

DISCOVERY: The British monarchy plot to undermine the property grants claimed by the Plymouth Pilgrims

[Charles Francis Adams, Jr., ed. (1883). Sir Christopher Gardiner, Knight, An Historical Monograph with Additions, 36 pgs. John Wilson and Son, Cambridge MA. Source: [Google Books](#).]

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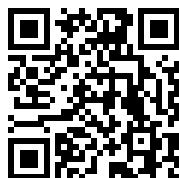
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The attack on the Massachusetts Colony was made on the 19th of December, 1632, and it was a formidable one. The charter of 1629 — King Charles's charter, as it is called — was the *Magna Charta* of Massachusetts. As such it is still jealously preserved as the most precious archive of the Commonwealth. The Lords of the Privy Council were now called upon to inquire into the methods through which the charter had been obtained, as well as into the grave abuses which had, as it was alleged, been subsequently practised

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wrought a miraculous interference.”¹ That secret influences were at work is plain, but what those influences were, and who it was that wielded them, is still a mystery. Gorges

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them. Nevertheless Sir Christopher was a mysterious personage, whose presence in the Massachusetts Colony at that time was well calculated to excite suspicion. The evidence that he was a Catholic was regarded as very significant of something; though exactly what, the magistrates could not make out. He was “a Snake which Lay Latent in the Tender Grass,”¹ as the half-crazy Scottow phrased it sixty years later, and Winthrop and the rest were evidently inclined to believe that there was some deep plot afoot against the “poore churches here.”² Accordingly, with finger on lip and air of profoundest mystery, they went prying about in all directions.

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The last-named, Winthrop says, was especially serviceable in this emergency. It may well have been that he had access to influential personages at court. Perhaps, also, he knew exactly where to place those bribes which were then freely taken by every one about the king. Only a little while before, Isaac Allerton, representing the poor Plymouth Colony, had found that at Whitehall “many riddles must be resolved, and many locks must be opened with the silver—nay, with the golden—key.”² Emanuel Downing may have understood the skilful use of these keys; but, whether he did or not, this hearing before the committee of the Privy Council was made to result disastrously for the complainants. That

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Not only had **Gardiner** frankly confessed himself, in the full spirit of this performance, to be **no friend to the colony**, but towards the end of June all doubt as to his connection with Gorges was dispelled, if indeed any doubt as to it had before existed. At that time a boat made its appearance from Piscataqua, bringing from Captain Neale, the Governor there, a **packet of letters for Sir Christopher**, which was placed in **Winthrop's hands**. These, being "directed to one who was our prisoner," the **Governor did not hesitate to open**, and from them he learned that **Sir Ferdinando was still maturing plans to maintain his claim to the Robert Gorges grant**, and that **Gardiner was his confidential agent**.

