The King of England had no hesitation in laying claim to the whole continent, or of authorizing his subjects to people it for him. They had settled Virginia in 1607; and although the colonists had perished at first almost as rapidly as they came, two or three thousand of them were well established now. Others had colonized Bermuda and Barbados. In New England a group of Separatists had been living at Plymouth since 1620; and in 1623 a contingent of fishermen and farmers put down at Cape Ann, backed by a company of merchants calling themselves the Dorchester Adventurers. Though the merchants gave up by 1627 and most of the settlers returned to England, a few hung on in a village they named Salem.

In the circles where Winthrop moved, among the Puritan gentry of the eastern counties, there had been interest in colonization even before Charles I's final dissolution of Parliament in 1629. Noblemen with Puritan leanings had already invested in such ventures and showed a continuing interest that can scarcely be attributed to any financial returns they obtained. The founding of colonies was a notoriously unprofitable activity, and though the hope of striking it rich still led otherwise sane businessmen to invest modestly in colonies, there was probably a thought in the minds of many Puritans who squandered their money this way that a colony in the New World, if managed properly, might prove a port in the storm that was obviously brewing. Some wanted to acquire an island in the West Indies; others favored New England.

Actually a group of gentlemen and noblemen known as the Council for New England had already received a royal grant to the whole of New England in 1620. They had not yet made a serious colonizing effort, but they were willing to allow settlements on their land; and in 1628 they granted a charter to a group of Puritan merchants organized as the New England Company. The charter authorized the company to settle and govern the area from three

miles south of the Charles River to three miles north of the Merrimack. This tract included the settlement at Salem, and the company immediately sent over Captain John Endecott, a veteran of the Dutch wars and a good Puritan, to take charge there. With him they sent a shipload of servants whom he was to employ in collecting the commodities supposed to abound in the country—sarsaparilla and sassafras (valued at the time as medicines), furs, and silk grass.

John Winthrop was not a member of the New England Company, and he was not optimistic about the prospects of colonial life. His second son, Henry, had gone to Barbados to make his fortune in 1627 and returned two years later with expensive habits and no fortune. But Barbados was not a Puritan settlement. When his oldest son, John, Jr., proposed to join Endecott's group, Winthrop received the idea favorably, if not enthusiastically. "I know not wheare you should goe with such religious company and under such hope of blessinge," he told his son, but urged him not to commit himself permanently to living in the New World. John thought it over, decided to try the Mediterranean instead, and went off on a fourteen-month tour of Constantinople, Leghorn, and Venice. Before he returned, the New England Company had been transformed into the Massachusetts Bay Company, and John Winthrop himself was deeply interested in it. There had evidently been some doubt about the validity of the charter from the Council for New England, and before investing heavily in the region, the members of the New England Company wished to make their title to it more secure. In March 1629, just a week before Charles dissolved his last Parliament, they managed—how is not clear—to obtain a royal charter confirming the grant and changing the name of the company to the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England.

Winthrop was at Groton when the royal charter was

granted but took the road shortly afterwards to attend the Easter term of court. At London he found gentlemen putting their heads together over a bottle to whisper things that one no longer dared to speak aloud. Parliament was at an end; Arminian prelates were riding high; the Tower was loaded with Puritan patriots. Everywhere, for those who could see through the glitter of Charles's self-assurance, the clouds of God's wrath seemed to be gathering. Members of the Massachusetts Bay Company were looking toward their colony with quickened interest. Winthrop doubtless talked with some of them. Possibly he already had emigration in mind when he wrote home to Margaret on May 15, 1629, "If the Lord seeth it wilbe good for us, he will provide a shelter and a hidinge place for us and ours."

A fortnight later he was able to snatch a brief holiday at Groton before the Trinity term of court began on June 5. As he and Margaret sat together in the long June evenings there was much to talk about: not only the alarming degeneration of the country but the even more spectacular degeneration of their son Henry, who had been painting the town red ever since his return from Barbados. On a visit to Uncle Fones in London he had turned the household into a veritable inn for his riotous companions and on top of that had wooed and won his cousin Bess, Fones's daughter, without so much as a by-your-leave from her father. Fones told Winthrop, "They both pretend to have proceeded so far that there is no recalling of it." They had been hastily married and shipped off to Groton for a honeymoon. But both John and Margaret feared that Henry had not yet settled down, and it would be easy for a father to think that the boy might behave in a more godly fashion if he lived in a more godly community. At any rate, Winthrop thought more and more of New England, and Margaret, being the woman she was, doubtless assured him that she would follow wherever he led.

Winthrop returned to his duties in London to find that his brother-in-law, Emmanuel Downing, was leaning strongly in the same direction, and he wrote at once to Margaret, "I am still more confirmed in that course which I propounded to thee." Two weeks later he sent her news "that wilbe more wellcome to thee, than a greate deale of other. My Office is gone, and my chamber, and I shalbe a saver in them both: so as I hope, we shall now enjoye each other againe as we desire." Possibly Winthrop resigned the office voluntarily in preparation for emigration. But whether he left England or not, his work in London was hardly worth continuing. The expense of travel and lodgings ate up most of the extra earnings, and since the doors to preferment were now closing against Puritans, the job was unlikely to be a springboard to a higher and more effective public office, which might have compensated for the pain of being so often separated from Margaret.

Though he had not yet made a firm decision to leave England, he had certainly begun to lean in that direction. As he himself later phrased it, "when God intendes a man to a worke he setts a Byas on his heart so as tho' he be tumbled this way and that yet his Bias still drawes him to that side, and there he restes at last." Winthrop's bias was now drawing him toward New England. To be sure that God had set it in him, he analyzed the problem of emigration as though it were a legal case, himself the client, and amassed evidence from as many sources as he could reach: from the directors of the Massachusetts Bay Company to satisfy himself of their motives and of the likelihood of success; from the Puritan clergymen he knew, for their opinion of its acceptability to God; from his friends, because they knew him and his situation and would not hesitate to speak plainly if they detected self-deception in his decisions. The sum of all the evidence he incorporated into a remarkable series of documents, designed to convince himself and others of the desirability of moving to

New England. They were circulated among important Puritans and were a powerful persuasive to Winthrop's contemporaries.

