were of the aristocracy, such as Lady Arabella Johnson, daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, Sir Richard Saltonstall, Lady Deborah Moody, members of the Harlakenden family, young Henry Vane, Thomas Gorges, and a few others. Of "Misters" and "Esquires" there was a goodly number, such as Winthrop, Haynes, Emanuel Downing, and the like. The first leaders were exceptional men, possessed of ability and education, and many were university graduates, who brought with them the books and the habits of the reader and scholar of their day. They were superior to those of the second and third generation in the breadth of their ideas and in the vigor and originality of their convictions.

Migration ceased in 1641, and a time of stress and suffering set in. Commodities grew scarce, prices rose, many colonists returned to England leaving debts behind, and as yet the colony produced no staples to exchange for merchandise from the mother country. Some of the settlers, discouraged, went to the West Indies; others, fleeing for fear of want, found their way

to the Dutch at Long Island. Pressure was brought to bear at various times to persuade the people to migrate elsewhere as a body, to Old Providence and Trinidad in the Caribbean, to Maryland, and later to Jamaica; but these attempts proved vain. The Puritan was willing to endure hardship and suffering for the sake of civil and religious independence, but he was not willing to lose his identity among those who did not share his faith in the guiding hand of God or who denied the principles according to which he wished to govern his community. At first the leaders of the migration were Nonconformists not Separatists. Francis Higginson, Endecott's minister at Salem, had declared in 1629 that they did not go to New England as separatists from the Church of England but only as those who would "separate from the corruption in it"; and Winthrop used "Easter" and the customary names of the months until 1635. But the Puritans became essentially Separatists from the day when Dr. Samuel Fuller of Plymouth persuaded the Salem community, even before the company itself had left England, to accept the practices of the Plymouth Church. Each town consequently had its church, pastor, teacher, and covenant, and became an independent Congregational community – a circumstance which left a deep impress upon the life and history of New England.

The government of the colony was never a democracy in the modern sense of the term. At first in 1630, control was assumed by the governor and his assistants, leaving but little power in the hands of the freeman; but such usurpation of power could

not last, and in 1634 the freemen were given the right to elect officials, to make and enforce laws, raise money, impose taxes, and dispose of lands. Thus was begun the transformation of the court of the company into a parliament, and the company itself into a commonwealth. So self-sufficient did the colony become in these early years of its history that by 1646 Massachusetts could assert that it owed only allegiance to England and was entirely independent of the British Parliament in all matters of government, in which affairs under its charter it had absolute power. Many denied this contention of the leaders, asserting that the company was only a corporation and that any colonist had a right of appeal to England. Winthrop refused definitely to recognize this right, and measures were taken to purge the colony of these refractory spirits, among whom were Dr. Robert Child, one of the best educated men of the colony, William Vassall, and Samuel Maverick. All were fined, some clapped in irons, and many banished. Child returned to England, Vassall went to Barbados, and the rest were silenced. So menacing was the revolt that Edward Winslow was sent to England to present the case to the parliamentary commissioners, which he did successfully.

But among those who upheld the freedom of the colony from English interference and control there were many who complained of the form the government was taking. The franchise was limited to church members, which debarred five-sixths of the population from voting and holding office; the magistrates insisted on exercising a negative vote upon the

proceedings of the deputies, because they deemed it necessary to prevent the colony from degenerating into "a mere democracy"; and the ministers or elders exercised an influence in purely civil matters that rendered them arbiters in all disputes between the magistrates and the deputies. Until 1634, the general court had been a primary assembly, but in that year representation was introduced and the towns sent deputies, who soon began to complain of the meagerness of their powers. From this time on, the efforts of the deputies to reduce the authority of the magistrates and to increase their own were continuous and insistent. One bold dissenter was barred from public office in 1635 for daring to deny the magistrates' claim, and others expressed their fear that autocratic rule and a governor for life would endanger the liberty of the people. The dominance of the clergy tended to the maintenance of an intolerant theocracy and was offensive to many in Massachusetts who, having fled from Laud's intolerance at home, had no desire to submit to an equal intolerance in New England. Between 1634 and 1638 the manifestations of this dislike became conspicuous and alarming. The Governor's son, the younger John Winthrop, dissatisfied with the hard régime in Massachusetts, returned to England in 1634. Henry Vane, though elected Governor in 1636, showed marked discontent, and when defeated the next year left the colony. The English aristocratic Puritans, Saye and Sele, Brooke, and others, who planned to leave England in 1635, found themselves so out of accord with the Massachusetts policy of