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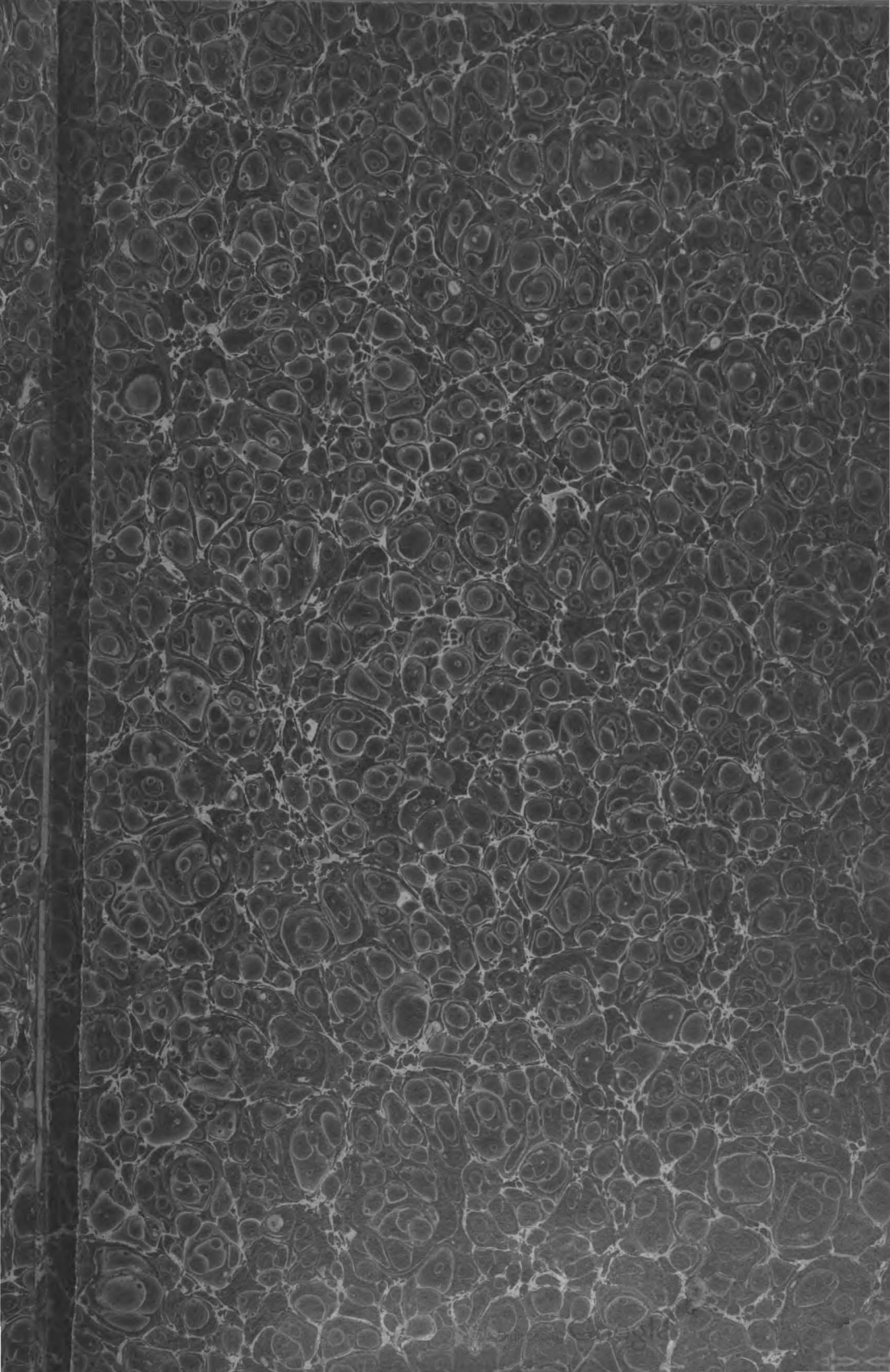
Whether the letters thus made free with ever reached the person for whom they were intended does not appear. Whether they did or not made, however, little difference. The **political significance**, so to speak, of Sir Christopher's presence in New England was **now apparent**, and it must have long before become clear to him that, so far as the Gorges interests were concerned, nothing was to be gained by his remaining. Yet he seems to have been in no haste to go home. It might be inferred with at least an appearance of reason that any private grounds he may have had for absenting himself from England had not yet been removed. And now Mary Grove appears once more upon the scene.



US 127671

Bd. Aug., 1883.





With Compliments of

Mr. Adams.

~~1836/37~~

SIR CHRISTOPHER GARDINER,
KNIGHT;

An Historical Monograph.

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR.

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[FROM VOL. XX. OF THE PROC'S OF THE MASS. HIST. SOC.]

WITH ADDITIONS.



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SIR CHRISTOPHER GARDINER, KNIGHT.

THE episode of Sir Christopher Gardiner is one of the puzzles of early New England history. In itself it is of no great consequence; for, though it seemed not impossible at one juncture that it might seriously affect the course of incipient events in Massachusetts, nothing finally came of it. It none the less remains suggestive, if only because it is inexplicable. Who the man was, and why or whence he came, or whither he subsequently went, are mysteries unlikely now to be ever wholly solved; but he none the less stands out in picturesque incongruity against the monotonous background of colonial life. It is somewhat as if one were suddenly to come across the portrait of a Cavalier by Vandyck in the vestibule of a New England village church. As he passes across the stage and mingles with the prosaic life of the sea-board settlements, while the sea-board was still the frontier, there is about the man a suggestion of the Spaniard and the Jesuit. Accompanied always by his equally mysterious female companion, he seems to wear a slouched hat and heavy cloak, beneath the folds of which last appears the long Spanish rapier. Such melodramatic personages are not common in Massachusetts history, and accordingly Sir Christopher long since attracted the notice of the New England poets and writers of fiction. Here were great possibilities. Miss Sedgwick was the first to avail herself of them, for as early as 1827 she introduced the knight, under the name of Sir Philip Gardiner, into her novel of *Hope Leslie*. He is the walking villain of that now forgotten tale. The historian

Motley next tried his hand upon him in his story of *Merry-mount*, published in 1849. The same year Whittier incidentally touched upon him in *Margaret Smith's Journal*; and then Mr. John T. Adams, in 1856, went over the ground once more in his *Knight of the Golden Melice*. Finally, in 1873, Longfellow put the Rhyme of Sir Christopher Gardiner in the mouth of the Landlord as the last of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Both Motley and Adams, as well as Whittier and Longfellow, present the knight under his own name, and, so to speak, in his proper person. They adhere more or less to the record. Miss Sedgwick does not. But they have all made somewhat droll work with the facts of history; and, as the historians themselves have in this respect not greatly bettered matters, it is the object of the present paper to put accurately in shape the little that is really known of Gardiner, and what more may fairly be surmised.

