

**Thomas Dudley on the Early Days of Settlement  
in the Massachusetts Bay Colony  
12 and 28 March 1631**

*After John Winthrop, Thomas Dudley (1576–1653) was the most important political leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the first generation. He was regularly elected a magistrate and served four terms as governor. Born in Northampton, he purportedly was descended from the highest ranks of English nobility, being related to John Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland. Dudley served as a law clerk to Augustine Nicolls, a judge in Common Pleas and chancellor to the Prince of Wales, the future King Charles I. In 1616 Theophilus Clinton, the fourth Earl of Lincoln, who resided at his manor in Sempringham, hired Dudley as his steward. It was his job to manage the extensive estates of the earl, who had inherited nearly £20,000 of debt together with his title. By careful management and by raising rents, Dudley soon brought the earl into solvency. As a trusted steward, he also arranged the marriage between the earl and Lady Bridget, the daughter of William Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele. Dudley probably met Winthrop at Tattershall Castle in Sempringham in 1629 when he came to discuss the possibility of establishing a puritan colony in Massachusetts. Dudley, also a puritan, decided to join Winthrop on the Arbella, and when John Humfrey's departure was delayed, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Company in London elected Dudley deputy governor in his place. Eight months after arriving in the New World, Dudley wrote to Lady Bridget a detailed letter describing the first difficult months of the settlement. His letter is found in Everett Emerson, Letters from New England: The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629–1638 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 67–83.*

To the Right Honorable my very good lady, the Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln,  
Madam:

Your letters (which are not common nor cheap) following me hither into New England and bringing with them renewed testimonies of the accustomed favors you honored me with in the old have drawn from me this narrative retribution, which (in respect of your proper interest in some persons of great note amongst us) was the thankfullest present I had to send over the seas. Therefore I humbly entreat your honor this be accepted as payment from him who neither hath nor is any more than

Your honor's old thankful servant,

Thomas Dudley

Boston in New England

March 12, 1630[1]

For the satisfaction of your honor and some friends and for the use of such as shall hereafter intend to increase our plantation in New England, I have in the throng of domestic, and not altogether free from public, business, thought fit to commit to memory our present condition and what hath befallen us since our arrival here, which I will do shortly, after my usual manner, and must do rudely, having yet no table nor other room to write in than by the fireside upon my knee in this sharp winter, to which my family must have leave to resort, though they break good manners and make me sometimes forget what I would say, and say what I would not.

... Sachem in New England whom I saw the last summer. Upon the river of Naponset, near to the Mattachusetts fields [present-day Quincy], dwelleth Chicka Talbot, who hath between fifty and sixty subjects. This man least favoereth the English of any sagamore (for so are the kings with us called, as they are sachems southwards) we are acquainted with, by reason of the old quarrel between him and those of Plymouth, wherein he lost seven of his best men, yet he lodged one night the last winter at my house in friendly manner. About seventy or eighty miles westward

from these are seated the Nipnett men, whose sagamore we know not, but we hear their number exceed any but the Pecoates [Pequots] and the Narragansets, and they are the only people we yet hear of in the inland country. Upon the river of Mistick is seated Sagamore John, and upon the river Sawgus, Sagamore James, his brother, both so named by the English. The elder brother John is a handsome young [one line missing] conversant with us, affecting English apparel and houses and speaking well of our God. His brother James is of a far worse disposition, yet repaireth often to us. Both these brothers command not above thirty or forty men, for aught I can learn. Near to Salem dwelleth two or three families subject to the sagamore of Agawam, whose name he [Masconnomo] told me, but I have forgotten it. This sagamore hath but few subjects and them and himself tributary to Sagamore James, having been before the last year (in James his minority) tributary to Chicka Talbott. Upon the river Merimack is seated Sagamore Passaconaway, having under his command four or five hundred men, being esteemed by his countrymen a false fellow and by us a witch. For any more northerly I know not, but leave it to after relations. Having thus briefly and disorderly, especially in my description of the bays and rivers, set down what is come to hand touching the [one line missing].