Winthrop had no desire to become a martyr. His arguments were those of a man accustomed to success and intending to have more of it. Several arguments demonstrated that England offered fewer opportunities for worldly success than America. "This land growes wearye of her Inhabitants," he wrote, referring to the depression which had put so many people, especially in Suffolk, out of work. People were too extravagant: a man was hard pressed to "keep sayle with his equalls," and all arts and trades were "carried in that deceiptfull and unrighteous course, as it is allmost impossible for a good and upright man to maintaine his charge and live comfortably in any of them," even an attorney in the Court of Wards. Indeed, in no trade could one expect a suitable recompense for time and labor, "except falshood he admitted to equall the balance." At the same time land was so hard to come by that men would spend as much for an acre or two as would buy many hundreds in America.

But wait. The King might lay claim to the continent, but what about the people already living there? Winthrop had heard of the epidemics that had wiped out so many, though he could scarcely have known how many, and he saw in their destruction the hand of God making way for the godly. Those who remained alive would have no need for the vast tracts of land around them. There would be, he argued, "more than enough for them and us," especially as he had heard that "they inclose no ground, neither have they cattell to maintayne it." So "why may not christians have liberty to go and dwell amongst them in their waste lands and woods (leaving them such places as they have manured for their corne) as lawfully as Abraham did among the Sodomites?" The translation of Indians into Sodomites was more than a figure of speech, for

Europeans had already formed an enduring image of native Americans as savages under the thrall of Satan. Christians moving in among them would help save their souls and improve their lives, even while the Christians made the most of their own God-given talents in exploiting the opportunities of the New World.

Those opportunities probably figured more largely in Winthrop's religious consciousness than any missionary impulse. Just as he considered hunting with a gun a bad form of recreation because he got so little profit from it, so the move to New England would be wrong unless there was a good chance that the colony could be an economic success. A man's duty to God was to work at his calling and improve his talents like a good and faithful servant. If he could do it better in New England than in old, that was good reason for moving. God was the overwhelming reality, indeed the only reality. Success and failure were relevant only as indications, and not always reliable ones, of His satisfaction or displeasure with a man's efforts to serve Him as he passed through life.

In framing his arguments Winthrop relied heavily on the opinions and advice of the Puritan ministers he most respected. The most compelling argument on his list was the judgment which they thought God would shortly bring upon England. "All other Churches of Europe are brought to desolation," he wrote, "and it cannot be, but the like Judgment is comminge upon us: And who knows, but that God hath provided this place, to be a refuge for manye, whom he meanes to save out of the general destruction." He recorded the objection raised by some of his friends, that "we have feared a Judgment a longe tyme, but yet we are safe, soe it were better to staye till it come," to which he added the grim rejoinder: "It is like that this consideration made the Churches beyonde the seas (as the Palatinate, Rochell etc.) to sitt still at home, and not look out for shelter while they might have found it." The fact that

so many of the ministers approved of the New England enterprise he felt to be a reliable sign of its acceptability to God, for surely God would not "seduce his people by his owne prophetts" to follow a course contrary to His will.

The Puritan clergy were also concerned about the infection of the younger generation by the contagious wickedness that surrounded them in England. "The fountains of learninge and religion are so corrupted," wrote Winthrop, "that most Children even the best wittes and of fayrest hopes, are perverted corrupted and utterly overthrowne by the multitude of evill examples and the licentious government of those seminaryes." Nowhere in the numerous drafts of Winthrop's arguments was a denial or an objection raised to this reason for emigration. Winthrop was apparently not the only Puritan father with a wayward son.

America offered many advantages over England; it was folly to sit still and wait the harvest of wrath that other men had sown. But one other thought kept recurring to Winthrop, a gnawing doubt not easily downed: would it not be deserting the world and one's fellow sinners to flee into a brave new land? Though one professed affection for all the saints and all the true churches of England, was it not in fact an act of separation to put three thousand miles of water between oneself and them? Though there might be opportunities to serve the Lord in New England, was it not a duty, especially for a man of some prominence, a justice of the peace, say, to stay in England and keep on striving to bring righteousness there?

This was the question that troubled Winthrop most, and he posed it plainly: "It wilbe a great wronge to our owne Churche and Countrye to take awaye the good people, and we shall laye it the more open to the Judgment feared." Other Puritans felt the objection strongly too, and applied it closely to Winthrop, who was becoming a more important man to the Puritan cause than he may himself have realized. Robert Ryece, a well-known Suffolk antiquary and one of the many friends whom Winthrop consulted, told him bluntly, "The church and common welthe heere at home, hath more neede of your best abyllitie in these dangerous tymes, than any remote plantation."

In his first attempt, Winthrop was unable to answer this objection to his own complete satisfaction. He minimized the number of people involved: those who went would be few, as nothing by comparison with those left behind. Many served no public function in England. Besides, the church of Christ ought to be considered universal, without respect to countries, and it would be a good thing to convert the Indians. These were weak arguments, as he must have known, for he drew up another list, designed to prove "that persons of good use here (yea in publike service) may be transplanted for the furtherance of this plantation in New England."

