

about them, for all were not friends that were then about them.* And soon after, when the vehemency of the fire was over, smoke was seen to arise within a shed that was joined to the end of the aforesaid storehouse, which was wattled up with boughs, in the withered leaves whereof the fire being kindled; which some running to quench, found a long firebrand of about an ell long, lying under the wall on the inside, which could not come thither by casualty, but must be laid there by some hand, in the judgment of all that saw it. But God kept them from this danger, whatever might be intended.

But to return again, to speak something of the aforesaid Capt. Gorges, after he had been at the eastward, and expedited some occasions there, he and some that depended upon him returned for England, having scarcely saluted the country in his government, finding the state of things not to answer his quality and condition; his people dispersed themselves, some for England, others for Virginia, some few remained, and ● were helped with supplies from Plymouth. Amongst the rest the said captain brought over a minister with him, one Mr. Morrel, who returned for England about a year after him, he took ship at Plymouth, and had a certain power and authority of superintendency over other churches granted him, and instructions for that end; but he never showed it, or made any use of it, but only spoke of it to some of Plymouth, at his going away. This was in effect the end of the second plantation, in the forenamed place called Wesagusquaset.

There were also some scattering beginnings made in other places, as at Piscataqua, by Mr. David Thompson, and at Monhegin, and some other places, by sundry others.

1624.

The time of new election of officers being come, for this year at Plymouth, the number of their people being increased, and their troubles and occasions therewith; the governor

* A very remarkable preservation. — M.

desired them to change the persons, as well as renew the election, and also to add more assistants to the governor for help and counsel, and the better carrying on of public affairs, showing that it was necessary it should so be; for if it were an honor or benefit, it was fit that others should be made partakers of it; if it was a burden (as doubtless it was) it was but equal that others should help to bear it, and that this was the end of yearly elections.*

The conclusion was, that whereas there was before but one assistant, they now chose five, giving the governor a double voice; † and afterwards they increased them to seven, which course hath continued in that colony until this day.‡

* January 1, 1624, Lord Sheffield grants a patent to Robert Cushman and Edward Winslow, and associates of Cape Ann, for the Plymouth Colonists. He empowers them to build a town, and, through permission from him, to enact laws for the colony.

January 24. Robert Cushman in London, sends word to Mr. Bradford, that the adventurers had sent a carpenter to build ships, a person to make salt, and a preacher. The preacher is John Lyford, whose coming was promoted by members of the company, who opposed the emigration of Robinson. He also remarks, "We have taken a patent for Cape Anne." Under this patent a colony was established at Cape Anne, in the spring of the year 1624, which is now expanded into the commonwealth of Massachusetts. It was dated January 1, 1623, O. S. The original was recently discovered, by J. Wingate Thornton, Esq., and will soon be published, edited by him. Under it Roger Conant was appointed governor. The mutations of the companies in England do not affect the historical identity of the colony, nor the chronological order of the incidents in its civil history, which may be considered independently of the authority under which they transpired, and merely with reference to its internal history. In this view the reader will readily trace the series of governors or rulers of the people, from Roger Conant, governor at Cape Anne, under the grant of Lord Sheffield, through John Endicott, the first governor under the Massachusetts Charter, and Winthrop, the second governor under this charter, and Sir William Phipps, Knight, the first governor under the third, or Provincial Charter of 1692.

† Governor Bradford's request was not granted, he was reelected,

‡ "This spring the people requesting the governor to have some land for continuance, and not by yearly lot as before; he gives every person an acre, to them and theirs, as near the town as can be; and no more till the seven years expire, that we may keep close together for greater defence and safety."

— *Bradford's MS. Hist.* *Prince's Chron.* 226.

In the month of March, in this year, Mr. Edward Winslow arrived at Plimouth, in New England, having been employed as agent for that plantation, on sundry occasions, with the merchant adventurers in England, who brought a considerable supply with him, the ship being bound on a fishing voyage; and with him came Mr. John Lyford, a minister, which was sent over by some of the adventurers.

There came over likewise in this ship, three heifers and a bull, which were the first neat cattle that came into New England.

