

**JOHN ABBOTT**

KING PHILIP

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# **John S. C. (John Stevens Cabot) Abbott**

## **King Philip / Makers of History**

### **PREFACE**

Few, even of our most intelligent men, if we except those who are devoted to literary pursuits, are acquainted with the adventures which our forefathers encountered in the settlement of New England. The claims of business are now so exacting, that those whose time is engrossed by its cares have but little leisure for extensive reading, and yet there is no American who does not desire to be familiar with the early history of his own country. The writer, with great labor, has collected from widely-spread materials, and condensed into this narrative of the career of King Philip, those incidents in our early history which he has supposed would be most interesting and instructive to the general reader. He has spared no pains in the endeavor to be accurate. In the rude annals of those early days there is often obscurity, and sometimes contradiction, in the dates. Such dates have been adopted as have appeared, after careful examination, to be most

reliable.

The writer can not refrain, in this connection, from acknowledging the obligations he is under to his friend and neighbor, John M'Keen, Esq., to whose extensive and accurate acquaintance with the early history of this country he is indebted for many of the materials which have aided him in the preparation of this work.

*John S. C. Abbott.*

Brunswick, Maine, 1857.

# Chapter I

## Landing of the Pilgrims

**1620-1621**

Arrival of the Mayflower.

On the 11th of November, 1620, the storm-battered Mayflower, with its band of one hundred and one Pilgrims, first caught sight of the barren sand-hills of Cape Cod. The shore presented a cheerless scene even for those weary of a more than four months voyage upon a cold and tempestuous sea. But, dismal as the prospect was, after struggling for a short time to make their way farther south, embarrassed by a leaky ship and by perilous shoals appearing every where around them, they were glad to make a harbor at the extremity of the unsheltered and verdureless cape. Before landing, they chose Mr. John Carver, "a pious and well-approved gentleman," as the governor of their little republic for the first year. While the carpenter was fitting up the boat to explore the interior bend of the land which forms Cape Cod Bay, in search of a more attractive place of settlement, sixteen of their number set out on foot on a short tour of discovery. They were all well armed, to guard against any

attack from the natives.

Explorations.

Captain Weymouth.

Indian captives.

Cautiously the adventurers followed along the western shore of the Cape toward the south, when suddenly they came in sight of five Indians. The natives fled with the utmost precipitation. They had heard of the white men, and had abundant cause to fear them. But a few years before, in 1605, Captain Weymouth, on an exploring tour along the coast of Maine, very treacherously kidnapped five of the natives, and took them with him back to England. This act, which greatly exasperated the natives, and which led to subsequent scenes of hostility and blood, it may be well here to record. It explains the reception which the Pilgrims first encountered.

Enticing the natives.

The seizure.

Trophies.

Necessity for caution.

Captain Weymouth had been trafficking with the natives for some time in perfect friendship. One day six Indians came to the ship in two canoes, three in each. Three were enticed on board the ship, and were shut up in the cabin. The other three, a little suspicious of danger, refused to leave their canoe, but, receiving a can of pease and bread, paddled to the shore, where they built a fire, and sat down to their entertainment. A boat

strongly manned was then sent to the shore from the ship with enticing presents, and a platter of food of which the Indians were particularly fond. One of the natives, more cautious than the rest, upon the approach of the boat, retired to the woods; the other two met the party cordially. They all walked up to the fire and sat down, in apparent friendship, to eat their food together. There were six Englishmen and two naked, helpless natives. At a given signal, while their unsuspecting victims were gazing at some curiosities in a box, the English sprang upon them, three to each man. The natives, young, vigorous, and lithe as eels, struggled with Herculean energy. The kidnappers, finding it difficult to hold them by their naked limbs, seized them by the long hair of their heads, and thus the terrified creatures were dragged into the boats and conveyed to the ship. Soon after this Captain Weymouth weighed anchor, and the five captives were taken to England. He also took, as trophies of his victory, the two canoes, and the bows and arrows of these Indians. Sundry outrages of a similar character had been perpetrated by European adventurers all along the New England coast. The Pilgrims were well aware of these facts, and consequently they were not surprised at the flight of the Indians, and felt, themselves, the necessity of guarding against a hostile attack.

#### Discovery of a wigwam.

The English pursued the fugitives vigorously for many miles, but were unable to overtake them. At last night came on. They built a camp, kindled a fire, established a watch, and slept

soundly until the next morning. They then continued their course, following along in the track of the Indians. After some time they came to the remains of an Indian wigwam, surrounded by an old corn-field. Finding concealed here several baskets filled with ears of corn, they took the grain, so needful for them, intending, should they ever meet the Indians, to pay them amply for it. With this as the only fruit of their expedition, they returned to the ship.

New enterprises.

Soon after their return preparations were completed for a more important enterprise. The shallop was launched, and well provided with arms and provisions, and thirty of the ship's company embarked for an extensive survey of the coast. They slowly crept along the barren shore, stopping at various points, but they could meet with no natives, and could find no harbor for their ship, and no inviting place for a settlement. Drifting sands and gloomy evergreens, through which the autumnal winds ominously sighed, alone met the eye. They discovered a few deserted dwellings of the Indians, but could catch no sight of the terrified natives. After several days of painful search, they returned disheartened to the ship.

The return of the explorers.

It was now the 6th of December, and the cold winds of approaching winter began to sweep over the water, which seemed almost to surround them. Imagination can hardly conceive a more bleak and dreary spot than the extremity of Cape Cod.

It was manifest to all that it was no place for the establishment of a colony, and that, late as it was in the year, they must, at all hazards, continue their search for a more inviting location. Previous explorers had entered Cape Cod Bay, and had given a general idea of the sweep of the coast.

New expedition.

Sight of some Indians.

Cheerless encampment.

A new expedition was now energetically organized, to proceed with all speed in a boat along the coast in search of a harbor. The wind, in freezing blasts, swept across the bay as they spread their sail. Their frail boat was small and entirely open, and the spray, which ever dashed over these hardy pioneers, glazed their coats with ice. They soon lost sight of the ship, and, skirting the coast, were driven rapidly along by the fair but piercing wind. The sun went down, and dark night was approaching. They had been looking in vain for some sheltered cove into which to run to pass the night, when, in the deepening twilight, they discerned twelve Indians standing upon the shore. They immediately turned their boat toward the land, and the Indians as immediately fled. The sandy beach upon which their boat grounded was entirely exposed to the billows of the ocean. With difficulty they drew their boat high upon the sand, that it might not be broken by the waves, and prepared to make themselves as comfortable as possible. It was, indeed, a cheerless encampment for a cold, windy December night. Fortunately there was wood

in abundance with which to build a fire, and they also piled up for themselves a slight protection against the wind and against a midnight attack. Then, having commended themselves to God in prayer, they established a watch, and sought such repose as fatigue and their cold, hard couch could furnish.

The night passed away without any alarm. In the morning they divided their numbers, one half taking the boat, and the others following along upon foot on the shore. Thus they continued their explorations another day, but could find no suitable place for a settlement. During the day they saw many traces of inhabitants, but did not obtain sight of a single native.

#### Discoveries.

They found two houses, from which the occupants had evidently but recently escaped. The following is the description which the adventurers gave of these wigwams, in the quaint English of two hundred years ago:

Quaint description of the huts.

Interior of the hut, and what was found.

Good intentions not realized.

"Whilst we were thus ranging and searching, two of the Sayers which were newly come on the shore by chance espied two houses which had been lately dwelt in, but the people were gone. They having their peeces and hearing no body entred the houses and tooke out some things, and durst not stay but came again and told vs; so some seaven or eight of vs went with them, and found how we had

gone within a slight shot of them before. The houses were made with long yong Sapling trees bended and both ends stucke into the ground; they were made round like unto an Arbour and covered down to the ground with thicke and well wrought matts, and the doors were not over a yard high made of a matt to open; the chimney was a wide open hole in the top, for which they had a matt to cover it close when they pleased. One might stand and go upright in them; in the midst of them were four little trunches knockt into the ground, and small stickes laid over on which they hung their Pots, and what they had to seeth. Round about the fire they lay on matts which are their beds. The houses were double matted, for as they were matted without so were they within, with newer and fairer matts. In the houses we found wooden Boules, Traves & Dishes, Earthen Pots, Hand baskets made of Crab shells, wrought together; also an English Pail or Bucket; it wanted a bayle, but it had two iron eares. There was also Baskets of sundry sorts, bigger and some lesser, finer and some coarser. Some were curiously wrought with blacke and white in pretie workes, and sundry other of their houshold stuffe. We found also two or three Deeres heads, one whereof had been newly killed, for it was still fresh. There was also a company of Deeres feete stuck vp in the houses, Harts hornes, and Eagles clawes, and sundry such like things there was; also two or three baskets full of parched Acorns, peeces of fish and a peece of a broyled Hering. We found also a little silk grasse and a little Tobacco seed with some other seeds which wee knew not. Without was sundry bundles of Flags and Sedge, Bull-

rushes and other stuffe to make matts. There was thrust into a hollow tree two or three pieces of venison, but we thought it fitter for the Dogs than for us. Some of the best things we took away with us, and left their houses standing still as they were. So it growing towards night, and the tyde almost spent we hastened with our things down to the shallop, and got aboard that night, intending to have brought some Beades and other things to have left in the houses in signe of Peace and that we meant to truk with them, but it was not done by means of our hasty comming away from Cape Cod; but so soon as we can meet conveniently with them we will give them full satisfaction."

Another stormy night.

As they returned to their boat the sun again went down, and another gloomy December night darkened over the houseless wanderers. No cove, no creek even, opened its friendly arms to receive them. They again dragged their boat upon the beach. A dense forest was behind them, the bleak ocean before them. As they feared no surprise from the side of the water, they merely threw up a slight rampart of logs to protect them from an attack from the side of the forest. They again united in their evening devotions, established their night-watch, and, with a warm fire blazing at their feet, fell soundly asleep. Through the long night the wind sighed through the tree-tops and the waves broke upon the shore. No other sounds disturbed their slumber.

Morning preparations.

The next morning they rose before the dawn of day and

prepared anxiously to continue their search. The morning was dark and stormy. A drizzling rain, which had been falling nearly all night, had soaked their blankets and their clothing; the ocean looked black and angry, and sheets of mist were driven by the chill wind over earth and sea. The Pilgrims bowed reverently together in their morning prayer, partook of their frugal meal, and some of them had carried their guns, wrapped in blankets, down to the boat, when suddenly a fearful yell burst from the forest, and a shower of arrows fell upon their encampment.

A fearful attack.

Protection of the English.

Power of the Indians.

