

HISTORY OF BOSTON.

CHAPTER I.

Two Hundred years Ago. The May Flower. Landing at Plymouth. The First Winter. Welcome of Samoset. Visit from the Indians. Mount Wolaston. Fleet sails for America. Arrival. Settlement at Charlestown. Great Distress.

1. It is now about two hundred and thirteen years, since the first settlers of New England landed at Plymouth. Before that time, a few voyagers and fishermen had touched upon this part of the North American continent, but none had remained. Thick forests darkened the places that are now crowded with happy villages. Waters, which are now ploughed by mighty ships, laden with the productions of far distant countries, were then only disturbed by the frail and

silent canoe of the Indian. Places now busy with the hum of active and laborious industry, were the solitary hunting grounds of an indolent and savage race.

2. In December 1620, a small vessel called the *May Flower* was beating about in a stormy sea, on an unknown coast. On board of this vessel were strong men, with their wives and tender children. They had fled with all that they loved from England, their native country, because they had been persecuted for refusing to comply with certain religious forms and ceremonies. They preferred to live in a desert where they could worship God in peace, and in simplicity.

3. On the twenty-second of December, the wave-driven pilgrims landed, and resolved to commence a settlement. A large fragment of the rock on which they first stepped is still preserved, as a sacred memorial of this event. They chose Mr John Carver for their governor, and named the spot which they had resolved to make their home, *New-Plymouth*.

4. The season which followed was comfortless and severe to them. The fatigue and suffering to which they were exposed caused much sickness. Many of their number died. The survivors were filled with sorrow for the loss of their friends, and anxiety for their own fate. By good fortune the spring was an early one, and brought a welcome relief from the chill blasts of winter.

5. It was not till after some months that the white men

spoke with a native of the country. They knew that it was inhabited by savage tribes; they had sometimes seen a few of the Indians at a distance, and had once been visited by a shower of arrows.

6. On the sixteenth of March, 1621, they were surprised by the sudden approach of an Indian. He advanced boldly alone into the street of Plymouth, and exclaimed, 'Welcome Englishmen! Welcome Englishmen!' They were much astonished to hear him speak in their own language. He told them that he had learned it from the fishermen who had sometimes been upon the coast. He informed them, that all the inhabitants of the place where they were seated had died, about four years before, of an extraordinary plague. He also told them that his name was Samoset, and that he was the chief of a tribe.

7. Samoset was a tall straight man, with black hair, short before, but hanging long behind. He had a bow and two arrows. The pilgrims received him kindly, and gave him some biscuit and butter, cheese, pudding, and a piece of roast duck. The chief was quite pleased with his treat, and in return told the new comers a great many useful things.

8. The next morning Samoset paid them a visit with five other natives. Some of them were clothed in deer skins. Some wore long stockings that covered the whole legs, and pieces of leather about their waists. The chief was distinguished by having the skin of a wild cat on his arm. They

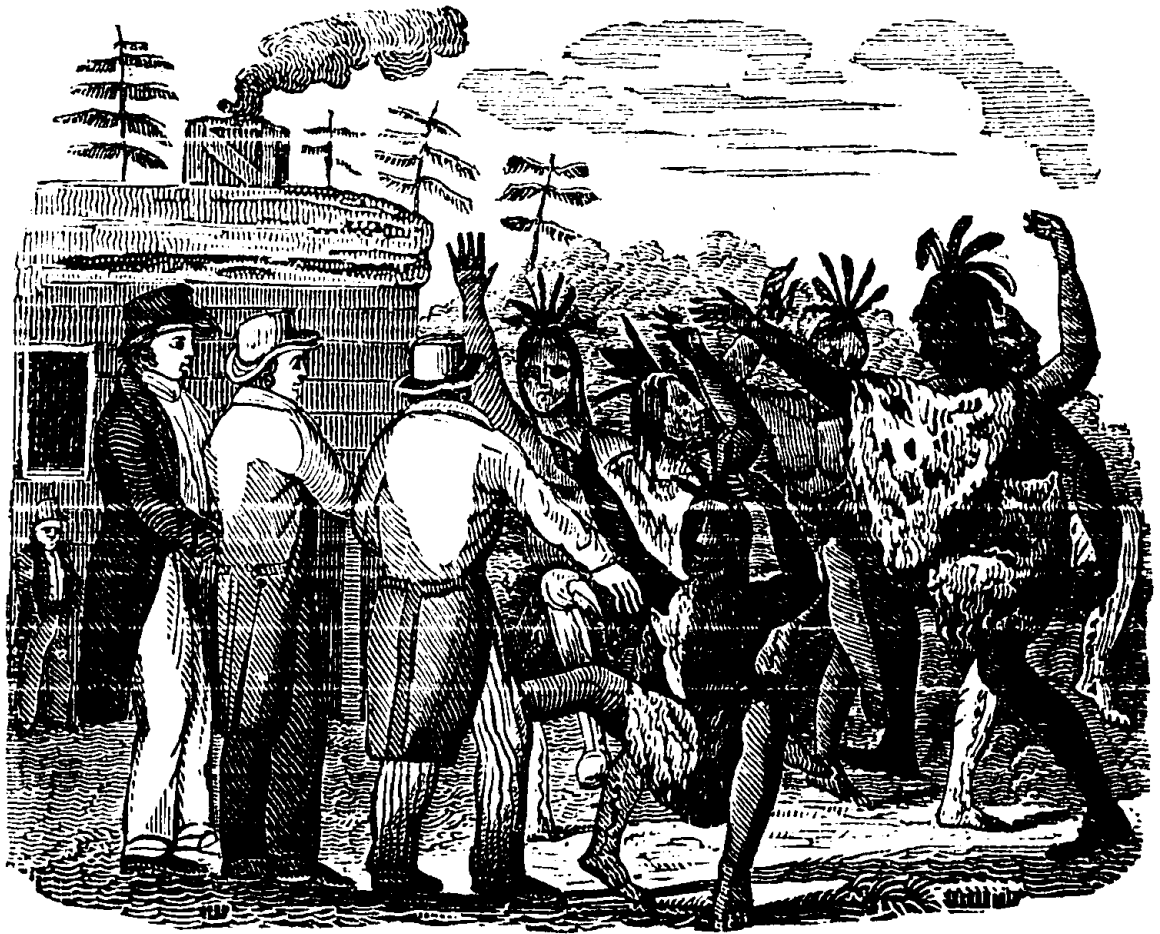
were tall men, with long black hair, stuck full of feathers, and painted to the excess of the fashion. After eating and drinking heartily with the English, they amused them by some Indian dances and songs.

