

The third settlement in order of time is that of Plymouth. In a previous chapter we have traced its origin. We have followed the members of the Congregational church at Serooby in their exile in Holland, where they plant their church polity at Leyden, and after a time divide into three bands, one part, with their pastor, remaining in Holland, one part returning to England to re-transplant their church polity and the principles of liberty; and another portion reach the wilds of America, the only spot on earth, as they suppose, where there is a field for the principles they have espoused. "Behold upon that icy deck," says a writer, "a meek but dauntless band, who for the right to worship God have left their native land, and to a dreary wilderness a glorious boon they bring." Mrs. Hemans has made their arrival the theme of one of her beautiful versifications in part as follows:—

"The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast;
And the woods against a stormy sky,
Their giant branches tossed:
And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and mountains o'er,—
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.
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There were men with hoary hair,
Amidst that pilgrim band:
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their native land?
There was woman's fearless eye
Lit by her deep love's truth,
There was manhood's brow, serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.
What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoil of war?
They sought a faith's pure shrine!
Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod,
They have left unstained what there they found,
Freedom to worship God!"

The hardships of the first winter bore hard upon these Puritan settlers. The governor was laid in the cold ground, and half the company with him, and still they faltered not. Longfellow in his "Miles Standish" has put into the mouths of the survivors the following words:

"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look backwards,
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to its fountains,
Though it pass over the graves of the dead and the hearts of the living,
It is the will of the Lord."

And when the *May Flower* was returning to England, and the captain expressed his joy because of leaving the inhospitable shores, "glad to be gone from the land of sickness and sorrow,"

"Then from their houses in haste came forth the pilgrims,
Men, women and children all hurrying down to the sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as a door-step,
Into a world unknown—the corner stone of a nation."—

"Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the Pilgrims,
O strong hearts and true! nor one went back in the *May Flower*!
No, not one looked back who had set his hand to the ploughing."