The English party consisted of but eighteen; but they were heroic men. Carver, Bradford, Winslow, and Standish were of their number. Four muskets only were left within their frail intrenchments. By the rapid and well-directed discharge of these, they, however, kept the Indians at bay until those who had carried their guns to the boat succeeded in regaining them, notwithstanding the shower of arrows which fell so thickly around. The thick clothing with which the English were covered, to protect themselves from the cold and the rain, were almost as coats of mail to ward off the comparatively feeble weapons of the natives. A very fierce conflict now ensued. The English were almost entirely unprotected, and were exposed to every arrow. The Indians were each stationed behind some large forest-tree, which effectually sheltered him from the bullets of

his antagonists. Under these circumstances, the advantage was probably, on the whole, with the vastly outnumbering natives. They were widely scattered; their bows were of great strength, and their arrows, pointed and barbed with sharp flint and stone, when hitting fairly and in full force, would pierce even the thickest clothing of the English; and, if striking any unprotected portion of the body, would inflict a dreadful wound.

The chief shot.

Disappearance of the Indians.

Sudden peace.

For some time this perilous conflict raged, the forest resounding with the report of musketry, and with the hideous, deafening yell of the savages. There was one Indian, of Herculean size and strength, apparently more brave than the rest, who appeared to be the leader of the band. He had proudly advanced beyond any of his companions, and placed himself within half musket shot of the encampment. He stood behind a large tree, and very energetically shot his arrows, and by voice and gesture roused and animated his comrades. Watching an opportunity when his arm was exposed, a sharpshooter succeeded in striking it with a bullet. The shattered arm dropped helpless. The savage, astounded at the calamity, gazed for a moment in silence upon his mangled limb, and then uttering a peculiar cry, which was probably the signal for retreat, dodged from tree to tree, and disappeared. His fellow-warriors, following his example, disappeared with him in the depths of the gloomy forest. Hardly

a moment elapsed ere not a savage was to be seen, and perfect silence and solitude reigned upon the spot which, but a moment before, was the scene of almost demoniac clamor. The waves broke sullenly upon the shore, and the wind, sweeping the ocean, and moaning through the sombre firs and pines, drove the rain in spectral sheets over sea and land. The sun had not yet risen, and the gray twilight lent additional gloom to the stormy morning. Both the attack and the retreat were more sudden than imagination can well conceive. The perfect repose of the night had been instantly followed by fiendlike uproar and peril, and as instantly succeeded by perfect silence and solitude.

Devotions.

Departure.

A gale.

The Pilgrims, as soon as they had recovered from their astonishment, looked around to see how much they had been damaged. Arrows were hanging by their clothes, and sticking in the logs by the fire, and scattered every where around, but, to their surprise, they found that not one had been wounded. Anxious to leave so dangerous a spot, they immediately collected their effects and embarked in the boat. Before embarking, however, they united in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for their deliverance. They named this spot "*The First Encounter.*" The rain now changed to sleet of mist and snow, and the cold storm descended pitilessly upon their unprotected heads. A day of suffering and of peril was before them. As the day advanced,

the wind increased to almost a gale. The waves frequently broke into the boat, drenching them to the skin, and glazing the boat, ropes, and clothing with a coat of ice. The surf, dashing upon the shore, rendered landing impossible, and they sought in vain for any creek or cove where they could find shelter. The short afternoon was fast passing away, and a terrible night was before them. A huge billow, which seemed to chase them with gigantic speed and force, broke over the boat, nearly filling it with water, and at the same time unshipping and sweeping away their rudder. They immediately got out two oars, and, with much difficulty, succeeded with them in steering their bark.

An accident.

Approaching night.

Night and the tempest were settling darkly over the angry sea. To add to their calamities, a sudden flaw of wind struck the boat, and instantly snapped the mast into three pieces. The boat was now, for a few moments, entirely unmanageable, and, involved in the wreck of mast, rigging, and sail, floated like a log upon the waves, in great danger of being each moment engulfed. The hardy adventurers, thus disabled, seized their oars, and with great exertions succeeded in keeping their boat before the wind. It was now night, and the rain, driven violently by the gale, was falling in torrents.

Discovery of a shelter.

Preparations for the night.

The dark outline of the shore, upon which the surf was furiously dashing, was dimly discernible. At last they perceived through the gloom, directly before them, an island or a promontory pushing out at right angles from the line of the beach. Rowing around the northern headland, they found on the western side a small cove, where they obtained a partial shelter from the storm. Here they dropped anchor. The night was freezing cold. The rain still fell in torrents, and the boat rolled and pitched incessantly upon the agitated sea. Though drenched to the skin, knowing that they were in the vicinity of hostile Indians, most of the company did not deem it prudent to attempt a landing, but preferred to pass the night in their wet, shelterless, wave-rocked bark. Some, however, benumbed and almost dying from wet and cold, felt that they could not endure the exposure of the wintry night. They were accordingly put on shore. After much difficulty, they succeeded in building a fire. Its blaze illumined the forest, and they piled upon it branches of trees and logs, until they became somewhat warmed by the exercise and the genial heat. But they knew full well that this flame was but a beacon to inform their savage foes where they were and to enable them, with surer aim, to shoot the poisoned arrow. The forest sheltered them partially from the wind. They cut down trees, and constructed a rude rampart to protect them from attack. Thus the explorers on the land and in the boat passed the first part of this dismal night. At midnight, however, those in the boat, unable longer to endure the cold, ventured to land, and, with

their shivering companions, huddled round the fire, the rain still soaking them to the skin.

They resolve to spend the Sabbath at their camp.

When the morning again dawned, they found that they were in the lee of a small island. It was the morning of the Sabbath. Notwithstanding their exposure to hostile Indians and to the storm, and notwithstanding the unspeakable importance of every day, that they might prepare for the severity of winter, now so rapidly approaching, these extraordinary men resolved to remain as they were, that they might "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." There was true heroism and moral grandeur in this decision, even though it be asserted that a more enlightened judgment would have taught that, under the circumstances in which they were placed, it was a work of "necessity and of mercy" to prosecute their tour without delay. But these men believed it to be their duty to sanctify the Sabbath; and, notwithstanding the strength of the temptation, they did what they thought to be right, and this is always noble. To God, who looketh at the heart, this must have been an acceptable sacrifice. For nearly two hundred years all these men have now been in the world of spirits, and it may very safely be affirmed that they have never regretted the scrupulous reverence they manifested for the law of God in keeping the Sabbath in the stormy wilderness.

Plymouth Bay.

Sounding for the channel.

Sites for the village.

With the early light of Monday morning they repaired their shattered boat, and, spreading their sails before a favorable breeze, continued their tour. Plymouth Bay opened before them, with a low sand-bar shooting across the water, which served to break the violence of the billows rolling in from the ocean, but which presented no obstacle to the sweep of the wind. It was an unsheltered harbor, but it was not only the best, but the only one which could be found. Cautiously they sailed around the point of sand, dropping the lead every few moments to find a channel for their vessel. They at length succeeded in finding a passage, and a place where their vessel could ride in comparative safety. They then landed to select a location for their colonial village. Though it was the most dismal season of the year, the region presented many attractions. It was pleasantly diversified with hills and valleys, and the forest, of gigantic growth, swept sublimely away in all directions. The remains of an Indian village was found, and deserted corn-fields of considerable extent, where the ground was in a state for easy and immediate cultivation.

Jealousy of the Dutch.

The Pilgrims had left England with the intention of planting their colony at the mouth of the Hudson River; but the Dutch, jealous of the power of the English upon this continent, and wishing to appropriate that very attractive region entirely to

themselves, bribed the pilot to pretend to lose his course, and to land them at a point much farther to the north; hence the disappointment of the company in finding themselves involved amid the shoals of Cape Cod. Though Plymouth was by no means the home which the Pilgrims had originally sought, and though neither the harbor nor the location presented the advantages which they had desired, the season was too far advanced for them to continue their voyage in search of a more genial home. With this report the explorers returned to the ship.

#### Arrival of the Mayflower.

On the 15th of December the Mayflower again weighed anchor from the harbor of Cape Cod, and, crossing the Bay on the 16th, cautiously worked its way into the shallow harbor of Plymouth, and cast anchor about a mile and a half from the shore. The next day was the Sabbath, and all remained on board the ship engaged in their Sabbath devotions.

#### Survey of the country.

Early Monday morning, a party well armed were sent on shore to make a still more careful exploration of the region, and to select a spot for their village. They marched along the coast eight miles, but saw no natives or wigwams. They crossed several brooks of sweet, fresh water, but were disappointed in finding no navigable river. They, however, found many fields where the Indians had formerly cultivated corn. These fields, thus ready for the seed, seemed very inviting. At night they returned to the ship,

not having decided upon any spot for their settlement.

The next day, Tuesday, the 19th, they again sent out a party on a tour of exploration. This party was divided into two companies, one to sail along the coast in the shallop, hoping to find the mouth of some large river; the other landed and traversed the shore. At night they all returned again to the ship, not having as yet found such a location as they desired.

A location selected.

Wednesday morning came, and with increasing fervor the Pilgrims, in their morning prayer, implored God to guide them. The decision could no longer be delayed. A party of twenty were sent on shore to mark out the spot where they should rear their store-house and their dwellings. On the side of a high hill, facing the rising sun and the beautiful bay, they found an expanse, gently declining, where there were large fields which, two or three years before, had been cultivated with Indian corn. The summit of this hill commanded a wide view of the ocean and of the land. Springs of sweet water gushed from the hill-sides, and a beautiful brook, overshadowed by the lofty forest, meandered at its base. Here they unanimously concluded to rear their new homes.

Interruptions by a storm.

As the whole party were rendezvoused upon this spot, the clouds began to gather in the sky, the wind rose fiercely, and soon the rain began to fall in torrents. Huge billows from the ocean rolled in upon the poorly-sheltered harbor, so that

it was impossible to return by their small boat to the ship. They were entirely unsheltered, as they had brought with them no preparations for such an emergency. Night, dark, freezing, tempestuous, soon settled down upon these houseless wanderers. In the dense forest they sought refuge from the icy gale which swept over the ocean. They built a large fire, and, gathering around it, passed the night and all the next day exposed to the fury of the storm. But, toward the evening of the 21st, the gale so far abated that they succeeded in returning over the rough waves to the ship.

Friday, December 22.

The birth-day of New England.

The next morning was the ever memorable Friday, December 22. It dawned chill and lowering. A wintry gale still swept the bay, and pierced the thin garments of the Pilgrims. The eventful hour had now come in which they were to leave the ship, and commence their new life of privation and hardship in the New World. It was the birth-day of New England. In the early morning, the whole ship's company assembled upon the deck of the Mayflower, men, women, and children, to offer their sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to implore divine protection upon their lofty and perilous enterprise.

"The Mayflower on New England's coasts has  
furled her tattered sails,  
And through her chafed and mourning shrouds

December's breezes wail.

"There were men of hoary hair  
Amid that Pilgrim band;  
Why had they come to wither there,  
Away from their childhood's land?

"There was woman's fearless eye,  
Lit by her deep love's truth;  
There was manhood's brow, serenely high,  
And the fiery heart of youth.

"What sought they thus afar?  
Bright jewels of the mine?  
The wealth of seas – the spoils of war?  
They sought a faith's pure shrine.

"Ay, call it holy ground,  
The soil where first they trod:  
They have left unstain'd what there they found —  
Freedom to worship God."