The aforesaid John Lyford, when he came first on shore, saluted them of the plantation of Plimouth with that reverence and humility, as is seldom to be seen; and indeed made them ashamed, he so bowed and cringed unto them, and would have kissed their hands, if they would have suffered him; yea, he wept and shed many tears, blessing God that had brought him to see their faces; and admiring the things they had done in their wants, as if he had been made all of love, and the humblest person in the world; but in the end proved more like those mentioned by the Psalmist, Psal. x. 10, that crouched and bowed, that heaps of the poor may fall by them; or like unto dissembling Ishmael, who when he had slain Gedaliah, went out weeping, Jer. xli. 6; and met those that were coming to offer incense in the house of the Lord, saying, come to Gedaliah, when he meant to slay them. They gave him the best entertainment they could, in all simplicity, and as their governor had used, in all weighty affairs, to consult with their elder, Mr. Brewster, together with his assistants, so now he called Mr. Lyford also on such like occasions. After some short time, he desired to join himself a member to their church, and was accordingly received; he made a large confession of his faith, and an acknowledgment of his former disorderly walking, and his being entangled with many corruptions, which had been a burden to his conscience, and blessed God for this opportunity of freedom and liberty, with many more such like expressions. In some short time he fell into acquaintance with Mr. John Oldham, who was a copartner with him in his after courses; not long after, both

Oldham and he grew very perverse, and showed a spirit of great malignity, drawing as many into a faction as they could; were they never so vile and profane, they did nourish and abet them in all their doings, so they would but cleave to them, and speak against the church. So as there was nothing but private meetings and whisperings amongst them, they feeding themselves and others with what they should bring to pass in England, by the faction of their friends there;* which brought others as well as themselves into a fool's paradise, yet they could not so carry closely, but both much of their doings and sayings were discovered, although outwardly they set a fair face on things.

At length when the ship he came in was ready to return for England, and it was observed that Lyford was long in writing, and sent many letters, and could nor forbear to communicate to his intimates such things as made them laugh in their sleeves, and thought he had done their errand sufficiently. The governor and some of his friends, knowing how things stood in reference to some known adversaries in England, and what hurt these things might do, took a boat and went out with the ship a league or two, and called for all Lyford's and Oldham's letters. Mr. William Pierce being master of the ship, and knew well their evil dealings, (both in England and here,) afforded them all the assistance he could; he found about twenty of Lyford's letters, many of them large and full of slanders and false accusations, tending not only to their prejudice, but ruin and utter subversion. Most of them they let pass, only took copies of them, but some of the most material they sent true copies of them and kept the originals, lest he should deny them, and that they might produce his own hand against him. Amongst these letters they found the copies of two letters which were sent in a letter of his to Mr. John Pemberton, a minister, and a great opposite to the plantation; these two letters, of which he took copies, were one of them written by a gentleman in England, to Mr.

* That is, some of the adventurers, who proved in the issue adversaries to the plantation. — M.

Brewster here, the other by Mr. Winslow to Mr. Robinson in Holland; at his coming away, as the ship lay at Gravesend, they lying sealed in the great cabin, whilst Mr. Winslow was busy about the affairs of the ship, this sly merchant opens them; takes copies of them, and seals them up again, and not only seals the copies of them thus, To his friend and their adversary, but adds thereto in the margin many scurrilous and flouting annotations. In the evening the governor returned, and they were something blank at it; but after some weeks, when they heard nothing, were then as brisk as ever thinking nothing had been known, but all was gone current, and that the governor went out but to despatch his own letters.

The reason why the governor and the rest concealed these things, was to let things ripen, that they might the better discover their intents, and see who were their adherents; because, amongst the rest, they found a letter of one of their confederates, in which was written, that Mr. Oldham and Mr. Lyford intended a reformation in church and commonwealth, and as soon as the ship was gone they intended to join together and have the sacrament; a few of Oldham's letters were found in the aforesaid search, being so bad a scribe as his hand was scarce legible, yet he was as deep in the mischief as the other; and thinking they were now strong enough, they began to pick quarrels at every thing. Oldham being called to watch, (according to order,) refuseth to come, fell out with the captain, called him rascal, and beggarly rascal, and resisted him, and drew his knife at him, though he offered him no wrong, nor gave him any ill terms, but with all fairness required him to do his duty; the governor hearing the tumult, sent to quiet it; but he ranted with great fury, and called them all traitors; but being committed to prison, after a while he came to himself, and with some slight punishment was let go upon his behaviour, for further censure. But to cut things short, at length it grew to this issue, that Lyford, with his accomplices, without either speaking one word either to the governor, church, or elder, withdrew themselves, and set up a public meeting apart on the Lord's day, with sundry such insolent

carriages, too long here to relate, beginning more publicly to act that which they had been long plotting.