Though Winthrop's own capacities for public service had hitherto been demonstrated only in local and minor offices, though he had never sat in Parliament, those who knew him evidently recognized that he had extraordinary talents. The members of the Massachusetts Bay Company in particular set their hearts on persuading him to join them, and the new list probably embodied the arguments they advanced to convince him that his services would be more acceptable to God in Massachusetts than in England. The line of reasoning this time was persuasive. The work of planting a godly colony in New England was acknowledged by all to be lawful and honorable. To ensure success, men of ability must engage in it. Probably few would feel inclined to do so, and therefore those with an inclination should also feel an obligation to go. In any case it was better to raise a new church where one did not exist than to labor to better part of an old one. Moreover, a lesser public office might lawfully be deserted for a larger one in another place. Finally, it might be a greater service to the churches of England to preserve a remnant

pure in the wilderness than to strive in vain for purity at home. In better times the remnant could expand and extend itself back to the mother country. "It was a good service to the Churche of the Jewes that Joseph and Marye forsooke them, that their mesiah might be preserved for them against tymes of better service." As Winthrop struggled to get over his most difficult moral hurdle, these last two arguments gave him confidence.

His friends in the Bay Company could press the argument of lesser and greater public offices by assuring him that in New England important men would be few, and he would certainly have a leading hand in public affairs, whereas in England his role was minor and likely to become more so in consequence of his dwindling estate. Three of his sons had come of age, and he had launched them with gifts of land that left his own holdings shrunk to half their former size. He would thus no longer be so important a man in the county and would therefore not be appointed to the public offices he could otherwise expect, "and so if he should refuse this opportunitye, that talent, which God hathe bestowed upon him for publike service, were like to be buried." In the margin he phrased it more pungently: "When a man is to wade throughe a deepe water, there is required tallnesse, as well as Courage, and if he findes it past his depth, and God open a gapp another waye, he may take it." Winthrop knew that in England he was not tall enough to do anything effective for the cause of God against the towering ungodliness of King Charles, but in New England Charles would cast a small shadow indeed, and Winthrop would be the giant.

Winthrop did not aim at power for the sake of power, but he longed to use his talents in the cause of God. Massachusetts, his friends in the Bay Company assured him, was the place to do so. The colony was to be a refuge for truth, a religious rather than a commercial enterprise. To attract godly settlers was the main concern, and Winthrop

could not deny the argument that, if men who were "knowne to be godly and live in wealthe and prosperity heere, shall forsake all this" to participate in the emigration, their presence would go far to convince the right kind of people that the enterprise was what it purported to be. Winthrop did not doubt the sincerity of his friends in the Bay Company, but they were, after all, only members of the company and could not with authority speak for the whole. The other members might be too shrewd to gainsay the godly motive, which was "such a bewtifull pretexte" that it furnished the answer to all objections. This was the comment of Robert Ryece, who was suspicious of the whole business. "The pipe goeth sweete," he warned Winthrop, "tyll the Byrde be in the nett, many bewtifull hopes are sett before your eyes to allewer you to danger."

What guarantee could there be that the suspicions of Ryece were unwarranted? What if godly settlers failed to be attracted? Or if, after they got to America, the weakling relative or favorite of some influential company official were sent to misrule them and perhaps wreck the whole venture? And if the new colony proved financially unsuccessful, what was to prevent the Massachusetts Bay Company from pulling out and leaving the settlers holding the bag? These were disturbing questions; but a complete and daring answer was already in preparation.

IV

The Way to a New England

Winthrop was in close communication with the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Company throughout the weeks when he was trying to make up his mind. On July 28, 1629, he and several other prominent Puritans who were interested in emigrating assembled in Lincolnshire to talk it over. They met at Tattershall, the home of Isaac Johnson and his wife the Lady Arbella. Johnson was a member of the company, himself planning to emigrate, and one of those most intimately concerned with trying to enlist Winthrop in the enterprise. He had summoned the meeting to discuss a plan for the government of the colony, a plan so extraordinary that it swept away Winthrop's last doubts.

The Massachusetts Bay Company was a trading corporation with powers of ownership and government over a specified area. There were other such corporations in England with powers over other areas. All held their meetings at London or Plymouth or whatever other English city had been assigned in their charters, and sent governors to carry out their orders in their respective domains across the seas. When the Massachusetts Bay Company obtained its charter, the King and his advisers undoubtedly assumed that it would hold its meetings in London, and so presumably did the members of the company. But through oversight, design, or indifference, no place of meeting was prescribed. It was now proposed to take advantage of the

omission by moving the place of meeting to the colony itself. In this way the governor of the company could become himself the governor of the colony, and the general court of the company could become the legislative assembly of the colony.

This daring proposal would effectively remove the colony from control by the Crown. The governmental powers of the company were extensive, greater in many ways then those which the King exercised in England. But as long as the company held its meetings in England, the King and his ministers could easily keep the members under surveillance. If they got too far out of line, as the Virginia Company of London had, they might forfeit their charter, and the King might take over the government of the colony. But if the company moved lock, stock, and barrel to the New World, who would ever know what they were up to?

The advantages of such a move to the Puritans who composed the majority of the membership were obvious. If the company moved to New England, it could become in effect a self-governing commonwealth, with the charter a blank check justifying everything it did. It would thus be able to enforce the laws of God and win divine favor. It could create in New England the kind of society that God demanded of all His servants but that none had yet given Him. The colony would not be a mere commercial enterprise, nor would it be simply a hiding place from the wrath of God. It would be instead the citadel of God's chosen people, a spearhead of world Protestantism.

To be part of such a holy enterprise would justify a man in casting off larger responsibilities than those of a justice of the peace. And it was made clear to Winthrop that his part in the venture would be a crucial one. For two weeks he remained in Lincolnshire, while Johnson and others impressed upon him the extraordinary opportunity and the urgency of his participation. In the end he was forced to

admit (speaking in the third person), "It is come to that Issue as (in all probabilitye) the wellfare of the Plantation dependes upon his goeinge, for divers of the Cheife undertakers (upon whom the reste depende) will not goe without him." He could hesitate no longer. On August 26 he rode to Cambridge, where he with eleven other leading Puritans signed an agreement to be ready by the following March to embark for New England, provided that "before the last of September next the whole governement together with the Patent for the said plantacion bee first by an order of Court legally transferred and established to remayne with us and others which shall inhabite upon the said plantacion."