### Hopes and expectations of the Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims, though inspired by impulses as pure and lofty as ever glowed in human hearts, were still but feebly conscious of the scenes which they were enacting. They were exiles upon whom their mother country cruelly frowned, and though they hoped to establish a prosperous colony, where their civil and

religious liberty could be enjoyed, which they had sought in vain under the government of Great Britain, they were by no means aware that they were laying the foundation stones of one of the most majestic nations upon which the sun has ever shone. As they stood upon that slippery deck, swept by the wintry wind, and reverently bowed their heads in prayer, they dreamed not of the immortality which they were conferring upon themselves and upon that day. Their frail vessel was now the only material tie which seemed to bind them to their father-land. Their parting hymn, swelling from gushing hearts and trembling lips, blended in harmony with the moan of the wind and the wash of the wave, and fell, we can not doubt, as accepted melody on the ear of God.

Leaving the ship.

These affecting devotions being ended, boat-load after boat-load left the ship, until the whole company, one hundred and one in number, men, women and children, were rowed to the shore, and were landed upon a rock around which the waves were dashing. As the ship, in the shallow harbor, rode at anchor a mile from the beach, and the boats were small and the sea rough, this operation was necessarily very slow.

Erection of the store house.

The little village.

Alarm from the Indians.

They first erected a house of logs twenty feet square, which would serve as a temporary shelter for them all, and which

would also serve as a general store-house for their effects. They then commenced building a number of small huts for the several families. Every one lent a willing hand to the work, and soon a little village of some twenty dwellings sprang up beneath the brow of the forest-crowned hill which protected them from the winds of the northwest. The Pilgrims landed on Friday. The incessant labors of the rest of the day and of Saturday enabled them to provide but a poor shelter for themselves before the Sabbath came. But, notwithstanding the urgency of the case, all labor was intermitted on that day, and the little congregation gathered in their unfinished store-house to worship God. Aware, however, that hostile Indians might be near, sentinels were stationed to guard them from surprise. In the midst of their devotions, the alarming cry rang upon their ears, "Indians! Indians!" A more fearful cry could hardly reach the ears of husbands and fathers. The church instantly became a fortress and the worshipers a garrison. A band of hostile natives had been prowling around, but, instructed by the valiant defense of the first encounter, and seeing that the Pilgrims were prepared to repel an assault, they speedily retreated into the wilderness.

Discomforts.

Watchfulness of the Indians.

The next day the colonists vigorously renewed their labors, having parceled themselves into nineteen families. They measured out their house lots and drew for them, clustering their huts together, for mutual protection, in two rows, with a narrow

street between. But the storms of winter were already upon them. Monday night it again commenced raining. All that night and all of Tuesday the rain fell in floods, while the tempest swept the ocean and wailed dismally through the forest. Thus they toiled along in the endurance of inconceivable discomfort for the rest of the week. All were suffering from colds, and many were seriously sick. Friday and Saturday it was again stormy and very cold. To add to their anxiety, they saw in several directions, at the distance of five or six miles from them, wreaths of smoke rising from large fires in the forest, proving that the Indians were lurking around them and watching their movements. It was evident, from the caution which the Indians thus manifested, that they were by no means friendly in their feelings.

End of the year.

The last day of the year was the Sabbath. It was observed with much solemnity, their store-house, crowded with their effects, being the only temple in which they could assemble to worship God.

"Amid the storm they sang,  
And the stars heard and the sea;  
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free."

Attempts to meet the Indians.  
Two men missing.

Return of the lost.

Monday morning of the new year the sun rose in a serene and cloudless sky, and the Pilgrims, with alacrity, bowed themselves to their work. Great fires of the Indians were seen in the woods. The valiant Miles Standish, a man of the loftiest spirit of energy and intrepidity, took five men with him, and boldly plunged into the forest to find the Indians, and, if possible, to establish amicable relations with them. He found their deserted wigwams and the embers of their fires, but could not catch sight of a single native. A few days after this, two of the pilgrims, who were abroad gathering thatch, did not return, and great anxiety was felt for them. Four or five men the next day set out in search for them. After wandering about all day unsuccessfully through the pathless forest, they returned at night disheartened, and the little settlement was plunged into the deepest sorrow. It was greatly feared that they had been waylaid and captured by the savages. Twelve men then, well armed, set out to explore the wilderness, to find any traces of their lost companions. They also returned but to deepen the dejection of their friends by the recital of their unsuccessful search. But, as they were telling their story, a shout of joy arose, and the two lost men, with tattered garments and emaciated cheeks, emerged from the forest. They gave the following account of their adventures:

Their adventures.

As they were gathering thatch about a mile and a half from the

plantation, they saw a pond in the distance, and went to it, hoping to catch some fish. On the margin of the pond they met a large deer. The affrighted animal fled, pursued eagerly by the dog they had with them. The men followed on, hoping to capture the rich prize. They were thus lured so far that they became bewildered and lost in the pathless forest. All the afternoon they wandered about, until black night encompassed them. A dismal storm arose of wind and rain, mingled with snow. They were drenched to the skin, and their garments froze around them. In the darkness they could find no shelter. They had no weapons, but each one a small sickle to cut thatch. They had no food whatever. They heard the roar of the beasts of the forests. They supposed it to be the roaring of lions, though it was probably the howling of wolves. Their only safety appeared to be to climb into a tree; but the wind and the cold were so intolerable that such an exposure they could not endure. So each one stood at the root of a tree all the night long, running around it to keep himself from freezing, drenched by the storm, terrified by the cries which filled the forest, and ready, as soon as they should hear the gnashing of teeth, to spring into the branches.

They discover the harbor.

Their sufferings.

The long winter night at length passed away, and a gloomy morning dimly lighted the forest, and they resumed their search for home. They waded through swamps, crossed streams, were arrested in their course by large ponds of water, and tore their

clothing and their flesh by forcing their way through the tangled underbrush. At last they came to a hill, and, climbing one of the highest trees, discerned in the distance the harbor of Plymouth, which they recognized by the two little islands, densely wooded, which seemed to float like ships upon its surface. The cheerful sight invigorated them, and, though their limbs tottered from exhaustion, they toiled on, and, just as night was setting in, they reached their home, faint with travel, and almost famished with hunger and cold. The limbs of one of these men, John Goodman, were so swollen by exertion and the cold that they were obliged to cut his shoes from his feet, and it was a long time before he was again able to walk. Thus passed the month of January. Nearly all of the colonists were sick, and eight of their number died.

February.

Death among the colonists.

February was ushered in with piercing cold and desolating storms. Tempests of rain and snow were so frequent and violent that but little work could be done. The huts of the colonists were but poorly prepared for such inclement weather, and so many were sick that the utter destruction of the colony seemed to be threatened. Though the company which landed consisted of one hundred and one, but forty-one of these were men; all the rest were women and children. Death had already swept many of these men away, and several others were very dangerously sick. It was evident that the savages were lurking about, watching them with an eagle eye, and with most manifestly unfriendly feelings.

The colonists were in no condition to repel an attack, and the most fearless were conscious that they had abundant cause for intense solicitude.

Discovery of Indians.

Alarm.

On the 16th of this month, a man went to a creek about a mile and a half from the settlement a gunning, and, concealing himself in the midst of some shrubs and rashes, watched for water-fowl. While thus concealed, twelve Indians, armed to the teeth, marched stealthily by him, and he heard in the forest around the noise of many more. As soon as the twelve had passed, he hastened home and gave the alarm. All were called in from their work, the guns were loaded, and every possible preparation was made to repel the anticipated assault. But the day passed away in perfect quietness; not an Indian was seen; not the voice or the footfall of a foe was heard. These prowling bands, concealed in the dark forest, moved with a mystery which was appalling. The Pilgrims had now been for nearly two months at Plymouth, and not an Indian had they as yet caught sight of, except the twelve whom the gunner from his ambush had discerned. Toward evening, Miles Standish, who, upon the alarm, had returned to the house, leaving his tools in the woods, took another man and went to the place to get them, but they were no longer there. The Indians had taken them away.

Preparations for defense.

Two savages appear.

This state of things convinced the Pilgrims that it was necessary to adopt very efficient measures that they might be prepared to repel any attack. All the able-bodied men, some twenty-five in number, met and formed themselves into a military company. Miles Standish was chosen captain, and was invested with great powers in case of any emergency. Rude fortifications were planned for the defense of the little hamlet, and two small cannons, which had been lying useless beneath the snow, were dug up and mounted so as to sweep the approaches to the houses. While engaged in these operations, two savages suddenly appeared upon the top of a hill about a quarter of a mile distant, gazing earnestly upon their movements. Captain Standish immediately took one man with him, and, without any weapons, that their friendly intentions might be apparent, hastened to meet the Indians. But the savages, as the two colonists drew near, fled precipitately, and when Captain Standish arrived upon the top of the hill, he heard noises in the forest behind as if it were filled with Indians.

Weakness of the colonists.

This was the 17th of February. After this a month passed away, and not a sign of Indians was seen. It was a month of sorrow, sickness, and death. Seventeen of their little band died, and there was hardly strength left with the survivors to dig their graves. Had the Indians known their weakness, they might easily,

in any hour, have utterly destroyed the colony.

# Chapter II

## Massasoit

1621

Advance of spring.

Sudden appearance of an Indian.

March "came in like a lion," cold, wet, and stormy; but toward the middle of the month the weather changed, and a warm sun and soft southern breezes gave indication of an early spring. The 16th of the month was a remarkably pleasant day, and the colonists who were able to bear arms had assembled at their rendezvous to complete their military organization for the working days of spring and summer. While thus engaged they saw, to their great surprise, a solitary Indian approaching. Boldly, and without the slightest appearance of hesitancy, he strode along, entered the street of their little village, and directed his steps toward the group at the rendezvous. He was a man of majestic stature, and entirely naked, with the exception of a leathern belt about his loins, to which there was suspended a fringe about nine inches in length. In his hand he held a bow and two arrows.

Samoset.

Effects of a plague.

The Indian, with remarkable self-confidence and freedom of gait, advanced toward the astonished group, and in perfectly intelligible English addressed them with the words, "Welcome, Englishmen." From this man the eager colonists soon learned the following facts. His name was Samoset. He was one of the chiefs of a tribe residing near the island of Monhegan, which is at the mouth of Penobscot Bay. With a great wind, he said that it was but a day's sail from Plymouth, though it required a journey of five days by land. Fishing vessels from England had occasionally visited that region, and he had, by intercourse with them, acquired sufficient broken English to be able to communicate his ideas. He also informed the Pilgrims that, four years before their arrival, a terrible plague had desolated the coast, and that the tribe occupying the region upon which they were settled had been utterly annihilated. The dead had been left unburied to be devoured by wolves. Thus the way had been prepared for the Pilgrims to settle upon land which no man claimed, and thus had Providence gone before them to shield them from the attacks of a savage foe.

Samoset is hospitably treated and likes his quarters.