Now concerning the English that are planted here, I find that about the year 1620 certain English set out from Leyden, in Holland, intending their course for Hudson's River, the mouth whereof lyeth south of the river of the Pecoates [Pequots] but ariseth, as I am informed, northwards in about forty-three degrees and so a good part of it within the compass of our patent. These, being much weather-beaten and wearied with seeking the river, after a most tedious voyage arrived at length in a small bay, lying northeast [northwest] from Cape Cod, where, landing about the month of December by the favor of a calm winter such as was never seen here since, began to build their dwellings in that place, which now is called New Plymouth, where after much

sickness, famine, poverty, and great mortality (through all which God by an unwonted Providence carried them) they are now grown up to a people healthful, wealthy, politic, and religious. Such things doth the Lord for those that wait for His mercies. These of Plymouth came with patents from King James and have since obtained others from our sovereign King Charles, having a governor and council of their own. There was about the same time one Mr. [Thomas] Wesen, an English merchant, who sent divers men to plant and trade who sat down by the river Wesaguscus, but these, not coming for so good ends as those of Plymouth, sped not so well, for the most of them dying and languishing away, they who survived were rescued by those of Plymouth out of the hands of Chicka Talbott and his Indians, who oppressed these weak English and intended to have destroyed them and the Plymoutheans also, as is set down in a tract [*Good News from New-England*, 1624] written by Mr. Winslow of Plymouth. Also since, one Captain Wollastone with some thirty with him came near to the same place and built on a hill, which he named Mount Wollaston, but being not supplied with renewed provisions, they vanished away as the former did. Also divers merchants of Bristow and some other places have yearly for these eight years or thereabouts sent ships hither at the fishing times to trade for beaver, where their factors dishonestly for their gains have furnished the Indians with guns, swords, powder, and shot.

Touching the plantation which we here have begun, it fell out thus. About the year 1627 some friends [Dudley and others], being together in Lincolnshire, fell into some discourse about New England and the planting of the gospel there, and after some deliberation we imparted our reasons by letters and messages to some in London [Winthrop and others] and the West Country [John Endecott and others], where it was likewise deliberately thought upon, and at length with often negotiation so ripened that in the year 1628 [1629, new style calendar] we procured a

patent [for the Massachusetts Bay Company] from his majesty for our planting between the Matachusets Bay and Charles River on the south and the river of Merimack on the north, and three miles on either side of those rivers and bay, as also for the government of those who did or should inhabit within that compass, and the same year we sent Mr. John Endicott and some with him to begin a plantation and to strengthen such as he should find there, which we sent hither from Dorchester and some places adjoining, from whom the same year receiving hopeful news, the next year, 1629, we sent divers ships over with about three hundred people and some cows, goats, and horses, many of which arrived safely. These by their too large commendations of the country and the commodities thereof invited us so strongly to go on that Mr. Wenthropp of Suffolke (who was well known in his own country and well approved here for his piety, liberality, wisdom, and gravity) coming in to us, we came to such resolution that in April 1630 we set sail from old England with four good ships. And in May following, eight more followed, two having gone before in February and March and two more following in June and August, besides another set out by a private merchant. These seventeen ships arrived all safe in New England for the increase of the plantation here this year 1630, but made a long, a troublesome and costly voyage, being all windbound long in England and hindered with contrary winds after they set sail, and so scattered with mists and tempests that few of them arrived together. Our four ships which set out in April arrived here in June and July, where we found the colony in a sad and unexpected condition, above eighty of them being dead the winter before, and many of those alive weak and sick. All the corn and bread amongst them all [were] hardly sufficient to feed upon a fortnight, insomuch that the remainder of 180 servants we had the two years before sent over, coming to us for victuals to sustain them we found ourselves wholly unable to feed them by reason that the provisions shipped for them were taken out of the ship they were put in, and they

who were trusted to ship them in another failed us and left them behind, whereupon necessity enforced us to our extreme loss to give them all liberty, who had cost us about 16 or 20 pounds a person, furnishing and sending over.

