

1. William Bradford Faces a "Hideous and Desolate Wilderness," 1620-1635

After long beating at sea they fell with that land which is called Cape Cod; the which being made & certainly known to be it, they were not a litle joyful. After some deliberation had amongst themselves & with the master of the ship, they tacked about and resolved to stand for the southward (the wind & weather being fair) to find some place about Hudsons river for their habitation. But after they had sailed that course about half the day, they fell amongst dangerous shoals and roaring breakers, and they were so far intangled there with as they conceived themselves in greater danger; & the wind shrinking upon them withall, they resolved to bear up again for the Cape, and thought themselves happy to get out of those dangers before night overtook them, as by Gods providence they did. And the next day they got into the Cape-harbor where they rode in safety. . . .

Being thus arived in a good harbor and brought saf to land, they fell upon their knees & blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast & furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils & miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. . . . Being thus past the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them, no inns to entertain or refresh their weatherbeaten bodies, no houses or much less means to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in scripture as a mercy to the apostle & his shipwrecked company, that the barbarians showed them no small kindness in refreshing them, but these savage barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows then otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp & violent, & subject to cruel & fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous & desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts & wild men? and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more fruitful country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes upward to the heavens) they could have litle solace or content in respect of outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods & thickets, represented wild & savage hue. If they looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar & gulf to separate them from the civil parts of the world. . . . What could now sustain them but the spirit of God & his grace? May not & ought not the children of these fathers, rightly say: *Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness. . . .*

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*. Boston: Wright and Potter, 1901, pp. 93, 94-96, 111, 116, 121, 127-130, 387-389.

But that which was most sad & lamentable was, that in 2. or 3. months' time half of their company died, especially in Jan: & February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses & other comforts; being infected with the scurvy & other diseases, which this long voyage & their inaccommodate condition had brought upon them; so as there died some times 2. or 3. of a day, in the foresaid time; that of 100. & odd persons, scarce 50. remained. And of these in the time of most distress, there was but 6. or 7. sound persons, who, to their great commendations be it spoken, spared no pains, night nor day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made them fires, dressed them meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed & unclothed them; in a word, did all the homely and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren. . . .

All this while the Indians came skulking about them, and would sometimes show themselves aloof of, but when any approached near them, they would run away. And once they stole away their tools where they had been at work, & were gone to dinner. But about the 16. of *March* a certain Indian came boldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand, but marvelled at it. . . . His name was *Samaset*; he told them also of another Indian whose name was *Squanto*, a native of this place, who had been in England & could speak better English then himself. Being, after some time of entertainment & gifts, dismissed, a while after he came again, & 5. more with him, & they brought again all the tools that were stolen away before, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem, called *Massasoyt*; who, about 4. or 5. days after, came with the chief of his friends & other attendants, with the aforesaid *Squanto*. With whom, after friendly entertainment, & some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this 24. years). . . . *Squanto* continued with them, and was their interpreter, and was a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never left them till he died. He was a native of this place, & scarce any left alive besides himself. He was caried away with divers others by one *Hunt*, a master of a ship, who thought to sell them for slaves in Spain; but he got away for England, and was entertained by a merchant in London, & employed to Newfoundland & other parts, & lastly brought hither into these parts by one Mr. *Dermer*, a gentle-man employed by Sr. Ferdinando Gorges & others, for discovery, & other designs in these parts. . . .

Anno: 1621

[April] Afterwards they (as many as were able) began to plant ther corn, in which service Squanto stood them in great stead, showing them both the manner how to set it, and after how to dress & tend it. Also he told them except they got fish & set with it (in these old grounds) it would come to nothing, and he showed them that in the middle of April they should have store enough come up the brook, by which they began to build, and taught them how to take it, and where to get other provisions necessary for them; all which they found true by trial & experience. Some English

seed they sew, as wheat & peas, but it came not to good, either by the badness of the seed, or lateness of the season, or both, or some other defect. . . .

[September] They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health & strength, and had all things in good plenty; for as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod, & bass, & other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want. And now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides water fowl, there was great store of wild Turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, &c. Besides they had about a peck a meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned, but true reports.