9. In the course of four or five years, several English settlements were made at different points of Massachusetts Bay. One was made in 1625, by Captain Wolaston, who brought over a party and placed them in a spot now called Braintree. He chose for this settlement a hill which he named Mount Wolaston.

10. Affairs were going on happily at this settlement, when the captain, with a part of the company, resolved to go on a voyage to Virginia. Among the men left behind there was a noisy, riotous fellow, by the name of Thomas Morton. This man determined to do some mischief.

11. One night, soon after the captain's departure, Morton called the men together, and gave them a plenty of punch. As soon as they had become a little merry and excited, Morton said to them — 'Now, my good fellows, the captain is gone, — suppose we turn out the lieutenant, and we shall then be able to do as we please.'

12. The men consented, and the lieutenant was forced to give up his authority. All was now changed at Mount Wolaston. They passed their days in eating, drinking, and dancing about a May-pole. It was a continued feast and riot. There was no power and no obedience. Each did as he liked, for there was no one to call another to account.



Indian Dance.

13. They altered the name of the settlement to Merry Mount. In order to support their idleness and excess, they endeavored to make friends of the natives, by teaching them the use of fire-arms. The Indians soon became better marksmen than the English. They were delighted with their new weapons, threw away their bows and arrows, and were willing to give any price for guns, powder and shot.

14. This was against the express orders of the king of England. It was unlawful to trade with the Indians in any sort of warlike stores. Captain Miles Standish was accordingly sent with some companions from Plymouth to put a stop to this traffic. He took Morton and his followers prisoners, and the colony at Mount Wolaston was broken up.

15. In March, 1630, there was a fleet of fourteen vessels at anchor in the English Channel, ready to set sail for America. On board of them were several hundred men, women and children. They were provided with necessaries for a long voyage, and subsistence for some time after their arrival. There were carpenters, blacksmiths, and men of different trades; and every care was taken in order to settle a strong and lasting colony.

16. During the voyage of this fleet across the ocean, the weather was very variable. Sometimes every thing would be quiet and mild, and it would seem that there was not a breeze stirring to roughen the waters. On other days, the rain fell, the winds blew, the waves swelled and roared, and the vessels were driven about as if under no human control.

17. Very strict rules were observed during the whole passage. Two young men disputed about some trifle, and were carried so far by their anger as to come to blows. To make an example of them, they were sentenced to walk upon deck till night, with their hands tied behind them.

18. By the sixth of July, thirteen out of fourteen of the ships had arrived in New England. They anchored in the harbor of Salem. Only fifteen of the passengers had died during the voyage. On the eighth of July, a public thanksgiving was kept through all the plantations.

19. A considerable number soon left Salem, and made a settlement at Charlestown. Among these was Mr John Winthrop, who had been appointed governor. Tents and cottages were hastily raised in the new town, and a building, called the *great house*, was erected for the public officers.

20. Great distress, however, began to prevail. Many were taken sick and died. They suffered very much from the want of water. There was only one spring in the place, which was poor and brackish, and so situated as only to be reached at low tide. It was the want of good water at this place, that led to the immediate settlement of Boston.