But bearing these things as we might, we began to consult of the place of our sitting down, for Salem, where we landed, pleased us not. And to that purpose some were sent to the [Boston] Bay to search up the rivers for a convenient place, who upon their return reported to have found a good place upon Mistick [River], but some other of us seconding these to approve or dislike of their judgment, we found a place [that] liked us better, three leagues up Charles River [later Newtown and then Cambridge], and thereupon unshipped our goods into other vessels and with much cost and labor brought them in July to Charlestowne, but there receiving advertisements by some of the late arrived ships from London and Amsterdam of some French preparations against us (many of our people brought with us being sick of fevers and the scurvy, and we thereby unable to carry up our ordnance and baggage so far) we were forced to change counsel and for our present shelter to plant dispersedly, some at Charles Towne, which standeth on the north side of the mouth of Charles River; some on the south side thereof, which place we named Boston (as we intended to have done the place we first resolved on); some of us upon Mistick, which we named Meadford; some of us westwards on Charles River, four miles from Charles Towne, which place we named Watertowne; others of us two miles from Boston in a place we named Rocksbury; others upon the river of Sawgus between Salem and Charles Towne [later Lynn]; and the western men four miles south from Boston at a place we named Dorchester. This dispersion troubled some of us, but help it we could not, wanting ability to remove to any place fit to build a town upon, and the time too short to deliberate any longer, lest the winter should surprise us before we had builded our houses. The best counsel we could find out was to build a fort to retire

to, in some convenient place, if an enemy pressed thereunto, after we should have fortified ourselves against the injuries of wet and cold. So ceasing to consult further for that time, they who had health to labor fell to building, wherein many were interrupted with sickness and many died weekly, yea almost daily; amongst whom were Mrs. Pinchon, Mrs. Coddington, Mrs. Philips, and Mrs. Alcock, a sister of Mr. [Thomas] Hooker's, insomuch that the ships being now upon their return, some for England, some for Ireland, there was, as I take it, not much less than an hundred (some think many more), partly out of dislike of our government, which restrained and punished their excesses, and partly through fear of famine, not seeing other means than by their labor to feed themselves, which returned back again. And glad were we so to be rid of them. Others also afterwards hearing of men of their own disposition, which were planted at Pascataway, went from us to them, whereby though our numbers were lessened, yet we accounted ourselves nothing weakened by their removal. Before the departure of the ships, we contracted with Mr. [William] Peirce, master of the *Lion* [*Lyon*] of Bristow, to return to us with all speed with fresh supplies of victuals, and gave him directions accordingly.

With this ship returned Mr. [John] Revil, one of the five undertakers here for the joint stock of the company, and Mr. [William] Vassall, one of the assistants, and his family, and also Mr. [Francis] Bright, a minister, sent hither the year before. The ships being gone, victuals wasting, and mortality increasing, we held divers fasts in our several congregations, but the Lord would not yet be deprecat, for about the beginning of September died Mr. [William] Gager, a right godly man, a skilful chirurgeon [surgeon], and one of the deacons of our congregation, and Mr. [Francis] Higginson, one of the ministers of Salem, a zealous and a profitable preacher, this of a consumption, that of a fever, and on the thirtieth of September died Mr. [Isaac] Johnson, another of the five undertakers (the Lady Arrabella, his wife, being dead a month before). This

gentleman was a prime man amongst us, having the best estate of any, zealous for religion and greatest furtherer of this plantation. He made a most godly end, dying willingly, professing his life better spent in promoting this plantation than it would have been any other way. He left to us a loss greater than the most conceived.