In November, about that time twelfth month that themselves came, there came in a small ship to them unexpected or looked for, in which came Mr. Cushman (so much spoken of before) and with him 35. persons to remain & live in the plantation; which did not a little rejoice them. And they when they came a shore and found all well, and saw plenty of victuals in every house, were no less glad. . . . So they were all landed; but there was not so much as biscuit-cake or any other victuals for them, neither had they any bedding, but some sorry things they had in their cabins, not pot, nor pan, to dress any meat in; nor overmany clothes, for many of them had brushed away their coats & cloaks at Plymouth as they came. But there was sent over some burching-lane suits in the ship, out of which they were supplied. The plantation was glad of this addition of strength, but could have wished that many of them had been of better condition, and all of them better furnished with provisions; but that could not now be helped. . . .

This ship (called the *Fortune*) was speedily dispatched away, being laden with good clapbord as full as she could stow, and 2. hogsheads of beaver and otter skins, which they got with a few trifling commodities brought with them at first, being altogether unprovided for trade; neither was there any amongst them that ever saw a beaver skin till they came here, and were informed by Squanto. The freight was estimated to be worth near 500. pounds. . . .

Anno Dom: 1634

I am now to relate some strange and remarkable passages. There was a company of people lived in the country, up above in the river of Connecticut, a great way from their trading house there, and were enemies to those Indians which lived about them, and of whom they stood in some fear (being a stout people). About a thousand of them had inclosed them selves in a fort, which they had strongly palisaded about. 3. or 4. Dutch men went up in the beginning of winter to live with them, to get their trade, and prevent them for bringing it to the English, or to fall into amity with them; but at spring to bring all down to their place. But their enterprise failed, for it pleased God to visit these Indians with a great sicknes, and such a mortality that of a 1000. above 900. and a half of them died, and many of them did rot above ground for want of burial, and the Dutch men almost starved before they could get away, for ice and

snow. But about Feb: they got with much difficulty to their trading house; whom they kindly relieved, being almost spent with hunger and cold. Being thus refreshed by them divers days, they got to their own place, and the Dutch were very thankful for this kindness.

This spring, also, those Indians that lived about their trading house there fell sick of the small pox, and died most miserably; for a sorer disease cannot befall them; they fear it more than the plague; for usually they that have this disease have them in abundance, and for want of bedding & lining and other helps, they fall into a lamentable condition, as they live on their hard mats, the pox breaking and mattering, and running one into another, their skin cleaving (by reason thereof) to the mats they lie on; when they turn them, a whole side will fly off at once, (as it were,) and they will be all of a gore blood, most fearful to behold; and then begin very sore, what with cold and other distempers, they die like rotten sheep. The condition of this people was so lamentable, and they fell down so generally of this disease, as they were (in the end) not able to help one another; no, not to make a fire, nor to fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead; but would strive as long as they could, and when they could procure no other means to make fire, they would burn the wooden trays & dishes they ate their meat in, and their very bows & arrows; & some would crawl out on all four to get a little water, and some times die by the way, & not be able to get in again. But those of the English house, (though at first they were afraid of the infection,) yet seeing their woeful and sad condition, and hearing their pitifull cries and lamentations, they had compassion of them, and daily fetched them wood & water, and made them fires, got them victuals whilst they lived, and buried them when they died. For very few of them escaped, notwithstanding they did what they could for them, to the hazard of themselves. The chief Sachem him self now died, & almost all his friends & kindred. But by the marvelous goodness & providence of God not one of the English was so much as sick, or in the least measure tainted with this disease, though they daily did these offices for them for many weeks together. And this mercy which they showed them was kindly taken, and thankfully acknowledged of all the Indians that knew or heard of the same; and their masters here did much commend & reward them for the same.

2. John Winthrop Sets Forth the Grounds for Settling in New England, 1629

The grounds of settling a plantation in new England.

[1. Ground.] The propagation of the gospell to the Indians. . . .

2. Ground. Charitie to our neighbors [who are] impoverished by decay of Trade and left destitute of hope of employment in tyme to come, who may comfortably be sustayned by their labors & endeavors in this Country [New England] yeilding