

all advantages for their more comfortable subsistence, yet could hardly make a shift to live. How could it then otherwise fall out, but that idleness and riotousness should clothe the prodigal spendthrifts with rags, and bring them to a morsel of bread!

CHAP. XIV.

The necessities and sufferings of the inhabitants of New Plymouth, during their first lustre of years: their Patent, how and when obtained.

THE inhabitants of Plymouth in the beginning of the year 1623 were reduced to that exigent, that by that time they had done planting, all their victuals were spent, so as for the following part of the summer they were to depend only on what the providence of God should cast in; being now driven to make it one constant petition in every of their daily prayers, "Give us this day our daily bread," not knowing when they went to bed where to have a morsel for the next meal, leaving no fragments to lay up for the morning, yet through the goodness of divine bounty never wanted wherewith to satisfy their hunger at the least. In these straits they began to think of the most expedient ways how to raise corn for their necessary support. To that end at the last it was resolved, that every one should plant corn for their own particular, which accordingly was yielded unto: for it seems hitherto they had been all maintained out of the common stock, like one entire family. Thus they ranged all their youth under some family, which course had success accordingly; it being the best way to bring all hands to help bear the common burden. By this means was much more corn produced than else would have been; yet was it not sufficient to answer the desired end. However, those sufferings were borne by them with invincible patience and alacrity of spirit, and that for the most part of two years, before they could overcome this difficulty. In these considerations, it may be said to them that succeed in the present generation, those that went before have plowed and sowed, and borne the heat and burden

of the day, but these have entered into the harvest of their labors.

In the year 1623 they had but one boat left, and that none of the best, which then was the principal support of their lives : for that year it helped them for to improve a net wherewith they took a multitude of bass, which was their livelihood all that summer. It is a fish not much inferior to a salmon, that comes upon the coast every summer, pressing into most of the great creeks every tide. Few countries have such an advantage. Sometimes fifteen hundred of them have been stopped in a creek, and taken in one tide. But when these failed, they used to repair to the clam banks, digging on the shores of the sea for these fish. In the winter much use was made of ground nuts instead of bread, and for flesh they were supplied with all sorts of wild fowls, that used to come in great flocks into the marshes, creeks, and rivers, which used to afford them variety of flesh enough, and sometimes to spare. Thus were they fed immediately by the hand of Providence, in a manner almost like as was Elijah by the ravens, and Israel in the wilderness. After they had for a long time struggled with ||these|| difficulties and temptations, (no new thing to those that venture upon new Plantations, as may be seen by what Peter Martyr, in his Decades, writes of the sufferings of the Spaniards in their conquests and first planting the West Indies,) at the last, letters¹ were received from the adventurers, putting them in some hopes of fresh supplies to be sent in a ship called the Paragon, under the command of Mr. John Peirce. This man it seems was employed to procure them a Patent for the place which they then possessed, and some part of the country adjoining, as might be convenient for a whole colony to settle upon. But this gentleman thus employed had a design of his own, which all were not aware of, that made him speak two words for himself where he spake one for them ; for it seems a little before this time, Nov. 3d, eighteenth year of King James' reign, the affairs of New England were put into the hands of a great number of worthy Adventurers, some of the nobility not being unwilling to the attend-

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¹ "Of Dec. 22 and April 9 last," says Bradford, in Prince, p. 217.—H.

ing so good a work, commonly called the Grand Council of Plymouth, by the grant of a Patent, confirmed to them by King James of blessed memory, about the year 1620, of which more in the next chapter. Now this Peirce aforesaid had insinuated by some friends into the said Council, and obtained a considerable Patent for a large tract of land in his own name, intending to keep it for himself and his heirs, purposing to allow the Company of Plymouth liberty to hold some parts thereof as tenants under him, to whose court they must come as chief Lord; but he was strangely crossed in his enterprises, and was forced to vomit up what he had wrongfully swallowed down. The ship he had bought in his own name, and set out at his own charge, upon hopes of great matters, by taking in goods and passengers for the company on the account of freight, and so to be delivered here; but though the lot be cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord: here was to appearance a notable contrivance for great advantage; but time and chance happens to all men, whereby their purposes are oft times disappointed, that are contrived with the greatest appearance of seeming policy: this ship was sadly blasted from its first setting out: that which is conceived in mischief, will certainly bring forth nothing but a lie: by what time it had sailed to the Downs, it sprang a leak, which was enough to have stopped their voyage: but besides that, one strand of their cable was casually cut, by an accidental chop, so as it broke in a stress of wind that there befel them, where she rode at anchor, so as they were in great danger to have been driven on the sands. By ||those|| accidents the ship was carried back to London, where, after fourteen days, she arrived. But being hauled into the dock to be repaired, it cost the owners an hundred pounds for her repair; for the recruiting of which loss more passengers were taken in, with which she was so pestered, that, after she had got half way the second time, either the old sins of the owner and undertaker, or the new ones of the last passengers, raised such a storm assent her back to London a second time, or to some other port in England. The storm is