It was now thought high time, to prevent further mischief, to call them to account; so the governor called a court, and summoned the whole company together, and they charged Lyford and Oldham with such things as they were guilty of respecting the premises; but they were stiff, and stood resolutely upon the denial of most things, and required proof; they first alleged what was writ compared with their practices here; that it was evident they joined in plotting against them, and disturbed their peace in their civil and church state, which was most injurious, for both they and all the world knew they came hither to enjoy the liberty of their consciences, in the free use of God's ordinances, and for that end had ventured their lives, and passed through much hardship hitherto, and they and their friends had borne the charge of these beginnings, which was not small, and that he, namely, Lyford, for his part, was sent over on this charge, and both he and his great family was maintained on the same; and for him to plot against them, and seek their ruin, was most unjust and perfidious.

But Lyford denied, and made strange of sundry things laid to his charge. Then his letters were produced, at which he was struck mute. Oldham began to be furious, and to rage, because they had intercepted their letters, provoked the people to mutiny in such words as these; my masters, where are your hearts? Now show your courage; you have often complained to me so and so, now is the time, if you will do any thing, I will stand by you, etc., thinking that every one knowing his humor that had fooled and flattered him, or otherwise, or that in their discontent uttered any thing unto him, would now side with him, in open rebellion; but he was deceived, for not a man opened his mouth, all were silent.

Then the governor took pains in convicting Lyford of his hypocrisy and treachery, in abusing his friends, in taking copies of their letters in an underhand way, and sending them abroad to their disgrace, etc., and produced them, and his own letters under his own hand, which he could not deny,

and caused them to be read before all the people; at which all his confederates were blank, and had not a word to say.

But after a while, he began to say, that sundry had made some complaint unto him, and informed him of divers things, which being there present, and the particulars named to them, they denied.

Then they dealt with him about his dissembling in the church, and that he professed to concur with them in all things, and what a large confession he had made at his admittance, and that he held not himself a minister, till he had a new calling, etc., and yet now he contested against them, and drew a company apart, and sequestered himself, and would go about to administer the sacraments by his former calling, without ever acquainting them with it. In conclusion he was fully convicted, and burst out into tears, and confessed, he feared he was a reprobate, his sins were so great that he doubted that God would not pardon them, he was unsavory salt, etc., and that he had so wronged them, as he could never make them amends; confessing all he had written against them was false and naught, both for matter and manner; and all this he did with as much fulness as words and tears could express.

After their trial and conviction, the court sentenced them to be expelled the plantation; John Oldham presently to depart, though his wife and family had liberty to stay all winter, or longer, until he could make provision to remove them comfortably.* Lyford had liberty to stay six months; it was with some eye to his release, if he carried himself well in the mean time, and that his repentance proved sound. Lyford acknowledged his censure was far less than he deserved, and afterwards he confessed his sin publicly in the church, with tears, more largely than before. I shall here relate it as I find it penned by some who took it from his own mouth as himself uttered it.

Acknowledging that he had done very evil, and slanderously

* "There was some friendly correspondence between the colony and Oldham, before his death." — *Marginal note in Bradford's record.*

abused them; and thinking most of the people would take part with him, he thought to have carried all by violence and strong hand against them; and that God might justly lay innocent blood to his charge, for he knew not what hurt might have come by these his writings, and blessed God that they were stayed; and that he spared not to take knowledge from any of any evil that was spoken, but shut his eyes and ears against all the good; and that if God should make him a vagabond in the earth, as was Cain, it was but just; and he confessed three things to be the causes of these his doings, pride, vainglory, and self-love; amplifying these heads with many other expressions in the particulars of them, so as they began to conceive good thoughts of him, upon his repentance, and admitted him to teach amongst them as before; yea, sundry tender-hearted persons amongst them were so taken with his signs of sorrow and repentance, as they professed they would fall on their knees to have his censure remitted and released. But that which made them all stand amazed in the end (and may do all others who shall come to hear the same, for a rarer precedent can scarce be named), was, that after two months' time, all his former confessions, convictions, and public acknowledgments, both in the presence of God and his church, and the whole company, with so many tears, and censures of himself, he should go again to justify what he had done; for secretly he wrote a second letter to the adventurers in England, in which he justified all his former writings, save in some things which tended to their damage.*

1625.

At the time of their election court, John Oldham came again amongst them; and though it was a part of his censure, for his former mutiny, not to return without leave first obtained, yet he presumed, without leave at all, to come, being set on and hardened by the ill counsel of others; and

* The copy of this letter is extant, but too large to be here inserted. — M.