He himself, it would seem, claimed to be descended of a Gloucester family, and that his father was a brother of the famous Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of Queen Mary, — the bitter and able reactionist whom Shakspeare makes Henry VIII. describe as a man of "a cruel nature, and a bloody."¹ Though the Bishop and Sir Christopher may well have been of the same family, the relationship certainly was not so close as that of uncle and nephew, insomuch as the knight could hardly have been born earlier than 1580, and was probably born much later, while the Bishop had died twenty-five years before that date, a man of seventy-two. However related, Gardiner had seen a good deal of the world and of men, and gave outward evidence at least of education and culture. Indeed, the story was that before his coming to America he had been disinherited by his father because of twenty-six years of absence in France, Italy, Germany and Turkey.² If such was the case, he must in 1630 have been hard on fifty years of age. During his wanderings he picked up degrees of some kind at a univer-

¹ Henry VIII., act v., scene 2.

² Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 335. Dudley's Letter to the Countess of Lincoln.

sity, and, although originally a Protestant, he had formally renounced his faith and become a member of the Church of Rome. His title was of a doubtful character, for in one place he is spoken of as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre,¹ having received the honor at Jerusalem; while in another it is as a Knight of the Golden Melice.² But that he had a right to some title would seem to be established by the fact that at a later day he was referred to in official proceedings in England as Sir Christopher Gardiner, Knight.³

Whencesoever he may have received the title, he first suddenly appeared bearing it in America in the month of April, 1630,⁴ a few weeks before the arrival of Winthrop and his company, and just six months before Boston was founded. Why he came must be matter of surmise. He made a pretence that he was weary of life in the Old World, and sought now to hide himself in the wilderness, finding a subsistence as best he might.⁵ In reality, there can be little if any doubt that he was an emissary, or confidential agent rather, of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. At this time, it will be remembered, the relations of Gorges and the Massachusetts Company were far from friendly, and the latter had just then stolen a distinct march on the former.

It had come about in this way. In 1623, seven years before the events now to be described took place, Gorges, as the directing spirit of the Council for New England, had sent his son, Captain Robert Gorges, out to the Massachusetts Bay in

¹ Bradford, p. 294. Winslow's Petition, Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., vol. v. p. 133.

² Winthrop, vol. i. p. *54. Mr. J. T. Adams suggests that this order derived its name from the Greek *Μέλισσα*, and that it was the equivalent of Honey-Bee, the companions of the order wearing the Bee as a device or emblem conspicuously on their dress or arms (p. 43). Mr. R. C. Winthrop, in a paper read before the Massachusetts Historical Society (Proceedings, vol. iv. pp. 125-129) rejects this explanation, and derives the word used by Governor Winthrop in his Journal from the French *milice*. Mr. J. Hammond Trumbull, however, in a note published in the Historical Magazine for 1864 (vol. viii. p. 75), shows that the well-known papal order called *Cavaliere della Milizia Aureata* was the one referred to. The order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is too well known to call for mention; see Burke's Orders of Knighthood, p. 347; Perrot's Ordres de Chevalerie, p. 147.

³ Palfrey, vol. i. pp. 330, 365, n.

⁴ Dudley in Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 333.

⁵ Bradford, p. 294.

charge of a company which was to settle there. He had then secured for Captain Robert the grant of a domain. This grant, like all those then made in America, was royal in its magnitude; it covered, as nearly as its limits can now be fixed, a tract just north of Boston, including the whole shore from the mouth of the Charles to Lynn, and the interior as far back as Concord and Sudbury.¹ Robert Gorges never himself took actual possession of this domain, but he had not abandoned his claim to it. Subsequently, in 1628, the Council for New England, with the assent of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, granted to the Massachusetts Company the whole region between the Merrimack and the Charles. The Robert Gorges concession lay within those limits, but Sir Ferdinando insisted that the subsequent grant was made with a distinct saving of all rights vested under the prior one.² A question of title involving some three hundred square miles in the heart of the Company's territory was thus raised.

Robert Gorges had died some years before, and whatever estate had vested in him under his patent of 1622 passed to his brother John. In January, 1629, while Winthrop was in the midst of his preparations for going out to Massachusetts, this John Gorges executed two conveyances covering large portions of the Robert Gorges claim, — one to Sir William Brereton, and the other to John Oldham. The validity of these conveyances the Massachusetts Company did not recognize; on the contrary, it secured the opinion of counsel that the original concession to Robert Gorges was void, and, besides this, went directly to the throne, and thence obtained, in the form of the great charter of 1629, a royal confirmation of its own grant.

It now became a question of actual possession. Gorges claimed that he already had it through the presence on the spot of Blackstone, Jeffreys, and others, "undertakers and tenants," left there in 1624 by his brother, Captain Robert.³ The Massachusetts Company, on the other hand, proceeded to get it, by hurrying out instructions to Endicott, who was

¹ Mem. Hist. of Boston, vol. i. pp. 73-76.