Within a month after, died Mr. [Edward] Rossiter, another of our assistants, a godly man and of a good estate, which still weakened us more, so that there now were left of the five undertakers but the governor, Sir Richard Saltonstall, and myself, and seven other of the assistants. And of the people who came over with us, from the time of their setting sail from England in April 1630 until December following, there died by estimation about two hundred at the least. So low hath the Lord brought us! Well, yet they who survived were not discouraged, but bearing God's corrections with humility and trusting in his mercies, and considering how after a greater ebb he had raised up our neighbors at Plymouth, we began again in December to consult about a fit place to build a town upon, leaving all thoughts of a fort because upon any invasion we were necessarily to lose our houses when we should retire thereunto, so after divers meetings at Boston, Roxbury, and Waterton, on the twenty-eight day of December, we grew to this resolution: to bind all the assistants (Mr. Endicott and Mr. Sharpe excepted, which last purposeth to return by the next ships into England) to build houses at a place a mile east from Waterton, near Charles River [Newtown], the next spring and to winter there the next year, that so by our examples and by removing the ordnance and munition thither, all who were able might be drawn thither and such as shall come to us hereafter to their advantage be compelled so to do, and so if God would, a fortified town might there grow up, the place fitting reasonably well thereto.

I should before have mentioned how both the English and Indian corn being at ten shilling a strike [bushel] and beaver being valued at six shilling a pound, we made laws to restrain the

selling of corn to the Indians and to leave the price of beaver at liberty, which was presently sold for ten and twenty shillings a pound. I should also have remembered how the half of our cows and almost all our mares and goats, sent us out of England, died at sea in their passage hither, and that those intended to be sent us out of Ireland were not sent at all, all which together with the loss of our six months' building, occasioned by our intended removal to a town to be fortified [Newtown], weakened our estates, especially the estates of the undertakers [ten men, who included Winthrop and Dudley], who were 3 or 4000 pounds engaged in the joint stock, which was now not above so many hundreds, yet many of us labored to bear it as comfortably as we could, remembering the end of our coming hither and knowing the power of God, who can support and raise us again, and useth to bring his servants low that the meek may be made glorious by deliverance (*Psalm 112*).

In the end of this December departed from us the ship *Handmaid* of London, by which we sent away one Thomas Morton, a proud, insolent man who has lived here divers years and had been an attorney in the West Countries while he lived in England. Multitude of complaints were received against him for injuries done by him both to the English and Indians, and amongst others for shooting hail shot at a troop of Indians, for not bringing a canoe unto him to cross a river withal, whereby he hurt one and shot through the garments of another, for the satisfaction of the Indians wherein and that it might appear to them and to the English that we meant to do justice impartially, we caused his hands to be bound behind him and set his feet in the bilboes [shackles attached to an iron bar] and burned his house to the ground, all in the sight of the Indians, and so kept him prisoner till we sent him for England, whither we sent him, for that my Lord Chief Justice there so required that he might punish him capitally for fouler misdemeaners there perpetrated, as we were informed.

I have no leisure to review and insert things forgotten but out of due time and order must set them down as they come to memory.

About the end of October this year 1630, I joined with the governor and Mr. [Samuel] Maverecke in sending out our pinnace [a ship's boat] to the Narragansetts to trade for corn to supply our wants, but after the pinnace had doubled Cape Cod, she put into the next harbor she found, and there meeting with Indians, who showed their willingness to truck [trade], she made her voyage there and brought us one hundred bushels of corn at about 4s. a bushell, which helped us somewhat. From the coast where they traded they saw a very large island four leagues to the east [possibly Rhode Island], which the Indians commended as a fruitful place, full of good vines and free from sharp frosts, having one only entrance into it, by a navigable river, inhabited by a few Indians, which for a trifle would leave the island if the English would set them upon the main, but the pinnace, having no direction for discovery, returned without sailing to it, which in two hours they might have done. Upon this coast they found store of vines full of grapes dead ripe, the season being past, whither we purpose to send the next year sooner to make some small quantity of wine, if God enable us, the vines growing thin with us and we not having yet any leisure to plant vineyards.