Samoset was disposed to make himself quite at home. He wished to enter the houses, and called freely for beer and for food. To make him a little more presentable to their families,

the Pilgrims put a large horseman's coat upon him, and then led him into their houses, and treated him with great hospitality. The savage seemed well satisfied with his new friends, and manifested no disposition to leave quarters so comfortable and entertainment so abundant. Night came, and he still remained, and would take no hints to go. The colonists could not rudely turn him out of doors, and they were very apprehensive of treachery, should they allow him to continue with them for the night. But all their gentle efforts to get rid of him were in vain – he *would* stay. They therefore made arrangements for him in Stephen Hopkins's house, and carefully, though concealing their movements from him, watched him all night.

#### Stealing of Indians.

Samoset was quite an intelligent man, and professed to be well acquainted with all the tribes who peopled the New England coasts. He said that the tribe inhabiting the end of the peninsula of Cape Cod were called Nausites, and that they were exceedingly exasperated against the whites, because, a few years before, one Captain Hunt, from England, while trading with the Indians on the Cape, had inveigled twenty-seven men on board, and then had fastened them below and set sail. These poor creatures, thus infamously kidnapped, were carried to Spain, and sold as slaves for one hundred dollars each. It was in consequence of this outrage that the Pilgrims were so fiercely attacked at *The First Encounter*. Samoset had heard from his brethren of the forest all the incidents of this conflict.

The chief of the Wampanoags.

He also informed his eager listeners that at two days' journey from them, upon the margin of waters now called Bristol Bay, there was a very powerful tribe, the Wampanoags, who exerted a sort of supremacy over all the other tribes of the region. Massasoit was the sovereign of this dominant people, and by his intelligence and energy he kept the adjacent tribes in a state of vassalage. Not far from his territories there was another powerful tribe, the Narragansets, who, in their strength, were sometimes disposed to question his authority. All this information interested the colonists, and they were anxious, if possible, to open friendly relations with Massasoit.

Departure of Samoset.

Return of the Indians.

Early the next morning, which was Saturday, March 17th, Samoset left, having received as a present a knife, a bracelet, and a ring. He promised soon to return again, and to bring some other Indians with him. The next morning was the Sabbath. It was warm, serene, and beautiful. Dreary winter had passed, and genial spring was smiling around them. As the colonists were assembling for their Sabbath devotions, Samoset again presented himself, with five tall Indians in his train. They were all dressed in skins, fitting closely to the body, and most of them had a panther's skin and other furs for sale. According to the arrangement which the Pilgrims had made with Samoset,

they all left their bows and arrows about a quarter of a mile distant from the town, as the Pilgrims did not deem it safe to admit armed savages into their dwellings. The tools which had been left in the woods, and which the Indians had taken, were also all brought back by these men. The colonists received these natives as kindly as possible, and entertained them hospitably, but declined entering into any traffic, as it was the Sabbath. They told the Indians, however, that if they would come on any other day, they would purchase not only the furs they now had with them, but any others which they might bring.

Presents to the Indians.

Upon this, all retired excepting Samoset. He, saying that he was sick, insisted upon remaining. The rest soon disappeared in the forest, having promised to return again the next day. Monday and Tuesday passed, and the colonists looked in vain for the Indians. On Wednesday morning, having made Samoset a present of a hat, a pair of shoes, some stockings, and a piece of cloth to wind around his loins, they sent him to search out his companions, and ascertain why they did not return according to their promise. The Indians who first left had all, upon their departure, received presents from the Pilgrims, so anxious were our forefathers to establish friendly relations with the natives of this New World.

Planting.

Appearance of savages.

During the first days of the week the colonists were very busy breaking up their ground and planting their seed. On Wednesday afternoon, Samoset having left, they again assembled to attend to their military organization. While thus employed, several savages appeared on the summit of a hill but a short distance opposite them, twanging their bow-strings and exhibiting gestures of defiance. Captain Standish took one man with him, and with two others following at a distance as a re-enforcement in case of any difficulty, went to meet them. The savages continued their hostile gesticulation until Captain Standish drew quite near, and then they precipitately fled.

Squantum.

His captivity.

His benefactors.

The next day it was again warm and beautiful, and the little village of the colonists presented an aspect of industry, peace, and prosperity. About noon Samoset returned, with one single stranger accompanying him. This Indian's name was *Squantum*. He had been of the party seized by Weymouth or by Hunt – the authorities are not clear upon that point – and had been carried to Spain and there sold as a slave. After some years of bondage he succeeded in escaping to England. Mr. John Slaney, a merchant of London, chanced to meet the poor fugitive, protected him, and treated him with the greatest kindness, and finally secured him a passage back to his native land, from whence he had been so ruthlessly stolen. This Indian, forgetting the outrage of the

knave who had kidnapped him, and remembering only the great kindness which he had received from his benefactor and from the people generally in London, in generous requital now attached himself cordially to the Pilgrims, and became their firm friend. His residence in England had rendered him quite familiar with the English language, and he proved invaluable not only as an interpreter, but also in instructing them respecting the modes of obtaining a support in the wilderness.

Approach of Massasoit.

Caution of the Indians.

Squantum brought the welcome intelligence that his sovereign chief, the great Massasoit, had heard of the arrival of the Pilgrims, and was approaching, with a retinue of sixty warriors, to pay them a friendly visit. With characteristic dignity and caution, the Indian chief had encamped upon a neighboring hill, and had sent Squantum as his messenger to inform the white men of his arrival, and to conduct the preliminaries for an interview. Massasoit was well acquainted with the conduct of the unprincipled English seamen who had skirted the coast, committing all manner of outrages, and he was too wary to place himself in the power of strangers respecting whom he entertained such well-grounded suspicions. He therefore established himself upon a hill, where he could not be taken by surprise, and where, in case of an attack, he could easily, if necessary, retreat.

Conference with Massasoit.

The Pilgrims also, overawed by their lonely position, and by the mysterious terrors of the wilderness and of the savage, deemed it imprudent, when such a band of armed warriors were in their vicinity, to send any of their feeble force from behind the intrenchments which they had reared. After several messages, through their interpreter, had passed to and fro, Massasoit, who, though unlettered, was a man of reflection and of sagacity, proposed that the English should send one of their number to his encampment to communicate to him their designs in settling upon lands which had belonged to one of his vassal tribes. One of the colonists, Edward Winslow, consented to go upon this embassy. He took as a present for the barbarian monarch two knives and a copper chain, with a jewel attached to it. Massasoit received him with dignity, yet with courtesy. Mr. Winslow, through Squantum as his interpreter, addressed the chieftain, surrounded by his warriors, in the sincere words of peace and friendship. The Pilgrims of the Mayflower were good men. They wished to do right, and to establish amicable relations with the Indians.

The Pilgrims leave a hostage.

Visit of Massasoit.

His reception.

Royal interview.

The first glass of spirits.

Massasoit listened in silence and very attentively to the speech of Mr. Winslow. At its close he expressed his approval, and,

after a short conference with his councilors, decided to accept Governor Carver's invitation to visit him, if Mr. Winslow would remain in the Indian encampment as a hostage during his absence. This arrangement being assented to, Massasoit set out, with twenty of his warriors, for the settlement of the Pilgrims. In token of peace, they left all their weapons behind. In Indian file, and in perfect silence, the savages advanced until they reached a small brook near the log huts of the colonists. Here they were met by Captain Miles Standish with a military array of six men. A salute of six muskets was fired in honor of the regal visit. Advancing a little farther, Governor Carver met them with his reserve of military pomp, and the monarch of the Wampanoags and his chieftains were escorted with the music of the drum and fife to a log hut decorated with such embellishments as the occasion could furnish. Two or three cushions, covered with a green rug, were spread as a seat for the king and the governor in this formal and most important interview. Governor Carver took the hand of Massasoit and kissed it. The Indian chieftain immediately imitated his example, and returned the salute. The governor then, in accordance with mistaken views of hospitality, presented his guest with a goblet of ardent spirits. The noble Indian, whose throat had never yet been tainted by this curse, took a draught which caused his eyes almost to burst from their sockets, and drove the sweat gushing from every pore. With the instinctive imperturbability of his race, he soon recovered from the shock, and a long, friendly, and very satisfactory conference

was held.

Appearance of the warriors.

Massasoit was a man of mark, mild, genial, affectionate, yet bold, cautious, and commanding. He was in the prime of life, of majestic stature, and of great gravity of countenance and manners. His face was painted red, after the manner of the warriors of his tribe. His glossy raven hair, well oiled, was cut short in front, but hung thick and long behind. He and his companions were picturesquely dressed in skins and with plumes of brilliant colors.

A friendly alliance.

As evening approached, Massasoit withdrew with his followers to his encampment upon the hill. The treachery of Hunt and such men had made him suspicious, and he was not willing to leave himself for the night in the power of the white men. He accordingly arranged his encampment to guard against surprise, and, sentinels being established, the rest of the party threw themselves upon their hemlock boughs, with their bows and arrows in their hands, and were soon fast asleep. The Pilgrims also kept a vigilant watch that night, for neither party had full confidence in the other. The next morning Captain Standish, with another man, ventured into the camp of the Indians. They were received with great kindness, and gradually confidence was strengthened between the two parties, and the most friendly relations were established. After entering

into a formal alliance, offensive and defensive, the conference terminated to the satisfaction of all parties, and the tawny warriors again disappeared in the pathless wilderness. They returned to Mount Hope, then called Pokanoket, the seat of Massasoit, about forty miles from Plymouth.

The ravages of death had now dwindled the colony down to fifty men, women, and children. But health was restored with the returning sun and the cheering breezes of spring. Thirty acres of land were planted, and Squantum proved himself a true and valuable friend, teaching them how to cultivate Indian corn, and how to take the various kinds of fish.

Death of Governor Carver.

Mission to Massasoit.

Trouble from the Indians.

In June Governor Carver died, greatly beloved and revered by the colony. Mr. William Bradford was chosen as his successor, and by annual election was continued governor for many years. Early in July Governor Bradford sent a deputation from Plymouth, with Squantum as their interpreter, to return the visit of Massasoit. There were several quite important objects to be obtained by this mission. It was a matter of moment to ascertain the strength of Massasoit, the number of his warriors, and the state in which he lived. They wished also, by a formal visit, to pay him marked attention, and to renew their friendly correspondence. There was another subject of delicacy and of difficulty which it had become absolutely necessary

to bring forward. Lazy, vagabond Indians had for some time been increasingly in the habit of crowding the little village of the colonists and eating out their substance. They would come with their wives and their children, and loiter around day after day, without any delicacy whatever, clamoring for food, and devouring every thing which was set before them like famished wolves. The Pilgrims, anxious to maintain friendly relations with Massasoit, were reluctant to drive away his subjects by violence, but the longer continuance of such hospitality could not be endured.

The journey.

Appearance of the country.

Hospitality of the natives.

Poverty of the natives.

