

CHAP. III.

Of a great mortality that happened amongst the Natives of New England, neere about the time that the English came there to plant.

IT fortuned some few yeares before the English came to inhabit at new Plimmouth, in New England, that upon some distaft given in the Massachussets bay by Frenchmen, then trading there with the Natives for beaver, they set upon the men at such advantage that they killed manie of * 23 them, burned their shipp, * then riding at Anchor by an Island there, now called Peddocks Island,¹ in memory of Leonard Peddock² that landed there, (where many wilde

in writing his *New England's Prospekt*, in 1633, remarks (p. 78), that "Some have thought they [the Indians] might be of the dispersed Jews, because some of their words be near unto the Hebrew; but by the same rule they may conclude them to be some of the gleanings of all nations, because they have words which found after the Greek, Latin, French, and other tongues."

There is in the *Magnalia* (book III. part iii.) a lengthy but highly characteristic passage, in which Mather recounts the points of resemblance which the evangelist Eliot saw between the Indians and "the posterity of the dispersed and rejected Israelites."

¹ Peddock's, or Pettick's, Island, still so called, is one of the largest islands in Boston Bay. It lies directly opposite to George's Island and Hull, from which last it is separated by a narrow channel, and is between Weymouth and Quincy

bays, on the east and west. See Shurtleff's *Description of Boston*, p. 557.

² Leonard Peddock seems to have been in the employment of the Council for New England. In the records of the Council for the 8th of November, 1622, is the following entry: "Mr. Thomson is ordered to pay unto Leo: Peddock £10 towards his paynes for his last Employments to New England." Subsequently, on the 19th of the same month: "It is ordered that a Letter be written from the Counsell to Mr. Weston, to deliver to Leonard Peddock, a boy Native of New England called papa Whinett belonging to Abbadakett, Sachem of Massachussets, which boy Mr Peddock is to carry over with him" (*Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, April, 1867, pp. 70, 74).

Andrew Weston had returned to England in the *Charity*, leaving Westaguffett in September, 1622 (*Supra*, 7). He would

wilde Anckies¹ haunted that time, which hee thought had bin tame,) diftributing them unto 5. Sachems, which were Lords of the feverall territories adjoyninge : they did keepe them fo longe as they lived, onely to fport themselves at them, and made thefe five Frenchmen fetch them wood and water, which is the generall worke that they require of a fervant.² One of thefe five men, out livinge the reft, had learned fo much of their language as to rebuke them for their bloody deede, faying that God would be angry with them for it, and

Five Frenchmen kept by the Salvages.

would feem to have brought over the Indian boy in queftion with him. From the entry in the records of the Council for New England, juft quoted, it would appear that Leonard Peddock was in New England during the fummer of 1622. The reference to him in the text is additional evidence that Morton was there at the fame time, and in company with Wefton.

¹ This is undoubtedly a mifprint for Auckies, which was a failor's corruption for Auks. The Great Auk (*Alca impennis*) is probably referred to. This bird, now fuppofed to be extinct, was formerly common on the New England coast. Audubon, writing in 1838, fays : "An old gunner, refiding on Chelfea Beach, near Boston, told me that he well remembered the time when the Penguins were plentiful about Nahant and fome other iflands in the bay." (*Am. Ornithological Biog.*, vol. iv. p. 316.) Profeffor Orton, alluding to this paffage, in the *American Naturalift* (1869, p. 540), expreffes the opinion that the Razor-billed Auk was the bird referred to ; but Profeffor F. W. Putnam adds, in a foot-note, that "the 'old hunter' was undoubtedly correct in his ftatement, as we have bones of the fpecies taken from the fhell-heaps of Marblehead, Eagle Hill in Ipfwich, and

Plum Ifland." Dr. Jeffries Wyman found them in the fhell-heaps at Cotuit. See *Mem. Hift. of Boston*, vol. i. p. 12.

There is an elaborate paper on the Great Auk, under the title of "The Garefowl and its Hiftorians," by Profefor Alfred Newton, in the *Natural Hiftory Review* for 1865, p. 467.

² Morton would feem to be miftaken in this ftatement. Between 1614 and 1619 two French veffels were loft on the Maffachufetts coast. One was wrecked on Cape Cod, and the crew, who fucceeded in getting on fhore, were moft of them killed by the favages, and the remainder enflaved in the way defcribed in the text. Two of thefe captives were fubfequently redeemed by Captain Dermer (Bradford, p. 98). The other veffel was captured by the favages in Boston Bay, and burned. This is the veffel referred to by Morton as riding at anchor off Peddock's Ifland. The circumftances of the capture are defcribed in Phinehas Pratt's narrative (iv. *Maff. Hift. Coll.*, vol. iv. pp. 479, 489). All the crew, he fays, were killed, and the fhip, after grounding, was burned. Pratt's ftatement is diftinct, and agrees with Bradford's, that the captives among the Indians were the furvivors from the veffel wrecked on Cape Cod, not from that captured in Boston Bay.

and that hee would in his displeasure destroy them ; but the Salvages (it seemes boasting of their strenght,) replied and sayd, that they were so many that God could not kill them.¹

*The Plague
fell on the In-
dians.*

But contrary wise, in short time after the hand of God fell heavily upon them, with such a mortall stroake that they died on heapes as they lay in their houfes ; and the living, that were able to shift for themselves, would runne away and let them dy, and let there Carcafes ly above the ground without buriall. For in a place where many inhabited, there hath been but one left a live to tell what became of the rest; the livinge being (as it seemes) not able to bury the dead, they were left for Crowes, Kites and vermin to pray upon. And the bones and skulls upon the severall places of their habitations made such a spectacle after my coming into those partes, that, as I travailed in that For-
rest