limiting of the suffrage to church members – and to church membership as determined by the clergy – that they refused to go to Boston, and persisted in their plan for a settlement at Saybrook. The Massachusetts system had thus become not a constitutional government fashioned after the best liberal thought in England of that day, but a narrow oligarchy in which the political order was determined according to a rigid interpretation of theology. This excessive theocratic concentration of power resulted in driving from the colony many of its best men.

More notorious even than the political dissensions were the moral and theological disputes which almost disrupted the colony. The magistrates and elders did not compel men to leave the colony because of political heresy, but they did drive them out because of difference in matters of theology. Even before the company came over, Endecott had sent John and Samuel Browne back to England because they worshiped according to the Book of Common Prayer. Morton and six others were banished in 1630 as an immoral influence. Sir Christopher Gardiner, Philip Ratcliffe, Richard Wright, the Walfords, and Henry Lynn were all forced to leave in 1630 and 1631 as "unmeete to inhabit here." Roger Williams, the tolerationist and upholder of soul-liberty, who complained of the magistrates for oppression and of the elders for injustice and who opposed the close union of church and state, was compelled to leave during the winter of 1635 and 1636. But the great expulsion came in 1637, when an epidemic of heresy struck the colony. A synod at Newtown condemned

eighty erroneous opinions, and the general court then disarmed or banished all who persisted in error.

A furor of excitement gathered about Anne Hutchinson, who claimed to be moved by the spirit and denied that an outward conformity to the letter of the covenant was a sufficient test of true religion unless accompanied with a change in the inner life. She was a nonconformist among those who, refusing to conform to the Church of England, had now themselves become conformists of the strictest type. To Mrs. Hutchinson the "vexatious legalism of Puritanism" was as abhorrent as had been the practices of the Roman and Anglican churches to the Puritans, and, though the latter did not realize it, they were as unjust to her as Laud had been to them. She broke from a covenant of works in favor of a covenant of grace and in so doing defied the standing authorities and the ruling clergy of the colony. Her wit, undeniable power of exhortation, philanthropic disposition, and personal attributes which gave her an ascendancy in the Boston church, drew to her a large following and placed the supremacy of the orthodox party in peril. After a long and wordy struggle to check the "misgovernment of a woman's tongue" and to rebuke "the impudent boldness of a proud dame," Mrs. Hutchinson was excommunicated and banished; and certain of those who upheld her – Wheelwright, Coggeshall, Aspinwall, Coddington, and Underhill, all leading men of the colony – were also forced to leave. In Boston and the adjoining towns dozens of men were disarmed for fear of a general uprising against the

orthodox government.

This discord put a terrible strain on the colony, and one marvels that it weathered the storm. Only an iron discipline that knew neither charity nor tolerance could have successfully resisted the attacks on the standing order. The years from 1635 to 1638 were a critical time in the history of the colony, and the unyielding attitude of magistrates and elders was due in no small part to the danger of attack from England. Determined, on the one hand, to save the colony from the menace of Anglican control, and, on the other, to prevent the admission of liberal and democratic ideas, they struggled to maintain the rule of a minority in behalf of a precise and logically defined theocratic system that admitted neither experiment nor compromise. For the moment they were successful, because the Cromwellian victory in England was favorable to their cause. But should independence be overthrown at home, should religion cease to be a deciding factor in political quarrels, and should the monarchy and the Established Church gain ascendancy once more, then Massachusetts would certainly reap the whirlwind. The harvesting might be long but the garnering would be none the less sure.