The governor sent to the Indian king, as a present, a gaudy horseman's coat. It was made of red cotton trimmed with showy lace. At 10 o'clock in the morning of the second of July, the two ambassadors, Mr. Winslow and Mr. Hopkins, with Squantum as guide and interpreter, set forward on their journey. It was a warm and sunny day, and with cheerful spirits the party threaded the picturesque trails of the Indians through the forest. These trails were paths through the wilderness through which the Indians had passed for uncounted centuries. They were distinctly marked, and almost as renowned as the paved roads of the Old World, which once reverberated beneath the tramp of the legions of the Cæsars. Here generation after generation of the moccasined

savage, with silent tread, threaded his way, delighting in the gloom which no ray of the sun could penetrate, in the silence interrupted only by the cry of the wild beast in his lair, and awed by the marvelous beauty of lakes and streams, framed in mountains and fringed with forests, where water-fowl of every variety of note and plumage floated buoyant upon the wave, and pierced the air with monotonous and melancholy song. Ten or twelve Indians – men, women, and children – followed them, annoying them not a little with their intrusiveness and their greedy grasp of food. The embassy traveled about fifteen miles to a small Indian village upon a branch of Taunton River. Here they arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon. The natives called the place Namaschet. It was within the limits of the present town of Middleborough. The Indians received the colonists with great hospitality, offering them the richest viands which they could furnish – heavy bread made of corn, and the spawn of shad, which they ate from wooden spoons. These glimpses of poverty and wretchedness sadly detract from the romantic ideas we have been wont to cherish of the free life of the children of the forest. The savages were exceedingly delighted with the skill which their guests displayed in shooting crows in their corn-fields.

The fishing-party.

As Squantum told them that it was more than a day's travel from there to Pokanoket or Mount Hope, they resumed their journey, and went about eight miles farther, till they came, about sunset, to another stream, where they found a party of natives

fishing. They were here cheered with the aspect of quite a fruitful region. The ground on both sides of the river was cleared, and had formerly waved with corn-fields. The place had evidently once been densely populated, but the plague of which we have spoken swept, it is said, every individual into the grave. A few wandering Indians had now come to the deserted fields to fish, and were lazily sleeping in the open air, without constructing for themselves any shelter. These miserable natives had no food but fish and a few roasted acorns, and they devoured greedily the stores which the colonists brought with them. The night was mild and serene, and was passed without much discomfort in the unsheltered fields.

Opposition to crossing the river.

Early in the morning the journey was resumed, the colonists following down the stream, now called Fall River, toward Narraganset Bay. Six of the savages accompanied them a few miles, until they came to a shallow place, where, by divesting themselves of their clothing, they were able to wade through the river. Upon the opposite bank there were two Indians who seemed, with valor which astonished the colonists, to oppose their passage. They ran down to the margin of the stream, brandished their weapons, and made all the threatening gestures in their power. They were, however, appeased by friendly signs, and at last permitted the passage of the river without resort to violence.

Assistance from the Indians.

Here, after refreshing themselves, they continued their journey, following down the western bank of the stream. The country on both sides of the river had been cleared, and in former years had been planted with corn-fields, but was now quite depopulated. Several Indians still accompanied them, treating them with the most remarkable kindness. It was a cloudless day, and intensely hot. The Indians insisted upon carrying the superfluous clothing of their newly-found friends. As they were continually coming to brooks, often quite wide and deep, running into the river, the Indians eagerly took the Pilgrims upon their shoulders and carried them through.

Scarcity of food.

Character of the Indians.

During the whole of the day, after crossing the river, they met with but two Indians on their route, so effectually had the plague swept off the inhabitants. But the evidence was abundant that the region had formerly been quite populous with a people very poor and uncultivated. Their living had been manifestly nothing but fish and corn pounded into coarse meal. Game must have been so scarce in the woods, and with such difficulty taken with bows and arrows, that they could very seldom have been regaled with meat. A more wretched and monotonous existence than theirs can hardly be conceived. Entirely devoid of mental culture, there was no range for thought. Their huts

were miserable abodes, barely endurable in pleasant weather, but comfortless in the extreme when the wind filled them with smoke, or the rain dripped through the branches. Men, women, children, and dogs slept together at night in the one littered room, devoured by fleas. The native Indian was a degraded, joyless savage, occasionally developing kind feelings and noble instincts, but generally vicious, treacherous, and cruel.

Massasoit absent.

The latter part of the afternoon they arrived at Pokanoket. Much to their disappointment, they found that Massasoit, uninformed of their intended visit, was absent on a hunting excursion. As he was, however, not far from home, runners were immediately dispatched to recall him. The chieftain had selected his residence with that peculiar taste for picturesque beauty which characterized the more noble of the Indians. The hillock which the English subsequently named Mount Hope was a graceful mound about two hundred feet high, commanding an extensive and remarkably beautiful view of wide, sweeping forests and indented bays.

Mount Hope.

This celebrated mound is about four miles from the city of Fall River. From its summit the eye now ranges over Providence, Bristol, Warren, Fall River, and many other minor towns. The whole wide-spread landscape is embellished with gardens, orchards, cultivated fields, and thriving villages.

Gigantic steamers plow the waves, and the sails of a commerce which girdles the globe whitens the beautiful bay.

Reflections on the past.

But, as the tourist sits upon the solitary summit, he forgets the present in memory of the past. Neither the pyramids of Egypt nor the Coliseum of the Eternal City are draped with a more sublime antiquity. Here, during generations which no man can number, the sons of the forest gathered around their council-fires, and struggled, as human hearts, whether savage or civilized, must ever struggle, against "life's stormy doom."

Here, long centuries ago, were the joys of the bridal, and the anguish which gathers around the freshly-opened grave. Beneath the moon, which then, as now, silvered this mound, "the Indian lover wooed his dusky maid." Upon the beach, barbaric childhood reveled, and their red limbs were bathed in the crystal waves.

Here, in ages long since passed away, the war-whoop resounded through the forest. The shriek of mothers and maidens pierced the skies as they fell cleft by the tomahawk; and all the horrid clangor of war, with "its terror, conflagration, tears, and blood," imbittered ten thousand fold the ever bitter lot of humanity.

"'Tis dangerous to rouse the lion;  
Deadly to cross the tiger's path;  
But the most terrible of terrors

Is man himself in his wild wrath."

Reflections inspired by the scene.

Character of our forefathers.

In the midst of this attractive scene, perhaps nothing is more conspicuous than the spires of the churches – those churches of a pure Christianity to which New England is indebted for all her intelligence and prosperity. It was upon the Bible that our forefathers laid the foundations of the institutions of this New World; and, though they made some mistakes, for they were but mortal, still they were sincere, conscientious Christian men, and their Christianity has been the legacy from which their children have derived the greatest benefits. Two hundred years ago, our fathers, from the summit of Mount Hope, looked upon a dreary wilderness through which a few naked savages roamed. How different the spectacle which now meets the eye of the tourist!

Return of Massasoit.

Massasoit, informed by his runners of the guests who had so unexpectedly arrived, immediately returned. Mr. Winslow and Mr. Hopkins, wishing to honor the Indian king, fired a salute, each one discharging his gun as Massasoit approached. The king, who had heard the report of fire-arms before, was highly gratified; but the women and children were struck with exceeding terror, and, like affrighted deer, leaped from their wigwams and fled into the woods. Squantum pursued them, and,

by assurances that no harm was to be feared, at length induced them cautiously to return.

Royal ceremonies.

Gifts to the king.

There was then an interchange of sundry ceremonies of state to render the occasion imposing. The scarlet coat, with its gaudy embroidery of lace, was placed upon Massasoit, and a chain of copper beads was thrown around his neck. He seemed much pleased with these showy trappings, and his naked followers were exceedingly delighted in seeing their chieftain thus decorated. A motley group now gathered around the Indian king and the English embassy. Massasoit then made a long speech, to which the natives seemed to listen with great interest, occasionally responding with applause. It was now night. The two envoys were weary with travel, and were hungry, for they had consumed all their food, not doubting that they should find abundance at the table of the sovereign of all these realms. But, to their surprise, Massasoit was entirely destitute, not having even a mouthful to offer them. Supperless they went to bed. In the following language they describe their accommodations for the night:

Want of food.

Night in a palace.

"Late it grew, but victuals he offered none, so we desired to go to rest. He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only planks laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two

more of his chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us, so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey."

Amusements.

Arrival of fish.

The next day there was gathered at Mount Hope quite a concourse of the adjoining Indians, subordinate chiefs and common people. They engaged in various games of strength and agility, with skins for prizes. The English also fired at a mark, amazing the Indians with the accuracy of their shot. It was now noon, and the English, who had slept without supper, had as yet received no breakfast. At one o'clock two large fishes were brought in, which had been speared in the bay. They were hastily broiled upon coals, and forty hungry men eagerly devoured them.

Motives for departure.

The afternoon passed slowly and tediously away, and again the Pilgrims went supperless to bed. Again they passed a sleepless night, being kept awake by vermin, hunger, and the noise of the savages. Friday morning they rose before the sun, resolved immediately to commence their journey home. Massasoit was very importunate to have them remain longer with him.

Graphic narrative.

"But we determined," they write in their graphic narrative, "to keep the Sabbath at home, and feared that we should either be light-headed for want of sleep, for what with bad lodgings, the savages' barbarous singing (for

they use to sing themselves asleep), lice, and fleas within doors, and musketoës without, we could hardly sleep all the time of our being there; we much fearing that if we should stay any longer we should not be able to recover home for want of strength; so that on the Friday morning before the sunrising we took our leave and departed, Massasoit being both grieved and ashamed that he could no better entertain us."

Stormy journey.

Their journey home was a very weary one. They would, perhaps, have perished from hunger had they not obtained from the Indians whom they met a little parched corn, which was considered a very great delicacy, a squirrel, and a shad. Friday night, as they were asleep in the open air, a tempest of thunder and lightning arose, with floods of rain. Their fire was speedily extinguished, and they were soaked to the skin. Saturday night, just as the twilight was passing away into darkness, they reached their homes in a storm of rain, wet, weary, hungry, and sore.

Result of the mission.

The result of this mission was, however, important. They renewed their treaty of peace with Massasoit, and made arrangements that they were to receive no Indians as guests unless Massasoit should send them with a copper necklace, in token that they came from him.

Child lost.

News of the safety of the child.

In the autumn of this same year a boy from the colony got lost in the woods. He wandered about for five days, living upon berries, and then was found by some Indians in the forests of Cape Cod. Massasoit, as soon as he heard of it, sent word that the boy was found. He was in the hands of the same tribe who, in consequence of the villainies of Hunt, had assailed the Pilgrims so fiercely at the First Encounter. The savages treated the boy kindly, and had him at Nauset, which is now the town of Eastham, near the extremity of the Cape. Governor Bradford immediately sent ten men in a boat to rescue the boy.

Endeavors for his rescue.

Cummaquids.

They coasted along the first day very prosperously, notwithstanding a thunder-shower in the afternoon, with violent wind and rain. At night they put into Barnstable Bay, then called Cummaquid. Squantum and another Indian were with them as friends and interpreters. They deemed it prudent not to land, but anchored for the night in the middle of the bay. The next morning they saw some savages gathering shell-fish upon the shore. They sent their two interpreters with assurances of friendship, and to inquire for the boy. The savages were very courteous, informed them that the boy was farther down the Cape at Nauset, and invited the whole party to come on shore and take some refreshments. Six of the colonists ventured ashore, having first received four of the natives to remain in their boat as hostages. The chief of this small tribe, called the

Cummaquids, was a young man of about twenty-six years of age, and appeared to be a very remarkable character. He was dignified and courteous in his demeanor, and entertained his guests with a native politeness which surprised them much.