But now having some leisure to discourse of the motives for other men's coming to this place or their abstaining from it, after my brief manner I say this: that if any come hither to plant for worldly ends that can live well at home, he commits an error, of which he will soon repent him. But if for spiritual and that no particular obstacle hinder his removal, he may find here what may well content him, *viz.* [Latin *videlicet*, namely]: materials to build, fuel to burn, ground to plant, seas and rivers to fish in, a pure air to breathe in, good water to drink till wine or beer can be made, which, together with the cows, hogs, and goats brought hither already, may suffice for

food, for as for fowl and venison, they are dainties here as well as in England. For clothes and bedding, they must bring them with them, till time and industry produce them here. In a word, we yet enjoy little to be envied but endure much to be pitied in the sickness and mortality of our people. And I do the more willingly use this open and plain dealing, lest other men should fall short of their expectations when they come hither, as we to our great prejudice did, by means of letters sent us from hence into England, wherein honest men out of a desire to draw over others to them wrote somewhat hyperbolically of many things here. If any godly men, out of religious ends, will come over to help us in the good work we are about, I think they cannot dispose of themselves nor of their estates more to God's glory and the furtherance of their own reckoning, but they must not be of the poorer sort yet, for divers years, for we have found by experience that they have hindered, not furthered, the work. And for profane and debauched persons, their oversight in coming hither is wondered at, where they shall find nothing to content them. If there be any endued with grace and furnished with means to feed themselves and theirs for eighteen months, and to build and plant, let them come over into our Macedonia and help us [Acts 16:9], and not spend themselves and their estates in a less profitable employment, for others, I conceive they are not yet fitted for this business.

Touching the discouragements which the sickness and mortality which every first year hath seized upon us, and those of Plymouth as appeareth before, [they] may give to such who have cast any thoughts this way (of which mortality it may be said of us almost as of the Egyptians, that there is not an house where there is not one dead [Exodus 12:29-30], and in some houses many). The natural causes seem to be in the want of warm lodging and good diet to which Englishmen are habituated at home, and in the sudden increase of heat which they endure that are landed here in summer, the salt meats at sea having prepared their bodies thereto, for those

only two last years died of fevers who landed in June and July; as those of Plymouth who landed in the winter died of the scurvy, as did our poorer sort, whose houses and bedding kept them not sufficiently warm, nor their diet sufficiently in heart. Other causes God may have, as our faithful minister Mr. Wilsoune [John Wilson] (lately handling that point) showed unto us, which I forbear to mention, leaving this matter to the farther dispute of physicians and divines.

Wherefore to return: upon the third of January died the daughter of Mr. [Thomas] Sharpe, a godly virgin, making a comfortable end after a long sickness. The plantation here received not the like loss of any woman since we came hither, and therefore she well deserves to be remembered in this place, and to add to our sorrows, upon the fifth day came letters to us from Plymouth, advertising us of this sad accident following. About a fortnight before, there went from us in a shallop [small, two-masted sailing vessel] to Plymouth six men and a girl, who in an hour or two before night on the same day they went forth, came near to the mouth of Plymouth Bay, but the wind then coming strongly from the shore kept them from entering and drove them to seawards, and they having no better means to help themselves, let down their killick [anchor] that so they might drive the more slowly and be nearer land when the storm should cease. But the stone slipping out of the killick and thereby they driving faster than they thought all the night, in the morning when they looked out they found themselves out of sight of land, which so astonished them, the frost being extreme and their hands so benumbed with cold that they could not handle their oars, neither had any compass to steer by, that they gave themselves for lost and lay down to die quietly, only one man who had more natural heat and courage remaining than the rest continued so long looking for land that the morning waxing clearer, he discovered land and with difficulty hoisted the sail, and so the wind a little turning, two days after they were driven from Plymouth Bay, they arrived at a shore unknown unto them [Cape Cod]. The stronger helped