Matthew Cradock, the governor of the company, had meanwhile officially informed the members of the proposal, and on August 29 they met to consider it. Seven of those who had participated in the Cambridge agreement were on hand to press for acceptance. Some members, who had no intention of going to the colony themselves, were reluctant to let their controlling reins slip free, but enough were moved by the arguments of the Cambridge group so that when the question was finally put, "it appeared by the generall consent of the Company, that the government and pattent should bee setled in New England."

Winthrop was thus committed to his decision. The recognition that he must live in the world had led him to the paradoxical conclusion that he should withdraw from the only part of the world he had ever known. Having learned to use the good things that God gave man, he had reached out to strike down the evils that God forbade, and in so doing found that he must save not merely Groton or Suffolk County but England herself. And now he had determined to reach still farther: England, for the moment, could not be saved in England, and perhaps could not be saved at all. The only hope was to cross the water and establish a government of Christ in exile.

The next six months were hectic ones. Before sailing he must put all his affairs in order, transform into the unstable currency of the day the lands which he and his father and grandfather had so painfully acquired, prepare to leave, perhaps forever, the manor where every corner, every tree, every hollow in the ground was as familiar as his own hand. He had learned his Puritan lessons well, and he never set down what it cost him in heartache to put this good part of the world behind him. He did not attempt to conceal, however, what it meant to leave Margaret, even for a short time.

For a while he thought of taking her with him on the first voyage, but when she and Henry's wife both became pregnant, it seemed best that they wait out their time in England. Samuel, Margaret's two-year-old, would stay with them. So would Forth, who was about to be married, and John, Jr., whom Winthrop deputed to conclude the family business and keep the colonists supplied during the first year. John, Jr., had inherited his father's strength of character, and Winthrop was happy to have him at his back. He knew too that John would take good care of Margaret. She was disheartened by the prospect of their separation. As he hurried about his preparations for departure, he dashed off brief letters to cheer her and calm her anxiety about his own safety. "My dear wife," he would write, "be of good courage, it shall go well with thee and us . . . therefore rayse up thy thoughts, and be merrye in the Lorde."

Winthrop had little time for his family in these last months. While winding up his personal affairs he suddenly found the direction of the whole New England enterprise thrust upon him. He had anticipated that he would have a leading role in New England, and when the company decided to transfer the government and charter to New England, he knew that some member who was going there would be elected governor. But he seems not to

have expected that he would be the man, even though he was by now a member of the company and therefore eligible for the office. On October 20, 1629, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Company (the title of the meeting of members), after nominating four candidates for governor, Winthrop, John Humfrey, Isaac Johnson, and Sir Richard Saltonstall, picked Winthrop by "a generall vote and full consent." "So it is," he wrote his wife, "that [it] hath pleased the Lorde to call me to a further trust in this business of the plantation, than either I expected or finde my selfe fitt for." This at least assured him that he had been right in thinking he would find a more active employment of his talents in the New England venture than at home, but it also meant a great deal of unexpected work to be done before sailing. He must now take charge of the arrangements for the whole expedition: ships, provisions, and passengers.

Of the three, the last was the most difficult task. Winthrop had already started to drum up settlers before he became governor. As soon as he returned from Tattershall with his own mind made up, he set to work on the local prospects. He also committed to paper the arguments and answers to objections which had for weeks been piling up in his own mind. These passed from hand to hand in prominent Puritan circles, where the main campaign was conducted. There were, however, many non-Puritans who were eager to join the godly expedition for economic reasons. It was Winthrop's privilege to reject unsuitable applicants, but it was also his responsibility to see the colony supplied with men trained in all the trades necessary to its success. However desirable it was to have none but godly settlers, if the passenger list lacked a necessary sawyer, cooper, surgeon, or whatever, he must supply one somehow. Much of his time went to sifting letters of recommendation, searching out suitable men with suitable trades, and arranging sponsors to pay the passage of those

who could not pay their own. It was generally possible to find someone who would pay the fare of the skilled but poor, and give them bed and board for a specified number of years in return for their services. Settlers who could afford it carried a number of these servants with them, and some of the most essential craftsmen were doubtless transported at the company's expense. Winthrop himself brought at least four entire families and probably more as part of his own household.

While putting together and equipping and financing his expedition, Winthrop had to deal with a problem created by the transformation of a trading company into a holy experiment. The Massachusetts Bay Company had attracted many stockholders who did not wish to adventure their lives along with their money in the New World. The problem was to furnish these less ardent souls with some return on their investment. An agreement was finally worked out whereby the remaining resources of the company would be managed for seven years by "undertakers"—five in England, five in Massachusetts—the profits to be distributed at the end of the period. Long before the seven years were up, it became apparent that there would be no profits. Nevertheless, though the Massachusetts Bay Company, like most colonizing companies, did not prove a sound business investment, probably most of the men who footed the bill did not count the money as wholly lost.

Winthrop's difficulties as governor, even while still in England, were not entirely financial and managerial. As preparations went forward, people all over England talked about the venture. A thousand men and women were selling their possessions and saying good-bye to their friends. Since most of them were Puritans, it was easy to infer that they were Separatists, come-outers who had decided at last to repudiate and defy both England and her churches. Winthrop and his friends were very sensitive to the charge. They were painfully aware that to all appearances they

were walking out of a difficult situation. They were sure that they were acting in the best interests of those who remained behind, that the pure church they intended to establish in New England would someday, somehow, rescue its English parent from the mire of corruption. But the fact that their action looked like desertion worried them far more than the dangers they would face in a wilderness. It gave them a half-recognized sense of guilt that cropped out occasionally in unexpected ways. Thomas Shepard, who became one of New England's most eminent ministers and a pillar of strength to Winthrop during a subsequent crisis, later confessed he was all but overcome when his first attempt to leave England was thwarted by stormy seas: "The Lord made me feare my affliction came in part for running too far in a way of separation from the mixt Assemblies in England: tho I blesse God I have ever beleeved that there are true churches in many parishes in England where the Lord sets up able men and ministers of his gospell; and I have abhorred to refuse to heare any able minister in England." Another minister, George Phillips, who lived near Groton and accompanied Winthrop to New England, was so obsessed with the need for avoiding separatism, so determined to avow his participation in the world with all its sins, that he declared not only the churches of England but also those of Rome to be true churches.