CHAPTER III

COMPLETING THE WORK OF SETTLEMENT

Through the portal of Boston at one time or another passed all or nearly all those who were to found additional colonies in New England; and from that portal, willingly or unwillingly, men and women journeyed north, south, and west, searching for favorable locations, buying land of the Indians, and laying the groundwork for permanent homes and organized communities. In this way were begun the colonies of Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Haven, and New Hampshire, each of which sprang in part from the desire for separate religious and political life and in part from the migratory instinct which has always characterized the Englishman in his effort to find a home and a means of livelihood. Sometimes individuals wandered alone or in groups of two or three, but more frequently covenanted companies of men and women of like minds moved across the face of the land, followed Indian trails, or voyaged by water along the coast and up the rivers, usually remaining where they first found satisfaction, but often, in new combinations, taking up the burden of their journeying and moving on, a second, a third, and even a fourth time in search of homes. Abraham Pierson and his flock migrated four times in thirty years, seeking a place where they

might find rest under a government according to God.

The frontier Puritan was neither docile nor easily satisfied. He was restless, opinionated, and eager to assert himself and his convictions. The controversies among the elect regarding doctrines and morals often became so heated that complete separation was the only remedy; and wherever there was a migrating leader followers were sure to be found. Hence, despite the dangers from cold, famine, the Indian, and the wilderness, the men of New England were constantly shifting in these earlier years as one motive or another urged them on. Land was plentiful, and, as a rule, easily obtained; opportunities for trade presented themselves to any one who would seek them; and the freedom of earth and sky and of nature unspoiled offered an ideal environment for a closer communion with God. Owing to the many varieties of religious opinion that prevailed among these radical pioneers, each new grouping and consequent settlement had an individuality of its own, determined by the personality of its leader and by the ideas that he represented. Thus Williams, Clarke, Coddington, and Gorton influenced Rhode Island; Hooker, Haynes, and Ludlow, Connecticut; Davenport, Eaton, and Pierson, New Haven; and Wheelwright and Underhill, New Hampshire.

Roger Williams, the founder of Providence – the first plantation to be settled in what was later the colony of Rhode Island – was driven out of Boston because he called in question the authority of the government, denied the legality of its land

title as derived from the King, and contested the right of the magistrates to deal with matters ecclesiastical. Making his way through the wilderness in the winter of 1635-1636, he finally settled on the Mooshassuc River, calling the place Providence; and in the ensuing two years he gathered about him a number of those who found the church system of Massachusetts intolerable and the Erastian doctrines of the magistrates, according to which the sins of believers were to be punished by civil authority, distressing to their consciences. They drew up a plantation covenant, promising to subject themselves "in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreements" as might be made for the public good in an orderly way by the majority vote of the masters of families, "incorporated together into a town fellowship," but "only in civill things." Thus did the men of Providence put into practice their doctrine of a church separable from the state, and of a political order in which there were no magistrates, no elders exercising civil as well as spiritual authority, and no restraint on soul liberty.

A year or two later William Coddington, loyal ally of Anne Hutchinson, with others – Clarke, Coggeshall, and Aspinwall, who resented the aggressive attitude of Boston – purchased from the Indians the island of Aquidneck in Narragansett Bay and at the northern end planted Pocasset, afterwards Portsmouth, the second settlement in the colony of Rhode Island. They, too, entered into a covenant to join themselves into a body politic and elected Coddington as their judge and five others as elders.

But this modeling of the government after the practices of the Old Testament was not pleasing to a majority of the community, which desired a more democratic organization. After a few months, in the spring of 1639, Coddington and his followers therefore journeyed southward and established a third settlement at Newport. Here the members adopted a covenant, "engaging" themselves "to bear equall charges, answerable to our strength and estates in common," and to be governed "by major voice of judge and elders; the judge to have a double voice." Though differing from the system as developed in Massachusetts, the Newport government at the beginning had a decidedly theocratic character.

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