² 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. vi. p. 80.

³ Hazard, vol. i. p. 391.

at Salem, to forthwith "send forty or fifty persons to Mattachusetts Bay, to inhabit there."¹ He did as he was charged, and the settlement of Charlestown in June, 1629, followed. While this was doing, the Gorges party, fully alive to the necessities of the situation, had not been idle. The difficulty with them was that they had no means. Their grantee, Oldham, was giving the Company all the trouble he could, negotiating with them one day and threatening them the next, but he was wholly unable to raise the money necessary to enable him to fit out an expedition of his own. Under these circumstances, with the current of events running heavily against him, it was obviously of great importance to Gorges that there should be some one on the spot in New England competent to represent his interests. Sir Christopher Gardiner would seem to have been fixed upon as the best available person. This is fairly to be inferred from those letters which Gorges subsequently wrote to him explaining the course it was proposed to take in the matter of the disputed title.² At the same time there is reason to suppose, as will presently be seen, that Gardiner was himself at this juncture anxious to be at a distance from English officers and English courts. A temporary absence, even though during it he had to sojourn in the wilderness, was in fact for him something more than expedient.

Having been selected as the Gorges representative, it remained for Sir Christopher to find his way to New England. He did not go alone, but was accompanied by a servant or two, and also, as Bradford informs us, by "a comly yonge woman, whom he caled his cousin, but it was suspected she (after the Italian maner) was his concubine." In other words, Sir Christopher committed the folly of bringing a mistress out into the wilderness with him, as part of his following. The woman's name was Mary Grove, and of her more will be heard presently.

As Gardiner and his party arrived in Massachusetts about a month before Winthrop, — that is, during the last of April or early in May, 1630, — they must have left England in

¹ Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 1

² Winthrop, vol. i. p. *57.

January or February preceding.¹ As no vessel then sailed for Massachusetts, they probably went out in some of the fishing fleet which always started at that season of the year, or a little earlier, for the stations on the coast of Maine. This was the way Phinehas Pratt was sent out by Weston in 1622;² and it was by way of these stations that Robert Gorges had gone back to England in 1624. Arriving at Damariscove or Monhegan in March or April, it must have taken Sir Christopher some little time to reach the disputed territory, and it would naturally have been May before he found himself in the Massachusetts.

He seems to have gone at once to Boston Bay, on the shores of which he knew that Blackstone and Jeffreys, as well as Thomas Morton, were living. With Morton, who had then recently found his way back to Mount Wollaston, Sir Christopher, if he was, indeed, an agent of Gorges, was doubtless well acquainted, for Morton was another agent of Gorges.³ The two could hardly have failed to meet in England in the summer of 1629, when both must have been in constant intercourse with Sir Ferdinando as to his New England projects. During the next year they were certainly in correspondence with him.⁴ When he reached his destination, therefore, Gardiner would seem to have been among friends.

The place where he established himself cannot be identified. Dudley simply says that it was seven miles from Boston, and on a river. Savage infers that it was on the south side of the Neponset,⁵ and in this he was probably correct. If Sir Christopher did build a habitation on the south side of that river, it was necessarily near its mouth, as he certainly would not have gone far into the interior; and Dudley particularly says

¹ Scottow, in his Narrative (4 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. iv. p. 293), says that Gardiner "came over in the first Fleet"; meaning, apparently, with Skelton and Higginson, in 1629. This, however, does not agree with Dudley's statement that Gardiner "arrived here a month before us"; and Scottow, besides being otherwise unreliable, wrote in this case more than sixty years after the event, and was less well informed in regard to it than we are now.

² 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. iv. p. 478.

³ New English Canaan, Prince Soc. ed., pp. 36-41.

⁴ Winthrop, vol. i. p. *57.

⁵ *Ib.*, p. *55, n.

that his dwelling was so placed that he could easily discover any one crossing the river half a mile away. A short distance only from its mouth the Neponset becomes narrow, and its banks were in 1630, as they yet are, heavily wooded. The probabilities, therefore, are that Sir Christopher established himself on the borders of the old Massachusetts Fields in what is now North Quincy, within easy sight of the Neponset, and separated from it only by the salt marshes which there skirt the river line.¹ If he did so fix himself, he was in close proximity not only to Morton, a mile and a half away at Merrymount, but he was yet nearer to David Thompson's widow, who, with her infant son and farm servants, lived close by at Squantum, or on the island in the harbor which still bears her husband's name.