Such feelings did not prevent Phillips from leaving his own church for a purer one in the New World. But they made him and many other leaders of New England highly sensitive to any suggestion of schism from the Church of England. The founders were so dazzled by the godly purpose and unique opportunity of their mission in the wilderness that they could not acknowledge their departure from England as in fact a separation. They felt bound to protest too often and too loudly that it was no such thing. Before they left, John Cotton, the brilliant young

minister of Boston in Lincolnshire, came down to Southampton and preached them a sermon reassuring them that they had a clear call from God for the work they had undertaken. But in order to reaffirm to their countrymen that they were not religious snobs, bent on demonstrating superior holiness, they published a statement avowing their great affection for the Church of England. They were not, they insisted, Separatists. They were not "of those that dreame of perfection in this world." They did not disavow their membership in the Church of England. "We desire," they told their countrymen, "you would be pleased to take notice of the principals, and body of our company, as those who esteeme it our honour, to call the Church of England, from whence wee rise, our deare Mother, and cannot part from our native Country, where she specially resideth, without much sadnes of heart, and many teares in our eyes, ever acknowledging that such hope and part as wee have obtained in the common salvation, we have received in her bosome, and suckt it from her breasts." It was an eloquent statement, a little too eloquent, but all the more deeply felt because of the facts that seemed to belie it.

Winthrop and his friends issued their statement from aboard the *Arbella,* the flagship of the expedition, on April 7, 1630, and the next day the ship was under way. Across the receding water his thoughts reached confidently back to Margaret. They had made an agreement to think of each other every Monday and Friday between five and six o'clock and so hold communion together. As soon as possible she would join him. "Oh how it refresheth my heart," he wrote to her, "to thinke that I shall yet againe see thy sweet face in the lande of the livinge, that lovely countenance that I have so much delighted in, and beheld with so great contente!"

And in the other direction, still more insistent, lay the vision of a new England.

V

Survival

April and May were cold in the North Atlantic; the sun did not seem to have the warmth it did in England. As the ship rolled and pitched and groaned through heavy gales, the landlubbers packed below groaned too. Winthrop routed them out periodically and set them playing games on deck, where fresh air and salt spray revived lagging spirits. But two months of heavy seas and spare diet had wearied everyone by the time land was sighted off Cape Sable on June 6. Two days later they got their first glimpse of New England: the hills of Mount Desert. It was a fair day, with a fresh, clear breeze bearing the fragrance of a million fir trees, "and there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden."

For the next three days the ship cruised west and south across the Gulf of Maine, sometimes tacking in close enough so that the passengers could make out the trees along the shore, then out again and away, with that sweet smell of land lingering in the nostrils. Once they caught the outline of the White Mountains in the distance. On June 11 they passed the Isles of Shoals, where a ship lay at anchor and five or six fishing shallops bobbed merrily up and down. They were in sight of Cape Ann before dark and stood toward it against a southwest gale, finally rounding the point about sunrise the next morning. Wind and tide were with them now, and while curious eyes

looked out from Salem harbor, the *Arbella* sailed through the channel between Bakers Island and Little Island and cast anchor about ten o'clock off Plum Cove.

As the sea-weary company of men and women looked ashore at the straggling collection of huts and hovels and canvas booths that went by the name of Salem, they must have been staggered by the crudity of the life that lay ahead of them. The land was lovely but savage. Only a few hundred acres were cleared; beyond lay the forest, and they had seen for themselves how the huge trees came down to the shore along the coast to the north and east. How was this land to support them through the coming winter? Four hundred men, women, and children had come on the *Arbella* and the three ships that accompanied her. Six hundred more were on the way. Some had brought supplies to last until next season, but many poor families had pressed aboard at the last minute with little but zeal for provision. These would now look pitifully to the others for bread, and even the best prepared had little to spare. It cost the better part of fifty pounds to come to New England properly equipped, even if one knew exactly what to bring and what not to bring. And much was lost on the way. The most skillfully packed hogsheads of meal were not proof against the North Atlantic.

At best, to live for a year on the kind of food that could be salted and dried and put up was to invite scurvy. Though it was understood that lemon and lime juice were good preventives, they were not easily come by, and many put their faith in quack remedies instead. Fresh meat would have helped more than anything else, but it cost fifteen pounds merely for the freight of one cow. To be sure, the woods abounded with game (which must have been unusually plentiful as a result of the plague which had decimated the Indian population of the region twelve or thirteen years before), and the settlers had guns. But the guns were matchlocks, with which a man might conceivably

shoot a deer, if he had great familiarity with the weapon and great skill in stalking. There were precious few in the group with such accomplishments. Even the gentlemen of the expedition had had little experience in shooting at game. They had either forsworn it, like Winthrop, or they had followed the more fashionable form of hunting with falcons. Consequently, native game offered little hope, and since it included a large number of wolves, it may have destroyed as much in cattle as it furnished in venison or turkey.

