



THE

CANADIAN MAGAZINE

VOL. LIII.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER, 1919

No. 5

THE "MAYFLOWER" TERCENTENARY

BY CHARLES MORSE



IN the sixth day of September (O.S.), in the year of grace 1620, the little ship *Mayflower* left Plymouth Sound carrying the Pilgrim Fathers in quest of a home in the New World. They were voluntary exiles for conscience' sake. Many of them had known the sorrows of expatriation before, having come from the English Separatist community in Leyden, which at the time was shepherded by Pastor John Robinson. Of the hundred and two souls that took passage in the ship, not more than thirty-four men of full age at the time are properly to be regarded as of the pilgrim company, the remainder of the men being craftsmen and servants.

The *Mayflower* expedition was undertaken in virtue of a patent from the Virginia Company to John Pierce and his associates, and contemplated a settlement much farther south than that actually planted by the pilgrims.

The voyage was a tedious one of some nine weeks, and the captain was so far out of his reckoning that the first land he sighted was Cape Cod, many leagues north of the point which he had been instructed to make. The exiles, feeling that they had no right to settle in this region, endeavoured to persuade the master of the ship to proceed to some place about Hudson's River for their debarkation, so that the terms of their patent might be complied with. The master grudgingly consented, but, to quote Governor Bradford's "History of the Plymouth Plantation":

"After they had sailed yt course about halfe of ye day, they fell among deangerous shoulds, and roring breakers, and they were so far intangled ther with, as they conceived their selves in great danger, and ye wind shrinking vpon them withall, they resolved to bear vp againe for the cape; and thought them selves happy to gett out of