An aged Indian.

While in this place an old Indian woman came to see them, whom they judged to be a hundred years of age. As soon as she came into their presence she was overwhelmed with emotion, and cried most convulsively. Upon inquiring the reason, the Pilgrims were told that her three sons were kidnapped by Captain Hunt. The young men had been invited on board his ship to trade. He lured them below, seized and bound them, and carried them to Spain, where he sold them as slaves. The unhappy and desolate mother seemed quite heart-broken with grief. The Pilgrims addressed to her words of sympathy, assured her that Captain Hunt was a bad man, whom every good man in England condemned, and gave her some presents.

*Iyanough*.

Caution.

Recovery of the lost boy.

Presents to *Aspinet*.

They remained with this kind but deeply-wronged people until after dinner. Then *Iyanough* himself, the noble young chief of the tribe, with two of his warriors, accompanied them on board the boat to assist them in their search for the boy. A fair wind

from the west filled their sails, and late in the evening, when it was too dark to land, they approached Nauset. Here was the hostile tribe whose prowess the colonists had experienced in the First Encounter. The villain, Captain Hunt, had stolen from them twenty men. It was consequently deemed necessary to practice much caution. Iyanough and Squantum went on shore there to conciliate the natives and to inform them of the object of the mission. The next morning a great crowd of natives had gathered, and were anxious to get into the boat. The English, however, prudently, would allow but two to enter at a time. The day was passed in parleying. About sunset a train of a hundred Indians appeared, bringing the lost boy with them. One half remained at a little distance, with their bows and arrows; the other half, unarmed, brought the boy to the boat, and delivered him to his friends. The colonists made valuable presents to *Aspinet*, the chief of the tribe, and also paid abundantly for the corn which, it will be remembered, they took from a deserted house when they were first coasting along the shore in search of a place of settlement. They then spread their sails, and a fair wind soon drove them fifty miles across the bay to their homes.

The Wampanoags.

Power of Massasoit.

The Wampanoags do not appear to have constituted a very numerous tribe, but, through the intellectual and military energy of their chieftain, Massasoit, they had acquired great power. The present town of Bristol, Rhode Island, was the region principally

occupied by the tribe; but Massasoit extended his sway over more than thirty tribes, who inhabited Cape Cod and all the country extending between Massachusetts and Narraganset Bays, reaching inland to where the head branches of the Charles River and the Pawtucket River meet. It will be seen at once, by reference to the map, how wide was the sway of this Indian monarch, and how important it was for the infant colony to cultivate friendly relations with a sovereign who could combine all those tribes, and direct many thousand barbarian warriors to rush like wolves upon the feeble settlement.

# Chapter III

## Clouds of War

1621-1622

Canonicus.

His hostility toward the Puritans.

The Narraganset Indians occupied the region extending from the western shores of Narraganset Bay to Pawcatuck River. They were estimated to number about thirty thousand, and could bring five thousand warriors into the field. Canonicus, the sovereign chief of this tribe, was a man of great renown. War had occasionally raged between the Narragansets and the Wampanoags, and the two tribes were bitterly hostile to each other. Canonicus regarded the newly-arrived English with great jealousy, and was particularly annoyed by the friendly relations existing between them and the Wampanoags. Indeed, it is quite evident that Massasoit was influenced to enter into his alliance with the English mainly from his dread of the Narragansets.

Corruption at court.

A rebellion.

Flight of Massasoit.

Bribery and corruption are almost as common in barbarian as in civilized courts. Canonicus had brought over to his cause one of the minor chiefs of Massasoit, named Corbitant. This man, audacious and reckless, began to rail bitterly at the peace existing between the Indians and the English. Boldly he declared that Massasoit was a traitor, and ought to be deposed. Sustained as Corbitant was by the whole military power of the Narragansets, he soon gathered a party about him sufficiently strong to bid defiance to Massasoit. The sovereign of the Wampanoags was even compelled to take refuge from arrest by flight.

The colonists heard these tidings with great solicitude, and learning that Corbitant was within a few miles of them, at Namasket (Middleborough), striving to rouse the natives to unite with the Narragansets against them, they privately sent Squantum and another friendly Indian, Hobbomak, to Namasket, to ascertain what had become of Massasoit, and how serious was the peril with which they were threatened.

Reported death of Squantum.

The next day Hobbomak returned alone, breathless and terrified. He reported that they had hardly arrived at Namasket when Corbitant beset the wigwam into which they had entered with a band of armed men, and seized them both as prisoners. He declared that they both should die, saying that when Squantum was dead the English would have lost their tongue. Brandishing a knife, the savage approached Squantum to stab him. Hobbomak, being a very powerful man, at that moment broke from the grasp

of those who held him, and outrunning his pursuers, succeeded in regaining Plymouth. He said that he had no doubt that Squantum was killed.

#### Action of the Puritans.

These were melancholy and alarming tidings. Governor Bradford immediately assembled the few men – about twenty in number – of the feeble colony, to decide what should be done. After looking to God for counsel, and after calm deliberation, it was resolved that, if they should suffer their friends and messengers to be thus assailed and murdered with impunity, the hostile Indians would be encouraged to continued aggressions, and no Indians would dare to maintain friendly relations with them. They therefore adopted the valiant determination to send ten men, one half of their whole number, with Hobbomak as their guide, to seize Corbitant and avenge the outrage.

#### The army.

#### Directions to the men.

The 14th of August, 1621, was a dark and stormy day, when this little band set out on its bold adventure. All the day long, as they silently threaded the paths of the forest, the rain dripped upon them. Late in the afternoon they arrived within four miles of Namasket. They then thought it best to conceal themselves until after dark, that they might fall upon their foe by surprise. Captain Standish led the band. To every man he gave minute directions as to the part he was to perform. Night, wet and

stormy, soon darkened around them in Egyptian blackness. They could hardly see a hand's breadth before them. Groping along, they soon lost their way, and became entangled in the thick undergrowth. Wet, weary, and dejected, they toiled on, and at last again happily hit the trail. It was after midnight when they arrived within sight of the glimmering fires of the little Indian hamlet of Namasket. They then sat down, and ate from their knapsacks a hearty meal. The food which remained they threw away, that they might have nothing to obstruct them in the conflict which might ensue.

Approach to the wigwam.

The attack.

"I am a squaw!"

They then cautiously approached a large wigwam where Hobbomak supposed that Corbitant and his men were sleeping. Silently they surrounded the hut, the gloom of the night and the wailings of the storm securing them from being either seen or heard. At a signal, two muskets were fired to terrify the savages, and Captain Standish, with three or four men, rushed into the hut. The ground floor, dimly lighted by some dying embers, was covered with sleeping savages – men, women, and children. A scene of indescribable consternation and confusion ensued. Through Hobbomak, Captain Standish ordered every one to remain, assuring them that he had come for Corbitant, the murderer of Squantum, and that, if he were not there, no one else should be injured. But the savages, terrified by the midnight

surprise and by the report of the muskets, were bereft of reason. Many of them endeavored to escape, and were severely wounded by the colonists in their attempts to stop them. The Indian boys, seeing that the women were not molested, ran around, frantically exclaiming, "I am a squaw! I am a squaw!"

Escape of Corbitant.

Appearance of the huts.

Squantum found.

At last order was restored, and it was found that Corbitant was not there, but that he had gone off with all his train, and that Squantum was not killed. A bright fire was now kindled, that the hut might be carefully searched. Its blaze illumined one of the wildest of imaginable scenes. The wigwam, spacious and rudely constructed of boughs, mats, and bark; the affrighted savages, men, women, and children, in their picturesque dress and undress, a few with ghastly wounds, faint and bleeding; the various weapons and utensils of barbarian life hanging around; the bold colonists in their European dress and arms; the fire blazing in the centre of the hut, all combined to present a scene such as few eyes have ever witnessed. Hobbomak now climbed to the top of the hut and shouted for Squantum. He immediately came from another wigwam. Having disarmed the savages of their bows and arrows, the colonists gathered around the fire to dry their dripping clothes, and waited for the light of the morning.

## Threats of Capt. Standish.

With the early light, all who were friendly to the English gathered around them, while the faction in favor of Corbitant fled into the wilderness. A large group was soon assembled. Captain Standish, in words of conciliation and of firmness, informed them that, though Corbitant had escaped, yet, if he continued his hostility, no place of retreat would secure him from punishment; and that, if any violence were offered to Massasoit or to any of his subjects by the Narragansets, or by any one else, the colonists would avenge it to the utter overthrow of those thus offending. He expressed great regret that any of the Indians had been wounded in consequence of their endeavors to escape from the house, and offered to take the wounded home, that they might be carefully healed.

The return.

Reconciliation of Corbitant.

After breakfasting with the Indians, this heroic band, accompanied by Squantum, some of the wounded, and several other friendly Indians, set out on their return. They arrived at home in safety the same evening. This well-judged and decisive measure at once checked the progress of Corbitant in exciting disaffection. He soon found it expedient to seek reconciliation, and, through the intercession of Massasoit, signed a treaty of submission and friendship; and even Canonicus, sovereign of the Narragansets, sent a messenger, perhaps as a spy, but professedly

to treat for peace. Thus this cloud of war was dissipated.

Prosperous summer.

On the whole, the Pilgrims had enjoyed a very prosperous summer. They were eminently just and kind in their treatment of the Indians. In trading with them they obtained furs and many other articles, which contributed much to their comfort. Fish was abundant in the bay. Their corn grew luxuriantly, and their fields waved with a rich and golden harvest. With the autumnal weather came abundance of water-fowl, supplying them with delicious meat. Thus were they blessed with peace and plenty.

Rumors of war.

Various rumors had reached the colonists that several of the tribes of the Massachusetts Indians, so called, inhabiting the islands and main land at the northwestern extremity of Massachusetts Bay, were threatening hostilities. It was consequently decided to send an expedition to them, not to intimidate, but to conciliate with words of sincerity and deeds of kindness.

New expedition.

Evidences of the plague.

Justice of the Pilgrims.

At midnight, September the 18th, the tide then serving, a small party set sail, and during the day, with a gentle wind, made about sixty miles north. Not deeming it safe to land, they remained in their boat during the night, and the next morning landed under a

cliff. Here they found some natives, who seemed to cower before them in terror. It appeared afterward that Squantum had told the natives that the English had a box in which they kept the plague, and that, if the Indians offended them, they would let the awful scourge loose. Every where the English saw evidences of the ravages of the pestilence to which we have so often referred. There were desolate villages and deserted corn-fields, and but a few hundred Indians wandering here and there where formerly there had been thousands. The kindness with which they treated the Indians, and the fairness with which they traded with them, won confidence. Squantum at one time suggested that, by way of punishment, and to teach the savages a lesson, they should by violence take away their furs, which were almost their only treasures. Our fathers nobly replied, "Were they ever so bad, we would not wrong them, or give them any just occasion against us. We shall pay no attention to their threatening words, but, if they attack us, we shall then punish them severely."