the weaker out of the boat and, taking their sail on shore, made a shelter thereof and made a fire, but the frost had so pierced their bodies that one of them died about three days after their landing, and most of the others grew worse, both in body and courage, no hope of relief being within their view. Well, yet the Lord pitying them and two of them who only could use their legs going abroad, rather to seek than to hope to find help, they met first with two Indian women, who sent unto them an Indian man, who informed them that Plymouth was within fifty miles and offered together to procure relief for them which they gladly accepting, he performed and brought them three men from Plymouth (the governor and council of Plymouth liberally rewarding the Indian and took care for the safety of our people), who brought them all alive in their boat thither, save one man, who with a guide chose rather to go over land but quickly fell lame by the way, and getting harbor at a trucking [trading] house the Plymoutheans had in those parts; there he yet abides [at Sandwich]. At the others' landing at Plymouth, one of them died as he was taken out of the boat; another (and he the worst in the company) rotted from the feet upwards where the frost had gotten most hold and so died within a few days. The other three, after God had blessed the chirurgeon's [surgeon's] skill used towards them returned safe to us. I set down this the more largely partly because the first man that died was a godly man of our congregation, one Richard Garrad, who at the time of his death more feared he should dishonor God than cared for his own life, as also because divers boats have been in manifest peril this year, yet the Lord preserved them all, this one excepted.

Amongst those who died about the end of this January, there was a girl of eleven years old, the daughter of one John Ruggles, of whose family and kindred died so many that for some reason it was matter of observation amongst us, who in the time of her sickness expressed to the minister and to those about her so much faith and assurance of salvation as is rarely found in any of that

age, which I thought not unworthy here to commit to memory, and if any tax me for wasting paper with recording these small matters, such may consider that little mothers bring forth little children, small commonwealths matters of small moment, the reading where of yet is not to be despised by the judicious, because small things in the beginning of natural or politic bodies are as remarkable as greater in bodies full grown.

Upon the fifth of February arrived here Mr. [William] Peirce with the ship *Lyon* of Bristow, with supplies of victuals from England, who had set forth from Bristow the first of December before. He had a stormy passage hither and lost one of his sailors not far from our shore, who in a tempest having helped to take in the sprit sail, lost his hold as he was coming down and fell into the sea, where after long swimming he was drowned, to the great dolor of those in the ship, who beheld so lamentable a spectacle without being able to minister help to him, the sea was so high and the ship drove so fast before the wind, though her sails were taken down. By this ship we understood of the fight of three of our ships and two English men-of-war coming out of the straits with fourteen Dunkirks [Spanish privateers from Dunkirk], upon the coast of England as they returned from us in the end of the last summer, who through God's goodness with the loss of some thirteen or fourteen men out of our three ships, and I know not how many out of the two men-of-war got at length clear of them. The *Charles*, one of our three, a stout ship of three hundred ton, being so torn that she had not much of her left whole above water.

By this ship we also understood the death of many of those who went from us the last year to Old England, as likewise of the mortality there, whereby we see are graves in other places as well as with us.

Also to increase the heap of our sorrows, we received advertisement by letters from our friends in England and by the reports of those who came hither in this ship to abide with us (who were

about twenty-six) that they who went discontentedly from us the last year, out of their evil affections towards us, have raised many false and scandalous reports against us, affirming us to be Brownists [Separatists]<sup>1</sup> in religion and ill affected to our state at home and that these vile reports have won credit with some who formerly wished us well. But we do desire and cannot but hope that wise and impartial men will at length consider that such malcontents have ever pursued this manner of casting dirt to make others seem as foul as themselves and that our godly friends, to whom we have been known, will not easily believe that we are not so turned from the profession we so long have made in our native country. And for further clearing, I truly affirm that I know no one person who came over with us the last year to be altered in judgment and affection, either in ecclesiastical or civil respects since our coming hither, but we do continue to pray daily for our sovereign lord the king, the queen, the prince, the royal blood, the council, and whole state, as duty binds us to do and reason persuades others to believe, for how ungodly and unthankful should we be if we should not thus do, who came hither by virtue of his majesty's letters patent, and under his gracious protection, under which shelter we hope to live safely and from whom [whose] kingdom and subjects we now have received and hereafter expect relief. Let our friends therefore give no credit to such malicious aspersions but be more ready to answer for us than we hear they have been. We are not like those which have dispensations to lie, but as we were free enough in Old England to turn our insides outwards, sometimes to our disadvantage, very unlike is it that now (being *procul a fulmine* [far from the thunderbolt]) we should be so unlike ourselves. Let therefore this be sufficient for us to say and others to hear in this matter.