The four hundred hungry, hollow-eyed men and women who stumbled ashore at Salem, many already weak with malnutrition, saw little to renew their strength. The summer heat, hotter than any they had known in England, was debilitating. The settlers who had spent the previous winter there could tell them that the winters were colder, too. How would they shelter themselves in such cold? A few had brought tents, but even a tent cost ten pounds in London. They could be improvised of course, but at best they would make a frail fence against the winter. Many of the old settlers were living in wigwams they had made like the Indians', of saplings stuck in the ground, tied together at the top, and covered with thatch or bark or skins. Inside they built fires and huddled like savages in the smoke that curled up through a hole at the top. They were as weak as the newcomers they greeted. Eighty had died in the preceding winter, and the new arrivals quickly began to add to the number.

That such a settlement could provoke the jealousy of a foreign power was laughable, yet the French and Spanish both had rival colonies in the New World and might at any time attack. Near at hand the Indians, whose cornfields might fill empty bellies, could easily turn from hospitality to hostility. They knew the country much better than the English and knew how to live off it. If they wished, they could easily drive the sickly invaders into the sea.

Looking over the beachhead to which he had brought so large and so weak a force, Winthrop saw that the colony needed backbone. On the faces of the languid men around him he read a failure of nerve. Many were already in the forlorn and lackadaisical state of mind that marks the onset of scurvy. Others, because of their short supplies and their disappointment in the primitive condition of the settlement, were ready to give up.

Little is known about Winthrop's movements during those first few months. He was too busy now to make more than a few scattered entries in the journal he had begun aboard ship. His letters to Margaret were infrequent, and he even admitted that he often failed to think of her at the appointed time on Mondays and Fridays. When he did write, he stressed the need to come well provided, and hurried off letters to young John to the same effect: bring forty hogsheads of meal at least, peas and oatmeal well dried as much as you can, good store of dry Suffolk cheese, sugar and fruit, pepper and ginger, vinegar and verjuice, in good casks and iron-bound. He never suggested that they should think twice about coming. Though his companions were dying, and his son Henry was drowned within a few days of arrival, and scores of his colonists were returning home on the ships that brought them, he seems never to have had a doubt about ultimate success. In his first letter to Margaret, written on July 16, after reciting the various afflictions, he concludes, "Yet for all these thinges (I prayse my God) I am not discouraged, nor doe I see cause to repent, or dispaire of those good dayes heere, which will make amends for all."

A glimpse of the effect of this confidence on the others emerges in a report that was shortly going the rounds in London. So soon "as Mr. Winthrop was landed, perceiving what misery was like to ensewe through theire Idlenes, he presently fell to worke with his owne hands, and thereby soe encouradged the rest that there was not an Idle person

then to be found in the whole Plantation and whereas the Indians said they would shortly retorne as fast as they came, now they admired to see in what short time they had all housed themselves and planted Corne sufficient for theire subsistance." Unfortunately, it was not quite that simple.

Winthrop's first move was to look for a roomier place than Salem in which to settle. There was not enough open land there, and the drab surroundings were bad for morale. Three days after landing he was off to explore the bay that lay to the south. He cruised for several miles up the Mystic River and took note of the meadows (Englishmen called them "champion land") with their fat black earth. Coming back, he stopped and spent the night at the fine house which Samuel Maverick had built at the mouth of the river on the north side, all encompassed by a palisade. Here was sufficient proof of what a little effort and courage would do. Maverick, a well-bred young man, had come over with his bride six years before, had built this house and fortified it, and now lived there like a king, offering hospitality to all who came. He seemed to have passed his six years in the wilderness as comfortably and civilly as if he had been in London. If one man could do so well in his own cause, how much more could a thousand do in the cause of God?

Winthrop doubtless surveyed the rest of the bay, including the peninsula of Charlestown, where an outpost of settlers from Salem had encamped the year before and constructed a large frame house. Hurrying back to Salem he passed out of the bay through the ship channel on the south by way of Nantasket (where he found a shipload of settlers deposited by a captain who could not be bothered to convey them farther). He returned with the conclusion that the bay was the place to settle: there was plenty of champion land on its rivers and peninsulas, and the islands which dotted it gave such protection against wind and wave that it was really an inland lake. On the peninsulas, with their narrow necks, it would be easy to keep out wolves and marauding Indians, while the bay itself, though navigable between the islands by small boats of shallow draft, could be entered by ships only through the channel at Nantasket. By commanding that channel he could defend the whole place against attack by Spain or France. There was no point in trying to crowd a thousand people into Salem when this land of Canaan lay waiting. Winthrop packed up the expedition again and landed it at Charlestown. From here the settlers fanned out and soon had plantations stretched around the bay from Dorchester on the south through Roxbury, Watertown, Newtown (Cambridge), and Boston to Charlestown on the north.

Winthrop, making his headquarters at Charlestown, next set about gathering food against the coming winter. The most reliable of the ship captains, Master William Peirce of the *Lyon,* he dispatched to Bristol with a bill of exchange and a letter to John, to see that money was furnished at once to buy provisions. Meanwhile, Winthrop sent men cruising up and down the coast to trade for corn wherever they could find the Indians or settlers willing to sell. One pinnace brought back a hundred bushels from Cape Cod. With the Indians about the bay he dealt personally. His solemnity of manner was precisely the attitude to win their respect, and he took care that relations should be on his terms, not theirs. With that unabashed assumption of superiority which was to carry English rule around the world, he noted of one sachem who visited him with a gift of corn that "being in English clothes, the governour set him at his own table, where he behaved himself as soberly, etc., as an Englishman."

While the governor collected corn, the settlers were digging in, many of them literally. They carved caves in the hillsides and dug cellars which they roofed over. Others constructed wigwams. In this land of too many forests, dressed wood was still at a premium, for Englishmen were

sawyers, not axmen, and it took time to rip out boards in a saw pit. Nevertheless, a few frame houses went up in all the settlements. At Charlestown, where Winthrop and the other officers of the company lived in the house constructed the year before, there was much sickness, which the settlers attributed to the water. Charlestown had plenty of water available by wells or ponds, but there was only one small spring, and Englishmen, who considered water to be at best a dubious beverage, thought that only spring water was to be trusted. After Isaac Johnson died on the last day of September—his wife, the Lady Arbella, died a month before him—Winthrop and most of the others in Charlestown crossed over to the peninsula of Boston, bringing with them the frame of a house that Winthrop had begun to erect in Charlestown.

