

hunt, that besides the delicacy of their bodies for food, their skins are so rich, as may well recompence thy daily labor, with a captain's pay.

For laborers, if those that sow hemp, rape,<sup>9</sup> turnips, parsnips, carrots, cabbage, and such like; give twenty, thirty, forty, fifty shillings yearly for an acre of ground, and meat, drink, and wages to use it, and yet grow rich: when better, or at least as good ground, may be had and cost nothing but labor; it seems strange to me, any such should there grow poor.

My purpose is not to persuade children [to go] from their parents; men from their wives; nor servants from their masters: only, such as with free consent may be spared: But that each parish, or village, in city, or country, that will but apparel their fatherless children, of thirteen or fourteen years of age, or young married people, that have small wealth to live on; here by their labor may live exceedingly well: provided always that first there be a sufficient power to command them, houses to receive them, means to defend them, and meet provisions for them; for, any place may be overlain:<sup>1</sup> and it is most necessary to have a fortress (ere this grow to practice) and sufficient masters (as, carpenters, masons, fishers, fowlers, gardeners, husbandmen, sawyers, smiths, spinsters, tailors, weavers, and such like) to take ten, twelve, or twenty, or as there is occasion, for apprentices. The masters by this may quickly grow rich; these may learn their trades themselves, to do the like; to a general and an incredible benefit, for king, and country, master, and servant.

1616

9. I.e., the rape plant.

1. Overcome.

## WILLIAM BRADFORD

1590-1657

William Bradford epitomizes the spirit of determination and self-sacrifice that seems to us characteristic of our first "Pilgrims," a word Bradford himself was the first to use to describe the community of believers who sailed from Southampton, England, on the *Mayflower* and settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. For Bradford, as well as for the other members of this community, the decision to settle at Plymouth was the last step in a long march of exile from England, and the hardships they suffered in the new land were tempered with the knowledge that they were in a place they had chosen for themselves, safe at last from persecution. Shortly after their arrival Bradford was elected governor. His duties involved more than that title might imply today: he was chief judge and jury, oversaw agriculture and trade, and made allotments of land. It would be hard to imagine a historian better prepared to write the history of this colony.

Bradford's own life provides a model of the life of the community as a whole. He was born in Yorkshire, in the town of Austerfield, of parents who were modestly well off. Bradford's father died when he was an infant. His mother remarried in 1593, and he was brought up by his paternal grandparents and uncles. He did not receive a university education; instead, he was taught the arts of farming. When he was only twelve or thirteen, he heard the sermons of the Nonconformist minister Richard Clyfton, who preached in a neighboring parish; these sermons changed Bradford's life. For

accidents, as are beyond my  
mple, to think, that ever any  
a Commonwealth; or draw  
to stay in New England to  
toil might be insupportable,  
I assure myself there  
e, that take much more pains  
gain wealth sufficient: and  
et content: for, our pleasure  
ere nature and liberty afford  
sts us dearly. What pleasure  
a-shore)<sup>4</sup> in planting vines,  
to the pleasure of their own  
ships, and other works, etc.,  
n their own boats upon the  
hook and line, by angling,  
asures? And is it not pretty  
e pence, as fast as you can  
cannot kill in one day with  
ls: which dressed and dried,  
ed (though in England they  
rvant, the master, and mer-  
ork but three days in seven,  
be excessive. Now that car-  
rs,<sup>6</sup> or what other, may they  
but an hour in a day, to take  
eat it, because there is so  
he fishermen, or merchants,  
d a more pleasing content,  
and crossing the sweet air  
sea, wherein the most curi-  
though all men be not fish-  
rs do as well. For necessity  
each in their several func-  
profitable, because there is

delight them, than ranging  
ing, for hunting and hawk-  
some pleasure, in seeing  
hour or two together, at the  
at a fowl; and never trou-  
ing, feeding, and attending  
ing. See you not a hawk?<sup>8</sup>  
d not only chase suffi-  
easure; but such beasts to

<sup>4</sup> and other games in America with the tedious  
of armed hawks in England must  
when such birds fly away and  
over the countryside. "Mew-  
ing is a game."

Clyfton was the religious guide of a small community of believers who met at the house of William Brewster in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, and it was this group that Bradford joined in 1606. Much against the opposition of uncles and grandparents, he left home and joined them. They were known as "Separatists," because unlike the majority of Puritans, they saw no hope of reforming the Church of England from within. They wished to follow Calvin's model and to set up "particular" churches, each one founded on a formal covenant, entered into by those who professed their faith and swore to the covenant. Their model was the Old Testament covenant God made with Adam and renewed through Christ. In their covenanted churches God offered himself as a contractual partner to each believer; it was a contract freely initiated but perpetually binding. They were not sympathetic to the idea of a national church. Separating was, however, by English law an act of treason, and many believers paid a high price for their dreams of purity. Sick of the hidden life that the Church of England forced on them, the Scrooby community took up residence in the Netherlands. Bradford joined them in 1609 and there learned to be a weaver. When he came into his inheritance he went into business for himself.

Living in a foreign land was not easy, and eventually the Scrooby community petitioned for a grant of land in the New World. Their original grant was for land in the Virginia territory, but high seas prevented them from reaching those shores and they settled instead at Plymouth, Massachusetts. In the second book of Bradford's history he describes the signing of the Mayflower Compact, a civil covenant designed to allow the temporal state to serve the godly citizen. It was the first of a number of plantation covenants designed to protect the rights of citizens beyond the reach of established governments.

Bradford was a self-educated man, deeply committed to the Puritan cause. Cotton Mather, in his ecclesiastical history of New England, describes him as "a person for study as well as action; and hence notwithstanding the difficulties which he passed in his youth, he attained unto a notable skill in languages. . . . But the Hebrew he most of all studied, because, he said, he would see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty. . . . The crown of all his life was his holy, prayerful, watchful and fruitful walk with God, wherein he was exemplary." Bradford served as governor for all but five of the remaining years of his life.

The manuscript of Bradford's *History*, although known to early historians, disappeared from Boston after the Revolution. The first book (through chapter IX) had been copied into the Plymouth church records and was thus preserved, but the second book was presumed lost. The manuscript was eventually found in the residence of the bishop of London and published for the first time in 1856. In 1897 it was returned to this country by ecclesiastical decree and was deposited in the State House in Boston.

## Of Plymouth Plantation<sup>1</sup>

### From Book I

#### CHAPTER IX. OF THEIR VOYAGE, AND HOW THEY PASSED THE SEA; AND OF THEIR SAFE ARRIVAL AT CAPE COD

September 6. These troubles being blown over,<sup>2</sup> and now all being compact together in one ship, they put to sea again with a prosperous wind, which con-

1. The text is adapted from Bradford's *History "Of Plimoth Plantation."* From the *Original Manuscript* (1897).

2. Some of Bradford's community sailed on the

*Speedwell* from Delftshaven early in August 1620, but the ship's unseaworthiness forced their transfer to the *Mayflower*.

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3. Strong, energet

4. Hesitate.

5. Shrewdly, in its  
generously.