Explorations.

Appearance of the harbor.

The Pilgrims explored quite minutely this magnificent harbor, then solitary and fringed with rayless forests, now alive with commerce, and decorated with mansions of refinement and opulence. The long promontory, now crowded with the busy streets and thronged dwellings of Boston, was then a dense and silent wilderness, threaded with a few Indian trails. Along the shore several rude wigwams were scattered, the smoke curling

from their fires from among the trees, with naked children playing around the birch canoes upon the beach.

Preparations for return.

In the evening of a serene day the moon rose brilliant on the harbor, illumining with almost celestial beauty the islands and the sea. Many of the islands were then crowned with forests; others were cleared smooth and verdant, but swept entirely clean of inhabitants by the dreadful plague. The Pilgrims, rejoicing in the rays of the autumnal moon, prepared to spread their sails. "Having well spent the day," they write, "we returned to the shallop, almost all the women accompanying us to trucke, who sold their coats from their backes, and tyed boughes about them, but with great shamefastness, for indeed they are more modest than some of our English women are. We promised them to come again to them, and they us to keep their skins.

The harbor.

"Within this bay the savages say there are two rivers, the one whereof we saw having a fair entrance, but we had no time to discover it. Better harbors for shipping can not be than here are. At the entrance of the bay are many rocks, and, in all likelihood, very good fishing ground. Having a light moon, we set sail at evening, and before next day noon got home, with a considerable quantity of beaver, and a good report of the place, wishing we had been seated there."

Friendly relations.

Arrival of emigrants from England.

Thus, by kindness, the natives of this region were won to friendship, and amicable relations were established. Before the close of this year another vessel arrived from England, bringing thirty-five persons to join the colony. Though these emigrants were poor, and, having consumed nearly all their food on a long voyage, were nearly starved, the lonely colonists received the acquisition with great joy. Houses were immediately built for their accommodation, and they were fed from the colony stores. Winter now again whitened the hills of Plymouth.

Declaration of war.

Canonicus.

Weakness of the Pilgrims.

Early in January, 1622, Canonicus, sovereign chief of the Narragansets, notwithstanding the alliance of the foregoing summer into which he had entered, dreading the encroachments of the white men, and particularly apprehensive of the strength which their friendship gave to his hereditary enemies, the Mohegans, sent to Governor Bradford a bundle of arrows tied up in the skin of a rattlesnake. Squantum was called to interpret the significance of such a gift. He said that it was the Indian mode of expressing hostility and of sending a declaration of war. This act shows an instinctive sense of honor in the barbarian chieftain which civilized men do not always imitate. Even the savages cherished ideas of chivalry which led them to scorn to strike an unsuspecting and defenseless foe. The friendly Indians around

Plymouth assured the colonists that Canonicus was making great preparations for war; that he could bring five thousand warriors into the field; that he had sent spies to ascertain the condition of the English and their weakness; and that he had boasted that he could eat them all up at a mouthful. It is pleasant to record that our fathers had not provoked this hostility by any act of aggression. They had been thus far most eminently just and benevolent in all their intercourse with the natives. They were settled upon land to which Canonicus pretended no claim, and were on terms of cordial friendship with all the Indians around them. The Pilgrims at this time had not more than twenty men capable of bearing arms, and five thousand savages were clashing their weapons, and filling the forest with their war-whoops, preparing to attack them. Their peril was indeed great.

Council called.

Governor Bradford called a council of his most judicious men, and it was decided that, under these circumstances, any appearance of timidity would but embolden their enemies. The rattlesnake skin was accordingly returned filled with powder and bullets, and accompanied by a defiant message that, if Canonicus preferred war to peace, the colonists were ready at any moment to meet him, and that he would rue the day in which he converted friends into enemies.

Pickwickian challenge.

Barbarian as well as civilized blusterers can, when discretion

prompts, creep out of an exceedingly small hole. Canonicus had no wish to meet a foe who was thus prompt for the encounter. He immediately sent to Governor Bradford the assurance, in Narraganset phrase, of his high consideration, and begged him to believe that the arrows and the snake skin were sent purely in a Pickwickian sense.

Preparations for defense.

Completion of the fortification.

The threatening aspect of affairs at this time led the colonists to surround their whole little village, including also the top of the hill, on the side of which it was situated, with a strong palisade, consisting of posts some twelve feet high firmly planted in the ground in contact with each other. It was an enormous labor to construct this fortification in the dead of winter. There were three entrance gates to the little town thus walled in, with bulwarks to defend them. Behind this rampart, with loop-holes through which the defenders could fire upon any approaching foe, the colonists felt quite secure. A large cannon was also mounted upon the summit of the hill, which would sweep all the approaches with ball and grape-shot. Sentinels were posted night and day, to guard against surprise, and their whole available force was divided into four companies, each with its commander, and its appointed place of rendezvous in case of an attack. The months of January and February were occupied in this work. Early in March the fortification was completed.

The challenge retracted.

The heroic defiance which was returned to Canonicus, and the vigorous measures of defense adopted, alarmed the Narragansets. They immediately ceased all hostile demonstrations, and Canonicus remained after this, until his death, apparently a firm friend of the English.

An arrival.

Kind reception.

In June, to the great annoyance of the Pilgrims, two vessels came into the harbor of Plymouth, bringing sixty wild and rude adventurers, who, neither fearing God nor regarding man, had come to the New World to seek their fortunes. They were an idle and dissolute set, greedy for gain, and ripe for any deeds of dishonesty or violence. They had made but poor provision for their voyage, and were almost starved. The Pilgrims received them kindly, and gave them shelter and food; and yet the ungrateful wretches stole their corn, wasted their substance, and secretly reviled their habits of sobriety and devotion. Nearly all the summer these unprincipled adventurers intruded upon the hospitality of the Pilgrims. In the autumn, these men, sixty in number, went to a place which they had selected in Massachusetts Bay, then called Wessagusset, now the town of Weymouth, which they had selected for their residence. They left their sick behind them, to be nursed by those Christian Pilgrims whose piety had excited their ribald abuse.

Complaints from the Indians.

Relief wanted.

Death of Squantum.

His prayer.

Hardly had these men left ere the ears of the Pilgrims were filled with the clamors which their injustice and violence raised from the outraged Indians. The Weymouth miscreants stole their corn, insulted their females, and treated them with every vile indignity. The Indians at last became exasperated beyond endurance, and threatened the total destruction of the dissolute crew. At last starvation stares them in the face, and they send in October to Plymouth begging for food. The Pilgrims have not more than enough to meet their own wants during the winter. But, to save them from famishing by hunger, Governor Bradford himself takes a small party in a boat and sails along the coast, purchasing corn of the Indians, getting a few quarts here and a few bushels there, until he had collected twenty-eight hogsheads of corn and beans. While at Chatham, then called Manamoyk, Squantum was taken sick of a fever and died. It is a touching tribute to the kindness of our Pilgrim fathers that this poor Indian testified so much love for them. In his dying hour he prayed fervently that God would take him to the heaven of the Englishmen, that he might dwell with them forever. As remembrances of his affection, he bequeathed all his little effects to sundry of his English friends. Governor Bradford and his companions, with tears, followed the remains of their

faithful interpreter to the grave, and then, with saddened hearts, continued their voyage.

Governor Bradford's journey.

Theft committed.

Return of the articles.

At Nauset, now Eastham, their shallop was unfortunately wrecked. Governor Bradford stored the corn on shore, placed it under the care of the friendly Indians there, and, taking a native for a guide, set out on foot to travel fifty miles through the forest to Plymouth. The natives all along the way received him with kindness, and did every thing in their power to aid him. Having arrived at Plymouth, he dispatched Captain Standish with another shallop to fetch the corn. The bold captain had a prosperous though a very tempestuous voyage. While at Nauset an Indian stole some trifle from the shallop as she lay in a creek. Captain Standish immediately went to the sachem of the tribe, and informed him that the lost goods must be restored, or he should make reprisals. The next morning the sachem came and delivered the goods, saying that he was very sorry the crime had been committed; that the thief had been arrested and punished; and that he had ordered his women to make some bread for Captain Standish, in token of his desire to cultivate just and friendly relations. Captain Standish having arrived at Plymouth, a supply of corn was delivered to help the people at Weymouth.

The Weymouth settlers implore aid.

But these lawless adventurers were as improvident as they were vicious and idle. By the month of February they were again destitute and starving. They had borrowed all they could, and had stolen all they could, and were now in a state of extreme misery, many of them having already perished from exposure and want. The Indians hated them and despised them. Conspiracies were formed to kill them all, and many Indians, scattered here and there, were in favor of destroying all the white men. They foresaw that civilized and savage life could not abide side by side. The latter part of February the Weymouth people sent a letter to Plymouth by an Indian, stating their deplorable condition, and imploring further aid. They had become so helpless and degraded that the Indians seem actually to have made slaves of them, compelling them to perform the most menial services. The letter contained the following dolorous complaints:

"The boldness of the Indians increases abundantly, insomuch that the victuals we get they will take out of our pots and eat it before our faces. If we try to prevent them, they will hold a knife at our breasts. To satisfy them, we have been compelled to hang one of our company. We have sold our clothes for corn, and are ready to starve, both with cold and hunger also, because we can not endure to get victuals by reason of our nakedness."

Disgraceful proceeding.

Under these circumstances, one of the Weymouth men, ranging the woods, came to an Indian barn and stole some corn.

The owner, finding by the footprints that it was an Englishman who had committed the theft, determined to have revenge. With insulting and defiant confederates, he went to the plantation and demanded that the culprit should be hung, threatening, if there were not prompt acquiescence in the demand, the utter destruction of the colonists. The consternation at Weymouth was great. Nearly all were sick and half famished, and they could present no resistance. After very anxious deliberation, it was decided that, since the man who committed the theft was young and strong, and a skillful cobbler, whose services could not be dispensed with, they would by stratagem save his life, and substitute for him a poor old bedrid weaver, who was not only useless to them, but a burden. This economical arrangement was unanimously adopted. The poor old weaver, bound hand and foot, and dressed in the clothes of the culprit, was dragged from his bed, and was soon seen dangling in the air, to the great delight of the Indians.

#### Injustice of Hudibras.

Much has been written upon this disgraceful transaction, and various versions of it have been given, with sundry details, but the facts, so far as can now be ascertained, are as we have stated. The deed is in perfect accordance with the whole course pursued by the miserable men who perpetrated it. The author of Hudibras unjustly – we hope not maliciously – in his witty doggerel, ascribes this transaction of the miscreants at Weymouth to the Pilgrims at Plymouth. The mirth-loving satirist seemed to rejoice

at the chance of directing a shaft against the Puritans.

Sickness of Massasoit.

Deputation from Plymouth.

The journey.

Reported death of Massasoit.