If Gardiner thus took up his abode in May, it was some nine or ten months before he was disturbed. Winthrop arrived in June, and Morton of Merrymount was not arrested and brought before the magistrates until September; and it was the end of the year before he was shipped away to England in the *Handmaid*.² Meanwhile the presence of Gardiner could not but have attracted the notice of Winthrop and his associates. He was clearly a gentleman and man of the world, who claimed to be a knight; and here he was

¹ The site selected for Gardiner's house by Motley, in the first chapter of *Merrymount*, would seem to be on the beach of Dorchester Bay, opposite Savin Hill, and on what is now the Squantum road. This does not agree with Dudley's description, which is that the house, "seven miles from us," was so placed that he could "see any crossing the river . . . half a mile before they approached" it. If it were permissible in an historical paper to venture a surmise on such slender indications of locality as these, I should, from long familiarity with this region, place Gardiner's house on the rocky, savin-covered hummock which juts down to the edge of the Neponset, on its south side, and a short distance below the bridge of the Old Colony Railroad Company. Until recently it was occupied by Ditmar's works for the manufacture of high explosives. It is naturally an attractive spot, and in the very early days hummocks were preferred as dwelling-places, because they both afforded shelter against weather, and were very defensible. The next hummock to the eastward, half a mile away, is still known as "Massachusetts Hummock," and is pointed out as having been at the time Sir Christopher was here the abiding place of the sachem Chickatabot. The Massachusetts Fields lay just south and west of these hummocks. (*Young's Chron. of Mass.*, pp. 305, 395.)

² *New English Canaan*, Prince Soc. ed., pp. 43-45.

living in the wilderness with a young woman, whom he called his cousin. He evidently felt that it was incumbent upon him to give some account of himself. Then it was that he must have made, as Bradford says, "pretence of forsaking the world," and professed his desire "to live a private life in a godly course, not, unwilling to put himself upon any mean employments, and take any pains for his living; and some time offered himself to join to the churches in sundry places." Neither his account of himself nor his professions could have been wholly satisfactory to the magistrates. But they had nothing against him, and would seem to have left him alone; though they probably sent out to England for information. Whether sent for or not, that information soon came; and it came in a very surprising shape. As Governor Dudley, with a delightful *non sequitur*, expresses it, they learned that Mr. Gardiner, as he calls him, "all this while was no Knight, but instead thereof had two wives, now living at a house in London."

Saving the knighthood, this, according to the evidence, seemed to be the case. The facts had come to light in the following manner.¹ One of the company's ships, the *Lyon*, of which Captain William Pierce was master, had returned to England from Salem in August, 1630. Captain Pierce may have carried back inquiries about Sir Christopher; but whether he did or not, while in London he got news of him through Isaac Allerton, the agent of the Plymouth Colony in England. It was to the effect that there were then two women in London, each of whom claimed to be the mysterious knight's lawfully married wife. Pierce and Allerton then saw the two women together, and heard their stories. They were of a somewhat startling character. The original wife, the senior Lady Gardiner, so to speak, claimed to have been married and deserted by her husband in Paris years before. Hearing that he had again married in England, she had, in September, 1630, come over to London in search of him. He, however, had already taken himself off, and she found only the junior Lady Gardiner inquiring anxiously as to his whereabouts.

¹ Dudley in Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 333.

The story of the junior Lady Gardiner was even more lamentable. She had not only been betrayed and deserted, but robbed; and she produced an inventory, "comprising therein many rich jewels, much plate, and costly service," which she alleged Sir Christopher had made away with. While they are represented as condoling with each other over their sad estate, these two wives were in very different frames of mind in respect to their husband. They both wanted to have him sent back incontinently to England; but, while the first wife desired this only to the end that he might be converted from his evil life, the second was disposed to be satisfied with nothing less than his destruction; and not his only, for her wrath extended to the companion of Sir Christopher's flight. Her she denounced by name as "Mary Grove, affirming her to be a known harlot,¹ whose sending back into Old England she also desired, together with her husband." All this, at the request of Captain Pierce and Mr. Allerton, the two ladies reduced to writing in the form of letters to Governor Winthrop, which Captain Pierce undertook to deliver when he next went to New England.

The Lyon set sail on the $\frac{1^{st}}{11^{th}}$ of December, and anchored in the Nantasket Roads on the $\frac{5^{th}}{15^{th}}$ of February. The bay was full of ice,² for that winter was one of unusual severity;³ but on the $\frac{8^{th}}{18^{th}}$ she had gotten up into the harbor as far as Long Island, and Governor Winthrop went on board. The letters from the Ladys Gardiner were, it is fair to presume, among those then handed to him by Captain Pierce.

No immediate action was taken in the matter. Meanwhile, besides Mr. Roger Williams, a "godly minister," and his wife, there had come over in the Lyon some score of passengers, among whom the Gardiner scandal had naturally been more or less discussed. It did not take long, therefore, for rumors of impending trouble to reach Sir Christopher, and he made a partial confession of guilt by taking measures accordingly. He prepared for flight. Yet he did not at once take himself

¹ On this point see, also, 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. viii. p. 320.