Until then Boston had been the dominion of another of those individuals who found the Old World too small. William Blackstone, like Samuel Maverick across the bay, was a well-educated, sophisticated man who had been living quietly for several years in the country now inundated by saints. It is quite likely that he was acquainted with some of the new arrivals, for he was a Lincolnshireman and a collegemate of Isaac Johnson's at Cambridge. It is even likely that Johnson crossed over and became a neighbor of Blackstone's at Boston (first called Trimountain) before he died. In any case, when the Charlestown settlers decided to find a place with better water, Blackstone showed Winthrop an excellent spring, emptying by a brook into a little cove on the eastern side of the peninsula. Winthrop led the exodus from Charlestown, setting up a dock at the head of the cove (now Dock Square), and here began the town of Boston, which soon was recognized as the political and economic center of the colony.

At Boston and the other plantations around the bay the settlers still sickened and died as they measured out their corn and scoured the rocks at low tide for mussels. "Bread was so very scarce," one of them later remembered, "that sometimes I thought the very crusts of my father's table would have been very sweet unto me. And when I could have meal and water and salt boiled together, it was so good, who could wish better?" Virus and bacteria struck without respect to persons, and by the end of November Winthrop had lost eleven of the servants whom he counted as part of his family, but he was himself still in good health and still confident. "I thanke God," he wrote Margaret in September, "I like so well to be heer, as I doe not repent my comminge: and if I were to come againe, I would not have altered my course, though I had foreseene all these Afflictions: I never fared better in my life, never slept better, never had more content of minde."

Others shared his resolution or caught the infectious spirit of it, else there would have been a larger number of graves in the coming winter and a heavier freight of return passengers in the spring. But few of the settlers were writing home in such terms as he used with Margaret. Most of the letters from Massachusetts that autumn were filled with disillusionment, and before the winter was over, there were tales to tell which would cool the enthusiasm of anyone contemplating a voyage to the New English Canaan. Winter struck first with a freezing northwest gale on the day before Christmas, and thereafter the settlers, unaccustomed to the temperatures, got their hands and feet frozen and sometimes died on short trips undertaken too casually. In their crude huts they built up the fires too large, so that chimneys daubed together out of clay and wood took fire, and so did the highly combustible thatched roofs, with no means at hand to extinguish them.

In February when starvation was in sight, Master Peirce came sailing up the bay in the *Lyon,* freighted with supplies that gladdened every heart, including a good store of lemon juice. A day or two later the cold broke. When Peirce prepared to return, however, he had eighty-odd pas-

sengers who had seen enough of New England, and he carried letters calling pitifully for help: "Lovinge fathere thoue I be far disstante from you yet I pray you remembure me as youer cheield and we do not know how longe we may subeseiste for we can not live her witheought provisseyones from ould eingland . . . so father I pray consedre of my cause for her will be but a verey por beinge and no beinge withe ought Lovinge father youer helpe withe provisseyones from ould eingland."

Two hundred had died that winter, and perhaps as many more returned home in the spring. It was a crude winnowing, for some of the most promising men had been lost. Nevertheless, most of those who remained realized that they had seen the worst and were ready to stick it out. Winthrop, as buoyant as ever, wrote to Margaret, "I want nothinge but thee and the rest of my family."

In addition to boosting the morale of the colony, springtime and the resumption of sea traffic brought a new problem for Winthrop. The sad tales told by the returning planters, who doubtless exaggerated their troubles in order to justify their retreat, combined with the discouraging letters from those who stayed, inevitably had their effect in England. In the previous year when the Massachusetts expedition embarked, so large and so full of hope, good Puritan merchants were ready to expect great things of it, and had given glib assurances of their friendship and their intention to send supplies over for sale to the prosperous colonists. Now, with so many deaths, so many hopeful men returning, and the colonists very unprosperous, the host of friends vanished. John Humfrey, one who remained faithful, had begun to take subscriptions for a common stock to send over provisions as soon as the fleet set sail, for he had observed that many were going without enough to carry them through the winter. He easily obtained promises amounting to five hundred pounds. But as reports began to arrive from the colony, money lost heart

more quickly than men. The subscribers gave up the whole enterprise as lost and refused to honor their obligations. "When wee least need freindes," Humfrey observed sadly, "possiblie wee may have them to befreind us."

Winthrop dug deep in his own pocket and paid for enough supplies to save the day, but the stay-at-homes did not realize that the day had been saved. Even Humfrey himself and Emmanuel Downing, who were both planning to come to the colony, were much shaken. They still looked to escape the wrath of God in the New World, but they doubted now that New England was the place. Winthrop, who had been exerting himself to prepare a house for Downing, was dismayed to hear from his brother-in-law that "our freindes here, yea those of best Judgement [meaning, among others, himself] wishe you bestowe not much Cost in building where you are, but doe advise that you doe speedily send about the discoverie of some fitter place more to the South." Winthrop received much advice to this effect from men who at the distance of three thousand miles were more afraid of the New England weather than he. There was less snow in the Narragansett country, they told him; and the Hudson River was still better.

Unfortunately, Winthrop's replies have not been preserved. There remains only a letter from Downing expressing his surprise that the colony survived the winter, and one from John, Jr., stating that Uncle Downing was now "well satisfied with your reasons you give him for the Country." Downing may have been satisfied, but he did not come over for seven years, and two years later word still had it in London that the planters in New England were starving and about to come home.