Just at this time news came to Plymouth that Massasoit was very sick, and at the point of death. Governor Bradford immediately dispatched Mr. Edward Winslow and Mr. John Hampden<sup>1</sup> to the dying chieftain, with such medical aid as the colony could furnish. Their friend Hobbomak accompanied them as guide and interpreter. Massasoit had two sons quite young, Wamsutta and Pometacom, the eldest of whom would, according to Indian custom, inherit the chieftainship. It was, however, greatly feared that the ambitious and energetic Corbitant, who had manifested much hostility to the English, might avail himself of the death of Massasoit, and grasp the reins of power. The deputation from Plymouth traveled the first day through the woods as far as Middleborough, then the little Indian hamlet of Namasket. There they passed the night in the wigwam of an Indian. They, the next day, continued their journey, and crossing in a canoe the arm of the bay, which there runs far inland and three miles beyond, with much anxiety approached the dwelling-place of Corbitant at Mattapoiset, in the present

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<sup>1</sup> There is much evidence that this was the celebrated John Hampden, renowned in the time of Charles I, and to whom Gray, in his *Elegy*, alludes: "The village Hampden, that with dauntless breast The little tyrant of his fields withstood."

town of Swanzey. They had been informed by the way that Massasoit was dead, and they had great fears that Corbitant had already taken steps as a usurper, and that they, two defenseless men, might fall victims to his violence.

Hobbomak.

Hobbomak, who had embraced Christianity, and was apparently a consistent Christian, was greatly beloved by Massasoit. The honest Indian, when he heard the tidings of his chieftain's death, bitterly deplored his loss.

"My loving sachem! my loving sachem!" he exclaimed; "many have I known, but never any like thee."

Then turning to Mr. Winslow, he added, "While you live you will never see his like among the Indians. He was no deceiver, nor bloody, nor cruel, like the other Indians. He never cherished a spirit of revenge, and was easily reconciled to those who had offended him. He was ever ready to listen to the advice of others, and governed his people by wisdom and without severity."

Hospitality of Corbitant's wife.

Arrival at Mount Hope.

When they arrived at Corbitant's house they found the sachem not at home. His wife, however, treated them with great kindness, and informed them that Massasoit was still alive, though at the point of death. They therefore hastened on to Mount Hope. Mr. Winslow gives the following account of the scene witnessed at the bedside of the sick monarch:

Massasoit's welcome.

"When we arrived thither, we found the house so full that we could scarce get in, though they used their best diligence to make way for us. They were in the midst of their charms for him, making such a fiendlike noise that it distempered us who were well, and therefore was unlike to ease him that was sick. About him were six or eight women, who chafed his arms, legs, and thighs, to keep heat in him. When they had made an end of their charming, one told him that his friends the English were come to see him. Having understanding left, but his sight was wholly gone, he asked *who was come*. They told him *Winsnow*, for they can not pronounce the letter *l*, but ordinarily *n* in the place thereof. He desired to speak with me. When I came to him, and they told him of it, he put forth his hand to me, which I took. Then he said twice, though very inwardly, *Keen Winsnow?* which is to say, Art thou Winslow? I answered *Ahhe*, that is, *yes*. Then he doubled these words: *Matta neen wonckanet namen Winsnow*; that is to say, *O Winslow, I shall never see thee again!*"

His recovery.

Kindness of the Pilgrims.

Mr. Winslow as physician.

Mr. Winslow immediately prepared some refreshing broth for the sick man, and, by careful nursing, to the astonishment of all, he recovered. Massasoit appeared to be exceedingly grateful for this kindness, and ever after attributed his recovery to the skill and attentions of his English friends. His unquestionable

sincerity won the confidence of the English, and they became more fully convinced of his real worth than ever before. Mr. Winslow wished for a chicken to make some broth. An Indian immediately set out, at two o'clock at night, for a run of forty miles through the wilderness to Plymouth. In a surprisingly short time, he returned with two live chickens. Massasoit was so much pleased with the fowls – animals which he had never seen before – that he would not allow them to be killed, but kept them as pets. The kind-hearted yet imperial old chieftain manifested great solicitude for the welfare of his people. He entreated Mr. Winslow to visit all his villages, that he might relieve the sick and the suffering who were in them. Mr. Winslow remained several days, and his fame as a physician spread so rapidly that great crowds gathered in an encampment around Mount Hope to gain relief from a thousand nameless ills. Some came from the distance of more than a hundred miles.

#### Alarming tidings.

While at Mount Hope, Massasoit informed Mr. Winslow that Wittuwamet, a sachem of one of the Massachusetts tribes of Indians near Weymouth, and several other Indian chiefs, had formed a plot for the purpose of cutting off the two English colonies. Massasoit stated that he had been often urged to join in the conspiracy, but had always refused to do so, and that he had done every thing in his power to prevent it. Mr. Winslow very anxiously inquired into all the particulars, and ascertained that the Weymouth men had so thoroughly aroused

the contempt as well as the indignation of the neighboring Indians, that their total massacre was resolved upon. The Indians, however, both respected and feared the colonists at Plymouth; and, apprehensive that they might avenge the slaughter of their countrymen, it was resolved, by a sudden and treacherous assault, to overwhelm them also, so that not a single Englishman should remain to tell the tale.

The party leave Mount Hope.

With these alarming tidings, Mr. Winslow, with Mr. Hampden and Hobbomak, left Mount Hope on his return. Corbitant, their outwardly-reconciled enemy, accompanied them as far as his house in what is now Swanzey.

Conversation with Corbitant.

"That night," writes Mr. Winslow, "through the earnest request of Corbitant, we lodged with him at Mattapoiset. On the way I had much conference with him, so likewise at his house, he being a notable politician, yet full of merry jests and squibs, and never better pleased than when the like are returned upon him. Among other things, he asked me that, if *he* were thus dangerously sick, as Massasoit had been, and should send to Plymouth for medicine, whether the governor would send it; and if he would, whether I would come therewith to him. To both which I answered yes; whereat he gave me many joyful thanks."

"I am surprised," said Corbitant, after a moment's thought, "that two Englishmen should dare to venture so far into our

country alone. Are you not afraid?"

"Where there is true love," Mr. Winslow replied, "there is no fear."

"But if your love be such," said the wily Indian, "and bear such fruit, how happens it that when we come to Plymouth, you stand upon your guard, with the mouth of your pieces pointed toward us?"

English salutations.

"This," replied Mr. Winslow, "is a mark of respect. It is our custom to receive our best friends in this manner."

Corbitant shook his head, and said, "I do not like such salutations."

Theological remarks.

Observing that Mr. Winslow, before eating, implored a blessing, Corbitant desired to know what it meant. Mr. Winslow endeavored to explain to him some of the primary truths of revealed religion, and repeated to him the Ten Commandments. Corbitant listened to them very attentively, and said that he liked them all except the seventh. "It must be very inconvenient," he said, "for a man to be tied all his life to one woman, whether she pleases him or not."

As Mr. Winslow continued his remarks upon the goodness of God, and the gratitude he should receive from us, Corbitant added, "I believe almost as you do. The being whom you call God we call Kichtan."

Return to Plymouth.

Mr. Winslow and his companions passed a very pleasant night in the Indian dwelling, receiving the most hospitable entertainment. The next morning they hastened on their way to Plymouth. They immediately informed the governor of the alarming tidings they had heard respecting the conspiracy, and a council of all the men in the colony was convened. It was unanimously decided that action, prompt, vigorous, and decisive, was necessary.

The army.

Captain Standish.

The bold Captain Standish was immediately placed in command of an army of *eight men* to proceed to Weymouth. He embarked his force in a squadron of *one boat*, to set sail for Massachusetts – for Massachusetts and Plymouth were then distinct colonies. The captain was an intrepid, impulsive man, who rarely took counsel of prudence. He would wrong no man, and, let the consequences be what they might, he would submit to wrong from no man. The Pilgrims valued him highly, and yet so deeply regretted his fiery temperament that they were unwilling to receive him to the communion of the Church.

Insolence of the Indians.

The commencement of hostilities.

The conflict and victory.

When they arrived at Weymouth they found a large number

of Indians swaggering around the wretched settlement, and treating the humiliated and starving colonists with the utmost insolence. The colonists dared not exhibit the slightest spirit of retaliation. The Indians had been so accustomed to treat the godless race at Weymouth with every indignity, that they had almost forgotten that the Pilgrims were men of different blood. As Captain Standish and his eight men landed, they were met by a mob of Indians, who, by derision and insolence, seemed to aim to provoke a quarrel. Wittuwamet, the head of the conspirators, was there. He was a stout, brawny savage, vulgar, bold, and impudent, almost beyond the conception of a civilized mind. Accompanied by a gang of confederates, he approached Captain Standish, whetting his knife, and threatening his death in phrase exceedingly contemptuous and insulting. By the side of this chief was another Indian named Peksuot, of gigantic stature and Herculean strength, who taunted the captain with his inferior size, and assailed him with a volley of barbarian blackguardism. All this it would be hard for a meek man to bear. Captain Standish was not a meek man. The hot blood of the Puritan Cavalier was soon at the boiling point. Disdaining to take advantage even of such a foe, he threw aside his gun, and springing upon the gigantic Peksuot, grasped at the knife which was suspended from his neck, the blade of which was double-edged, and ground to a point as sharp as a needle. There was a moment of terrific conflict, and then the stout Indian fell dead upon the ground, with the blood gushing from many mortal

wounds. Another Englishman closed with Wittuwamet, and there was instantly a general fray. Wittuwamet and another Indian were killed; another was taken prisoner and hung upon the spot, for conspiring to destroy the English; the rest fled. Captain Standish followed up his victory, and pursued the fugitives. A few more were killed. This unexpected development of courage and power so overwhelmed the hostile Indians that they implored peace.

The Weymouth men go to Monhegan.

The Weymouth men, thus extricated from peril, were afraid to remain there any longer, though Captain Standish told them that he should not hesitate to stay with one half their number. Still they persisted in leaving. Captain Standish then generously offered to take them with him to Plymouth, where they should share in the now almost exhausted stores of the Pilgrims. But they decided, since they had a small vessel in which they could embark, to go to Monhegan, an island near the mouth of the Kennebec River, where many English ships came annually to fish. The captain helped them on board the vessel, provided for them a supply of corn, and remained until their sail was disappearing in the distant horizon of the sea. He then returned to Plymouth, and all were rejoiced that the country was delivered from such a set of vagabonds.

Regrets of the English.

The Pilgrims regretted the hasty and violent measures adopted by Captain Standish, and yet they could not, under the

circumstances, severely condemn him. The Rev. Mr. Robinson, father of the Plymouth Church, wrote from Holland:

Letter from Rev. Mr. Robinson.

"Due allowance must be made for the warm temper of Captain Standish. I hope that the Lord has sent him among you for good, if you will but use him as you ought. I fear, however, that there is wanting that tenderness for the life of man, made after God's own image, which we ought to cherish. It would have been happy if some had been converted before any had been killed."

# **Chapter IV**

## **The Pequot War**

**1630-1637**

Prosperity of the colonies.

The energetic, yet just and conciliatory measures adopted by the Pilgrims at Plymouth, in their intercourse with the Indians, were productive of the happiest results. For several years there was a period of peace and prosperity. The colony had now become firmly established, and every year emigrants, arriving from the mother country, extended along the coasts and into the interior the comforts and the refinements of civilization.

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