² Winthrop, vol. i. p. *43.

³ Josselyn's Two Voyages, p. 253.

off. Delay was, in fact, very important to him, for his only escape lay through the wilderness. The ice in the harbor had apparently broken up, for on the $\frac{1}{2}$ ^{0th} of February there had been a great thaw;¹ but the Neponset could hardly yet have been free, and the flats and broad marshes which skirt the river's channel on either side must have been covered with huge broken blocks of discolored snow and ice, which rose and fell with the tide, and lay heaped in piles on the shore. It was a dreary season, and the outlook over sea and shore from Gardiner's savin-shrouded dwelling could not have been inviting; for the sea was just shaking off the grip of the New England winter, while the shore, patched with snow and burnt with frost, did not yet put forth the first faint indication of approaching spring. Though every day the sun went higher, it was still no time to abandon the hearth-stone for the woods. Fortunately for Sir Christopher, the magistrates now had a great deal to think of. To the infant settlement the winter had been one of sore trial. To such a degree had the scurvy raged among the poor half-sheltered, half-starved people, that, since the landing eight months before, no less than twelve had died in Winthrop's own family, and in his letters to his wife he spoke of being himself spared "among so many dead corpses."² When the Lyon arrived all were on the verge of starvation, and tradition has it that the governor "was distributing the last handful of meal in the barrel." What straits Sir Christopher himself had passed through does not appear, but, metaphorically as well as literally, it may safely be surmised that the wolf had not been far from his door. It was, indeed, a wretched period all round, and it is not to be taken against them that even the magistrates of Puritan Massachusetts, as they thus struggled out from under the icy pall of their first New England winter, allowed themselves a brief breathing spell before they proceeded to further purge the already depleted land.

Governor Winthrop must have received the letters relating to Gardiner on the $\frac{8}{18}$ th of February, yet not for three weeks after that, or until the $\frac{1}{11}$ th of March, was any formal

¹ Winthrop, vol. i. p. *43.

² *Ib.* pp. 455-6.

session of the magistrates held. Then at last the information brought by Captain Pierce was submitted, and the records of Massachusetts contain the following entry: —

“It is ordered that Sir Christopher Gardiner and Mr. Wright shall be sent as prisoners into England by the ship *Lyon*, now returning thither.”

Though this order was passed on what is now the 11th of March, no steps seem to have been immediately taken toward securing Gardiner. The *Lyon* was not to sail for several weeks, and it was apparently the middle of the month at least, if not close to the end of it, before officers were sent to take him and his female companion. The weakness of the colony and the continued severity of the season probably occasioned the delay.

Forewarned was forearmed with Sir Christopher. If he had not himself seen Morton in the stocks, he must during the previous December have watched the sky red with the flames of the burning house at Merrymount; for Merrymount lay south of where he lived, just beyond the woods and across the tidal bay. The harsh and summary disposition made of its owner could not but have been fresh in his memory. So he was now keeping a sharp lookout; and when he saw those in search of him crossing the Neponset and yet half a mile away, he put his compass in his pocket, slung his gun over his back, and disappeared in the woods.¹

When the messengers reached the house, only Mary Grove and the servants were to be found there. The former was taken in charge and carried off to Boston, where she was presently brought before the magistrates. She proved a very unwilling witness, “impenitent and close,” as Dudley expresses it, “confessing no more than was wrested from her by her own contradictions.” She acknowledged that her name was Mary Grove, and told where her mother lived; but while she admitted that she and Sir Christopher had formerly been Catholics, she insisted that they were now Protestants.

¹ Dudley in Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 334.

As to the two wives, she said that Gardiner "had [as he told her] married a wife in his travels, from whom he was divorced, and the woman long since dead"; while, as to his title, she took "him to be a knight, but never heard where he was knighted." This was all that could be gotten from her, and this did not amount to much. "So," as Dudley, with a touch of grim humor, adds, "we have taken order to send her to the two wives in Old England, to search her further." But Mary Grove, as will presently be seen, was not destined to return to England.

Meanwhile Sir Christopher had disappeared in the forest, from the depths of which no tidings of him came. That even now he was shrewdly suspected of being an emissary of Gorges may fairly be inferred from Dudley's remark in his letter to the Countess of Lincoln, which was written at just this time and while Gardiner's whereabouts were yet unknown. In that letter Dudley says that Sir Christopher "went his way, as most men think, northwards, hoping to find some English there like to himself." In other words, it was assumed, as a matter of course, that he would aim for the Gorges and Mason settlement at Piscataqua, where he would find a refuge among sympathizers. It was, however, further and characteristically added by the harsh old Puritan, that, in all human probability, "with hunger and cold [the fugitive] will perish before he find the place he seeks."