Actually there was never again a starving time in New England like that first winter. As soon as spring came the colonists began planting the champion ground in and around their settlements. Winthrop carved out a farm of six hundred acres on the fat land that had pleased him up

the Mystic River and set his large family of servants to cultivating it and building him a stone house. He made periodic visits to inspect his new domain and there tasted the hazardous life of the ordinary pioneer. He never ventured out without a gun in hand, "supposing he might see a wolf, (for they came daily about the house and killed swine and calves . . .)." Getting lost was another common danger, for there were only footpaths through the forest, which lay everywhere within a few hundred feet of a man's door. Winthrop once missed his path half a mile from the house and spent a sleepless night pacing up and down beside his campfire, gathering wood, and singing psalms. For such emergencies he "always carried about him match and a compass, and in summer time snakeweed," which the Indians had taught him to use as a remedy for snakebite.

Winthrop's travels from Boston generally took him to settlements other than his farm and on business other than his own. What occupied him most immediately was the difficult matter of getting the colony on a paying basis. Somehow the country must be made to furnish not only the wherewithal to keep itself alive but also something to pay for the supplies it had to buy from England: clothing, hardware, glass, and a thousand other things. There must be a "staple," some article the colony could produce better and cheaper than other places. In this first year or two there seemed to be several possibilities. One was hemp, for a native hemplike plant looked promising. Another was sassafras, much in demand in the Old World as a cure for syphilis. Wine might be produced from the abundant wild grapes, and some of the swamps held bog iron. But most certain of all were furs and fish.

Both required the use of ships, and Winthrop had had the foresight to bring over a number of skilled ship wrights including William Stephens, who had built a ship of six hundred tons and was said to be so able a man that

there was hardly such another to be found in all England. By the fourth of July these men were ready to launch a thirty-ton bark at Mystic, which Winthrop named *The Blessing of the Bay.* When she was rigged, he sent her off to trade for furs along the coast. The next year they built a ship of sixty tons at Medford.

What principally sustained the colony, however, and indeed brought it prosperity during the first ten years of its existence, was neither fish nor fur nor any other staple, but immigrants. For ten years the activities of Charles I and of Bishop Laud filled the sea lanes with ships crowding sail for New England. In spite of the woeful tales about the expiring condition of Massachusetts, God's wrath in England seemed to many a more imminent danger. Before Charles's futile attempt to rule without Parliament ended, between fifteen and twenty thousand people crossed the ocean. The ships that carried them were freighted with window glass and chimney backs, pots and kettles, guns and gunpowder, cloth and clothing, saws and axes, but not fresh food, milk, or boards. In the newcomers therefore, the old settlers found a ready market for the very things that they could most readily produce—dressed lumber, corn, cattle (cattle breeding became a principal occupation in these early years)—and at the same time a source of supply for the things that they themselves needed.

The only problem raised by this economy, so long as the stream of settlers lasted, was to prevent prices and wages from skyrocketing in a dizzy spiral. This was a job for government. In England, as a justice of the peace, Winthrop had doubtless sat in the sessions at Bury St. Edmunds to assign maximum wages for Suffolk workmen in various trades. In Massachusetts, as in England, the sin of charging more than a just wage or price was known as "oppression," and Winthrop and the other leaders of the colony were continually alert to prevent and punish it. At their first official meeting, held at Charlestown on August

23, 1630, maximum wages for carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, sawyers, and thatchers were set at two shillings a day, eightpence more than the justices at Bury, four months earlier, had assigned for the same trades in Suffolk. Later, as ships began to bring over large quantities of English goods, it was ordered that these should not be sold for more than fourpence in the shilling above what they cost in England. Unhappily the law of supply and demand proved stronger than the General Court, and in 1636 the problem was turned over to the towns. There was no easy solution. Oppression continued to be a problem in Massachusetts throughout the seventeenth century: but the efforts of the authorities to keep it in check were by no means perfunctory, and saved Massachusetts from the runaway prices that plagued later Americans in frontier boom towns.

By the fall of 1631, when Margaret and the rest of his family arrived, Winthrop knew that he no longer need worry excessively about the simple problem of survival. As Margaret came ashore with volleys of shot, people from all over the colony came to welcome her, and for days, in gratitude and respect for her husband, they sent gifts of "fat hogs, kids, venison, poultry, geese, partridges, etc., so as the like joy and manifestation of love had never been seen in New England. It was a great marvel, that so much people and such store of provisions could be gathered together at so few hours' warning."

It was a great marvel truly enough. It was also a great personal triumph for Winthrop. Under his guidance these people had left starvation behind. The Lord had pleased to give them all full bellies and a roof against the rain. The Lord had pleased to place Margaret once more by his side. Who could ask for greater proof that the Lord was pleased with His servant and with the people who had entered this wilderness to worship Him? It was up to them all now to justify His pleasure.

VI

A Special Commission

To please God the Puritans demanded of themselves a standard of behavior not far different from that required by most modern codes of morality. They did not think it necessary to be either prudes or prohibitionists. They did not dress in drab clothes or live in drab houses or speak in drab words. The people who appear in the pages of Winthrop's journal, the good men and women who showered him with venison and partridges and fat hogs to celebrate Margaret's arrival, the boys and girls who skipped rope on the decks of the *Arbella,* the men who built ships and caught fish and planted corn were all human enough.

Nevertheless, the Puritans did make strong demands on human nature, for they were engaged in a mission that required great exertion. They had undertaken to establish a society where the will of God would be observed in every detail, a kingdom of God on earth. While still aboard the *Arbella,* Winthrop had explained to his fellow emigrants their solemn commitment to this task. Every nation, they all knew, existed by virtue of a covenant with God in which it promised to obey His commands. They had left England because England was failing in its promise. In high hope that God was guiding them and would find their efforts acceptable, they had proposed to form a new society. Now God had demonstrated His approval. He had made way for them by a "special overruling providence."