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reported to be one of the saddest that ever poor men were overtaken with, that yet escaped with their lives, since that wherein the Apostle Paul suffered shipwreck ; of the same length for continuance, and like violence for danger. The pilot, or he that was to command the ship,¹ being some days fastened to the vessel for fear of being washed overboard : and sometimes the company could scarce tell whether they were in the ship or in the sea, being so much overraked with the waves. But at last they were, in mercy to some that were embarked with them, driven into Portsmouth, with the lives of all the sailors and passengers ; but having spent their masts, their roundhouse and all the upper works beaten off, a sad spectacle of a weather beaten vessel, yet as a monument of divine goodness, being drawn out of the depths and jaws of destruction. The said John Peirce, embarked with the rest, by all this tumbling backward and forwards, was at last forced to vomit up the sweet morsel which he had swallowed down ; so as the other Adventurers prevailed with him to assign over the Grand Patent to the Company,² which he had taken in his own name : whereby their former Patent was made quite void. But Anno 1629 they obtained another Patent by the Earl of Warwick and Sir Ferdinando Gorges's act, and a grant from the King for the confirmation thereof, to make them a corporation in as large and ample manner as is the Massachusetts.³

It is probable, the foresaid ship being made unseviceable by the last disasters, the goods and passengers were sent to New England with Mr. William || Peirse ||^b in another vessel called the Anne, which was said to arrive there in the middle of July, 1623, wherein came sundry passengers, two of the principal of ||^a whom || were Mr. Timothy Hatherley and Mr. George Morton. The first meeting with a sore trial soon after his arrival, by the burning of his house, was so impoverished and discouraged thereby, that he returned for England the winter following, where, having recruited his estate, by the blessing of God upon him, he came again to New England some years after, where he lived a long time after, a profitable in-

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¹ The master of the ship, says Morton, was Mr. William Peirse.—H.

² " For £500, which cost him but £50." Bradford, in Prince, p. 218.—H.

strument of good both in church and commonwealth, and a great support of another Plantation in Plymouth Colony called Scituate. The other, Mr. George Morton, continued but awhile, yet was found always an unfeigned wellwiller, and, according to his sphere and condition, a faithful promoter of the public good, laboring always to still and silence the murmurings and complaints of some discontented spirits, by occasion of the difficulties of these new beginnings. But he fell asleep in the Lord, within a year after his first arrival, in June 1624, when it pleased the Lord to put a period to the days of his pilgrimage here. Towards the end of July aforesaid, came in also the other vessel, which the former had lost at sea, in which, as well as in the former, came over sundry considerable persons, who sought the welfare of the Plantation at Plymouth. Among the rest, special notice was taken of Mr. John Jenny, a leading man, and of a public spirit, that improved the interest both of his person and estate, to promote the concernments of the Colony; in which service he continued faithful unto the day of his death, which happened in the year 1644, leaving this testimony behind, that he walked with God, and served his generation. As for the rest of the passengers, when they came and saw in what a low condition they found their friends, they were diversly affected, according to their different humors: some relenting with pity toward their friends, while others were surprised with grief, foreseeing their own sufferings in the glass of their neighbors' sorrowful condition. In short, it fared with them in general as sometime it did with those that were rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem after the captivity, when some wept things were no better, while others rejoiced they were like to go so well. Yet was the glory of that temple, whose foundation was then laid, foretold by the prophet to be greater than that of the former temple, although it was a long time afore that prophecy came to be fulfilled, in the full extent thereof: "who hath despised the day of small things?" so in a sense it happened with this Colony of Plymouth, which was the foundation of the flourishing and prosperity that in following years was seen in the other Colonies.

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