There was considerable probability of such an ending of the whole affair; but the unexpected occurred. Sir Christopher did not shape his course toward the north. On the contrary, his plan was to penetrate the wilderness in a south-westerly direction, and reach the Dutch settlement at Manhattan.¹ The attempt was a desperate one. The distance to be traversed was over two hundred miles, and his way was to be through a pathless wilderness, intersected by rivers both broad and deep, and full of wellnigh impassable swamps. As far as the Taunton River, some twenty or thirty miles from his starting-point on the Neponset, he had little to fear from the Indians, for this was the country of the Massachusetts

¹ 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. viii. p. 320.

and the Pokanokets, and those two once powerful tribes had a few years before been almost literally exterminated by the great pestilence of 1616. Scarcely a skulking remnant of them remained. Beyond the Taunton River, however, were the Narragansetts, yet numerous and warlike; and beyond the Narragansetts were the still fiercer Pequots, Mohegans and Mohawks. Sir Christopher, it is clear, soon realized the difficulties of his undertaking. He seems to have made his way some twenty miles, or two days' journey, and then given up all immediate idea of going further. He had not yet got to the Taunton River, and, though he was beyond the Massachusetts jurisdiction, he was still within that of Plymouth. That he should have paused there was natural enough, for it was the end of the first stage of his journey. This was the Namasket region,¹ often mentioned in the early annals of Plymouth and in the subsequent Indian wars. It lay at the head of that series of lakes in south-eastern Massachusetts, the beauties of which are still known to so few; and here the Indian trails from the interior and the Narragansett country to the eastern sea-board converged in "the Namasket path." This path, portions of which can yet be distinctly traced, began at the little Indian village, which stood near the point where the Namasket River was crossed, and wound its devious way from pond to spring through the hollows which lay among the low, heavily wooded hills, until it opened out on the banks of the Plymouth brook, fifteen miles away. Following this path, Winslow and Stephen Hopkins had, in June, 1621, gone on their first mission to Massasoit; and later, in August of the same year, Standish had led over it the little war party which rescued Squanto from the hands of "our bitter enemy," Corbitant.

The road to Plymouth from the point he had now reached was, therefore, open to Sir Christopher, and he could at any time have traversed it in half a day. He showed no disposition to do so. Still he hesitated to plunge into the wilderness beyond. During other seasons of the year the region in which he was lurking might well have had attractions for

¹ Winthrop, vol. i. p. *55.

him. In it there were few Indians, and plenty of game. The brawling river ran between swelling banks, as it flowed from the broad Assowamset Pond, alive with fish. There might be many a worse place for a summer's refuge. The difficulty was that the summer was still remote. Even after the breaking up of the winter in February there had fallen many snows and been much sharp frost,¹ the obstinate remains of which yet lingered in deep frozen drifts under cover of the pine woods and on the north side of the hills. The hollows and swales, thick with fallen trees, might afford some shelter, and on a clear day the early spring sun doubtless shed a sickly warmth on the south hillsides ; but none the less, as, chilled to the very marrow by the bleak, penetrating winds, he crouched over his camp-fire or lay on the damp ground, Gardiner must have had good cause to know that the New England March and April are not genial months.

As he was armed and a good sportsman, in woods full of deer he was in small danger of starving. As to his safety, though it is very probable that in the immensity of his solitude he had many anxious thoughts on that score, yet the Indians were few in number and broken in spirit. They probably evinced no disposition to molest him ; and, as the result showed, he was a man of desperate courage. In his need of company he may even have sought them out. Yet the situation could not last. Neither his ammunition nor his clothing would suffice for ever, and he must either go forward or go back. Apparently he could not make up his mind which to do, and so perhaps it was well for him that the Indians presently decided the point for him.

Of what now befell Sir Christopher we have two accounts, which differ only in their details. One is given by William Wood in his *New England's Prospect*, the other by Governor Bradford in his *Plimoth Plantation* ; and Bradford, at least, is a writer on whose simple, sinewy English it is scarcely less dangerous to try to improve than it would be to try to improve on the English of John Bunyan. He therefore must tell the story in his own words : —

¹ Winthrop, vol. i. p. *43.

"The Indians came to the Governor here, and told where he [Sir Christopher] was, and asked if they might kill him. He told them no, by no means; but if they could take him, and bring him hither [to Plymouth] they should be paid for their pains. They said he had a gun and a rapier, and he would kill them if they went about it; and the Massachusetts Indians said they might kill him. But the Governor [Bradford] told them, no; they should not kill him, but watch their opportunity and take him. And so they did; for when they light of him by a river-side, he got into a canoe to get from them; and when they came near him, whilst he presented his piece at them to keep them off, the stream carried the canoe against a rock and tumbled both him and his piece and rapier into the water. Yet he got out; and having a little dagger by his side, they durst not close with him, but getting long poles, they soon beat his dagger out of his hand. So he was glad to yield, and they brought him to the Governor. But his hands and arms were swollen, and very sore with the blows they had given him. So he [Bradford] used him kindly and sent him to a lodging where his arms were bathed and anointed; and he was quickly well again, and blamed the Indians for beating him so much. They said that they did but a little whip him with sticks."¹