*The livinge not
able to bury the
dead.*

¹ Pratt's account of this survivor among the French crew is to be found in *iv. Mass. Hist. Coll.*, vol. iv. pp. 479, 489. He says that "one of them was wont to read much in a book (some say it was the New Testament), and that the Indians enquiring of him what his book said, he told them it did intimate that there was a people like French men that would come into the country and drive out the Indians." The account given by Mather (*Magnalia*, B. I. ch. ii. § 6) is curiously like that in the text. After quoting the substance of Pratt's statement he adds: "These infidels then blasphemously replied, 'God could not kill them;' which blasphemous mistake was confuted by a horrible and unusual plague, whereby they were consumed in such vast multitudes that our first planters found the land almost covered with

their unburied carcafes ; and they that were left alive were smitten into awful and humble regards of the English by the terrors which the remembrance of the Frenchman's prophecy had imprinted on them."

Pratt, whom Mather followed, claims to have derived his knowledge of these events during the winter of 1622-3 directly from savages concerned in them. The probability is that the tradition of the French captive, and his book and prophecy, was a common one among the settlers both at Plymouth and about Boston Bay. Pratt apparently had a habit, as he grew old, of appropriating to his own account many of the earlier and more striking incidents of colonial history. (Mather's *Early New England*, p. 17.)

rest nere the Massachuffets, it seemed to mee a new found Golgatha.

* But otherwise, it is the custome of those Indian * 24 people to bury their dead ceremoniously and carefully, and then to abandon that place, because they have no desire the place should put them in minde of mortality: and this mortality was not ended when the Brownists of new Plimmouth were settled at Patuxet in New England: and by all likelyhood the sicknesse that these Indians died of was the Plague, as by conference with them since my arrivall and habitation in those partes, I have learned.¹ And by this meanes

¹ The mysterious pestilence, which in the years 1616 and 1617 swept away the New England Indians from the Penobscot to Narragansett Bay, is mentioned by all the earlier writers, and its character has recently been somewhat discussed. There can be no doubt that it practically destroyed the tribes, especially the Massachusets and the Pokanokets, among which it raged. The former were reduced from a powerful people, able, it is said, to muster three thousand warriors, to a mere remnant a few hundred strong. The Pokanokets were in some localities, notably at Plymouth, actually exterminated, and the country left devoid of inhabitants (I. *Majs. Hist. Coll.*, vol. i. p. 148; Young's *Chron. of Pilg.*, p. 183). Winslow gave a description of the desolation created by this pestilence, and of the number of the unburied dead, very like that in the text (Young's *Chron. of Pilg.*, pp. 183, 206). On this subject, see also, Bradford, pp. 102, 325; Johnson, p. 16; Wood's *Prof. pest.*, p. 72; III. *Majs. Hist. Coll.*, vol. vi. p. 57.

No definite conclusion as to the nature of this pestilence has been reached by medical men. It has been suggested that

it was the yellow-fever (Palfrey, vol. i. p. 99, *). As, however, it raged equally in the depth of the severest winter as in summer, this could not have been the case (III. *Majs. Hist. Coll.*, vol. vi. p. 57; Bradford, p. 325). Other modern medical authorities have inclined to the opinion that it was a visitation of small-pox (Dr. Holmes in *Majs. Hist. Soc., Low. Inst. Lett.*, 1869., p. 261; Dr. Green's *Centennial Address before the Majs. Med. Soc.*, June 7, 1881, p. 12). In support of this hypothesis Captain Thomas Dermer is quoted, who, sailing along the coast in 1619-20, wrote "we might perceive the sores of some that had escaped, who described the spots of such as usually die" (Purchas, vol. iv. p. 1778). On the other hand, none of the contemporaneous writers who speak of the disease ever call it the small-pox, though all of them were perfectly familiar with small-pox, and a very large portion of them probably bore its marks. Dermer speaks of it as "the plague." Bradford, when the same pestilence raged on the Connecticut, described it as "an infectious fever." Dr. Fuller, the first New England physician, then died of it (Bradford, p. 314). He could

2 Sam. 24. means there is as yet but a small number of Salvages in New England, to that which hath beene in former time, and the place is made so much the more fitt for the English Nation to inhabit in, and erect in it Temples to the glory of God.

CHAP. IV.

Of their Houses and Habitations.

THE Natives of New England are accustomed to build them houses much like the wild Irish; they gather Poles in the woodes and put the great end of them in the ground, placing them in forme of a circle or circumference, and, bendinge the topps of them in forme of an Arch, they bind them together with the Barke of Walnut trees, which is wondrous tuffe, so that they make the same round * 25 on the Topp * for the smooke of their fire to ascend and

could not but have been familiar with the small-pox and its symptoms; and it would seem most improbable that he should have died of that disease among his dying neighbors, and not have known what was killing him. Moreover, in 1633-4 the small-pox did rage among the Indians, and Bradford, in giving a fearfully graphic account of its ravages, adds, "they [the Indians] fear it more than the plague." Josselyn also draws the same distinction, saying (*Two Voyages*, p. 123): "Not long before the English came into the country, happened a great mortality amongst [the Indians]; especially where the English afterwards planted, the East and North-

ern parts were sore smitten by the contagion; first by the plague, afterwards, when the English came, by the small-pox."

It would seem, therefore, that the pestilence of 1616-7 was clearly not the small-pox. More probably it was, as Bradford says, "an infectious fever," or some form of malignant typhus, due to the wretched sanitary condition of the Indian villages, which had become overcrowded, owing to that prosperous condition of the tribes which Smith describes as existing at the time of his visit to the coast in 1614 (III. *Mafs. Hist. Coll.*, vol. vi. p. 109).