Amongst others who died about this time was Mr. Robert Welden, whom in the time of his sickness we had chosen to be captain of one hundred foot [militiamen], but before he took possession of his place, he died the sixteenth of this February and was buried as a soldier with

three volleys of shot. Upon the twenty-second day of February, we held a general day of thanksgiving throughout the whole colony for the safe arrival of the ship [*Lyon*] which came [at] last with our provisions.

About this time we apprehended one Robert Wright, who had been sometimes a linen draper in Newgate Market and after that a brewer on the Bankside and on Thames Street. This man we lately understood had made an escape in London from those who came to his house to apprehend him for clipping the king's coin<sup>2</sup> [one or two words missing] had stolen after us. Upon his examination, he confessed the fact and his escape, but affirmed he had the king's pardon for it, under the broad seal, which he yet not being able to prove, and one to whom he was known charging him with untruth in some of his answers, we therefore committed him to prison, to be sent by the next ship into England.

Likewise we were lately informed that one Mr. Gardiner, who arrived here a month before us (and who had passed here for a knight by the name of Sir Christopher Gardiner all this while) was no knight but instead thereof had two wives now living in an house at London, one of which came about September last from Paris in France (where her husband had left her years before) to London, where she had heard her husband had married a second wife and whom by inquiry she found out, and they both condoling each other's estate, wrote both their letters to the governor (by Mr. Pierce [Master of the *Lyon*] who had conference with both the women in the presence of Mr. [Isaac] Allerton of Plymouth), his first wife desiring his return and conversion, his second, his destruction for his foul abuse and for robbing her of her estate, of a part whereof she sent an inventory hither, comprising there-in many rich jewels, much plate, and costly linen. This man had in his family (and yet hath) a gentlewoman whom he called his kinswoman and whom one of his wives in her letter names Mary Grove, affirming her to be a known harlot, whose sending

back into Old England she also desired, together with her husband. Shortly after this intelligence, we sent to the house of the said Gardiner (which was seven miles from us) to apprehend him and his woman, with a purpose to send them both to London to his wives there, but the man, who having heard some rumor from some who came in the ship that letters were come to the governor requiring justice against him was readily prepared for flight, so soon as he should see any crossing the river or likely to apprehend him, which he accordingly performed, for he, dwelling alone, easily discerned such who were sent to take him half a mile before they approached his house, and with his piece on his neck went his way, as most men think northward, hoping to find some English there like to himself, but likely enough it is, which way soever he went, he will lose himself in the woods and be stopped with some rivers in his passing, notwithstanding his compass in his pocket, and so with hunger and cold will perish before he find the place he seeks. His woman was brought unto us and confessed her name and that her mother dwells eight miles from Beirdly in Salopshire and that Gardiner's father dwells in or near Gloucester and was (as she said) brother to Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and did disinherit his son for his twenty-six years' absence in his travels in France, Italy, Germany, and Turkey; that he had (as he told her) married a wife in his travels, from whom he was divorced, and the woman long since dead; that both herself and Gardiner were both Catholiques till of late but were now Protestants; that she takes him to be a knight but never heard when he was knighted. The woman was impenitent and close [closed-mouthed], confessing no more than was wrested from her by her own contradictions, so we have taken order to send her to the two wives in Old England to search her further.

Upon the eighth of March, from after it was fair daylight until about eight of the clock in the forenoon, there flew over all the towns in our plantations so many flocks of doves, each flock

containing many thousands and some so many that they obscured the light, that passeth credit if but the truth should be written, and the thing was the more strange because I scarce remember to have seen ten doves since I came into this country. They were all turtles [turtle doves], as appeared by divers of them we killed flying, somewhat bigger than those of Europe, and they flew from the northeast to the southwest, but what it portends I know not.

