

CHAP. XX.

*Of the civil polity and form of government of the Massachusetts Company of New England, by Patent; * with the sending over their first Agent thither, viz. Mr. J. Endicot, Anno 1628.**

ORDER and government being as necessary to the uniting together and upholding a civil society, as is the foundation or the studs to support and conjoin the parts of a building, therefore it cannot be supposed that the chief undertakers, who had the honor to lay the foundation of this Colony, were not aware of a necessity to provide for that in the first place, as may be seen by the form of government they are directed unto in his Majesty's Royal Charter and Patent, confirmed by the great seal of England; wherein the Patentees, with their associates, are declared to be a "body politic incorporate" together, and "to hold [as] of the manor of East Greenwich, in free and common soccage, and not in capite, or knight's service," and are to be styled, "The Governor and Company of New England," and by that name to plead and be impleaded upon all occasions. To the Governor are to be added, a Deputy Governor and eighteen Assistants, who, with the rest of the Company free of the Corporation, have power to make orders and laws within themselves, for the good of the whole, not repugnant to the laws of England, and to correct and punish all offenders according to the said orders and laws, as is more at large described in the said Charter.¹ But this Corporation or body of people, being but then an embryo, was willingly subject to, and governed by, those wholesome and known laws of the kingdom of England, acknowledging only its willing obedience to such rules and ordinances as were by the Corporation agreed upon as necessary for the carrying on of their present affairs, and yearly sent over from England, while the Charter remained, with the principal part of the Patentees, in England. They empowered Mr. John Endicot, as was said before, one of their number, to manage the company, sent over thither, as agent, in the year 1628,² and him they appointed their Deputy Governor in the year 1629,³ according to his best discretion,

¹ See this Charter in Hutchinson's Collection of Papers, pp. 1-23.—H.

² See page 109, note 2.—H.

³ On April 30th.—H.

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with due observance of the English laws, or such instructions as they furnished him with, till the Patent was brought over, 1630: the Patentees themselves, most of them, coming along at that time therewith.

The principal duty for those two years, incumbent on the agent aforesaid, or Deputy Governor, was to take care of the welfare of the company, to order the servants belonging to them, and to improve them in making preparation for the reception of the gentlemen, when they should come; the which were carefully minded by the said Mr. Endicot. And also some endeavors were used to promote the welfare of the Plantation, so far as he was capable in the beginning of things, by laying some foundation of religion, as well as civil government, as may appear by the ensuing letter sent by him in the beginning of the year, viz. May 11, 1629, to Mr. Bradford, Governor of New Plymouth, to obtain the help of one Mr. Fuller, a deacon of Mr. Robinson's church, skilled in the designs of the country, which those people that first came over in those two years were filled withal, and also well versed in the way of church discipline practised by Mr. Robinson's church; which letter was the foundation on which was raised all the future acquaintance, the Christian love and correspondency, that was ever after maintained betwixt their persons and respective Colonies, in which are these words: "I am satisfied by Mr. Fuller touching your judgment of the outward form of God's worship. It is, as far as I can gather, no other than is warranted by the evidence of truth, and the same which I have professed and maintained ever since the Lord [in mercy¹] revealed himself to me."²

CHAP. XXI.

The affairs of religion in the Massachusetts Colony in New England, during the first lustre of years after the first attempt for the planting thereof; from the year 1625 to the year 1630.

It doth evidently appear by the premises, that what purses soever were improved, or what charges they were

¹ Supplied from Morton, where may be found the letter entire.—H.

² This letter was not written to obtain aid, but it was a letter of thanks for favors already received.—H.