The ship now waits but for wind, which when it blows, there are ready to go aboard therein for England Sir Richard Saltonstall, Mr. [Thomas] Sharpe, Mr. [William] Coddington, and many others, the most whereof purpose to return to us again, if God will. In the mean time, we are left a people poor and contemptible, yet such as trust in God and are contented with our condition, being well assured that He will not fail us nor forsake us. I had almost forgotten to add this, that the wheat we received by this last ship stands us in thirteen or fourteen shillings a strike, and the peas about eleven shillings a strike, besides the adventure, which is worth three or four shillings a strike, which is an higher price than I ever tasted bread of before.

Thus, Madam, I have as I can told your honor all our matters, knowing your wisdom can make good use thereof. If I live not to perform the like office of my duty hereafter, likely it is some other will do it better.

Before the departure of the ship (which yet was wind-bound) there came unto us Sagamore John and one of his subjects requiring satisfaction for the burning of two wigwams by some of the English, which wigwams were not inhabited but stood in a place convenient for their shelter when upon occasion they should travel that ways. By examination we found that some English fowlers [birdcatchers], having retired into that which belonged to the subject and leaving a fire therein carelessly, which they had kindled to warm them, were the cause of burning thereof, for that which was the Sagamore's, we could find no certain proof how it was fired, yet lest he

should think us not sedulous [diligent] enough to find it out and so should depart discontentedly from us, we gave both him and his subject satisfaction for them both.

The like accident of fire also befell Mr. [Thomas] Sharpe and Mr. [William] Colborne upon the seventeenth of this March, both whose houses, which were as good and as well furnished as the most in the plantation, were in two hours' space burned to the ground, together with much of their household stuff, apparel, and other things, as also some goods of others who sojourned with them in their houses, God so pleasing to exercise us with corrections of this kind as he hath done with others, for the prevention whereof in our new town, intended this summer to be builded, we have ordered that no man there shall build his chimney with wood nor cover his house with thatch, which was readily assented unto, for that divers other houses have been burned since our arrival (the fire always beginning in the wooden chimneys) and some English wigwams which have taken fire in the roofs covered with thatch or boughs.

And that this ship might return into Old England with heavy news, upon the eighteenth day of March came one from Salem and told us that upon the fifteenth thereof there died Mrs. Skelton, the wife of the other minister there [Samuel Skelton], who, about eighteen or twenty days before, handling cold things in a sharp morning, put herself into a most violent fit of the wind colic and vomiting, which continuing, she at length fell into a fever and so died as before. She was a godly and an helpful woman, and indeed the main pillar of her family, having left behind her an husband and four children, weak and helpless, who can scarce tell how to live without her. She lived desired and died lamented, and well deserves to be honorably remembered.

Upon the twenty-fifth of this March, one of Waterton having lost a calf and about ten of the clock at night hearing the howling of some wolves not far off, raised many of his neighbors out of their beds, that by discharging their muskets near about the place where he heard the wolves,

he might so put the wolves to flight and save his calf. The wind serving fit to carry the report of the muskets to Roxbury, three miles off, at such a time, the inhabitants there took an alarm, beat up their drum, armed themselves, and sent in post to us to Boston to raise us also. So in the morning, the calf being found safe, the wolves affrighted, and our danger past, we went merrily to breakfast.

I thought to have ended before, but the stay of the ship and my desire to inform your honor of all I can hath caused this addition, and everyone having warning to prepare for the ship's departure tomorrow, I am now this twenty-eighth of March, 1631, sealing my letters.

1 Robert Browne is credited with separating from the Church of England in 1580 and beginning an independent church on the principle of congregationalism, hence leading his name to the Separatist movement. His most famous book is *A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* (1582).

2 Debasing a coin by shaving the precious metal (usually gold or silver) from its circumference.

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