¹ Wood's account, written from hearsay and two or three years after the event, is characteristic, and very similar to Bradford's. It is introduced into his book episodically, and to illustrate the readiness with which the Indians performed any service the English magistrates commanded of them:—

"A certaine man having layd himselfe open to the Kings lawes, fearing attachment, conviction, and consequently execution, sequestred himselfe from the honest societie of his neighbours, betaking himselfe unto the obscure thickets of the wilderness, where he lived for a time undiscovered, till the *Indians* who leave no place unsearched for Deare, found out his hant, and having taken notice by diverse discourses concerning him, how that it was the governors desire to know where he was, they thought it a part of their service to certifie him where he kept his rendevouze, who thereupon desired if they could to direct men to him for his attachment, but he had shifted his dwelling, and could not be found for the present, yet he was after scene by other *Indians*, but being double pistold, and well sworded, they feared to approach so neere him as to grapple with him: wherefore they let him alone till his owne necessary businesse cast him upon them; for having occasion to crosse over a river he came to the side thereof, where was an *Indian Cannow*, in which the *Indians* were to crosse the river themselves, he vauntingly commanded watage; which they willingly granted, but withall plotting how they might take him prisoner, which they thus effected; having placed him in the midship of their ticklish wherrie, they lanced forth into the deep, causing the capering *Cannow* to cast out her combersome ballast into the liquid water; which swomme like a stone, and now the

This is the affair which Thomas Morton in his *New Canaan* characteristically refers to as "a terrible skermish," in which the savages "had the worst of it" while Sir Christopher "scaped well enough."¹ He did escape; but, brave as he unquestionably was, Gardiner must have drawn a deep breath of relief at the outcome of his adventure. When, after his desperate struggle for life, as he supposed, the dagger was knocked out of his hand, he could, according to all principles of Indian warfare, have looked forward to nothing but death by torture. Then next to find himself safe at Plymouth, kindly received and comfortably lodged, must have seemed as queer a freak of fortune as any in the whole checkered life of that seventeenth-century wanderer.

Governor Bradford at once notified Winthrop that Gardiner was in custody, and Captain John Underhill and his lieutenant, a son of Governor Dudley, were despatched by Winthrop to bring him back to Boston. This they did on what is now the 14th of May. Meanwhile Sir Christopher had been very closely watched at Plymouth, and among other things a little note-book of his, "that by accident had slipt out of his pocket," was picked up and examined. It only confirmed Mary Grove's statement that they had both been Catholics, for in it was a memorandum of the day when the knight had formally returned to the Romish Church.

water having dank't his pistols, and lost his *Spanish* progge in the bottome, the *Indians* swomme him out by the chinne to the shore, where having dropt himselfe a little dry, he began to bluster out a storme of rebellious resistance, till they becalmed his pelting chafe with their pelting of pibles at him, afterward leading him as they list to the governour." *New England's Prospect*, p. 62.

An apt illustration of the utter-worthlessness of popular tradition as a basis for historical statement is furnished by the following note in Whitney's *History of Quincy*. Speaking of Miles Standish's breaking up of the Merry-mount establishment in June, 1628, two years before Gardiner came over, he says: "There is a tradition that, at the time of this arrest of Morton, one Gardiner, who had been engaged with him in his hostile conduct to the other settlements, fearing their vengeance, fled into the woods, and there got bewildered in a swamp, and died; from which circumstance the swamp has been called Gardiner's Swamp to this day." (p. 17, n.) Here is an historical basis of fact for a tradition; and yet every single detail of it is wrong, and the conclusion is misleading.

¹ *New Canaan*, p. 184.

Besides this, it contained references to the university in which he had graduated, and the degrees he had received. Information on all these points Bradford communicated to Winthrop, "who tooke it very thankfully."

The 14th of May, therefore, found Sir Christopher back in Boston, and virtually a prisoner there. But now that they had him, the magistrates evidently did not know what to do with him. The Lyon had sailed for England on the 1st of April. In sending him back to Boston, Bradford evidently had expressed a hope that he would be treated with leniency, and Winthrop made haste to assure his brother Governor in reply that he had "never intended any hard measure." The fact was that Gardiner had in America committed no crime, unless, perchance, that of living with a woman not his wife; and, though there were loose accusations of some criminal conduct on his part in England, they were wholly unsustained by proof, and the magistrates had no evidence that any proceedings had been begun, or that any English warrant was out against him. Certainly no such warrant had reached them. Nevertheless Sir Christopher was a mysterious personage, whose presence in the Massachusetts Colony at that time was well calculated to excite suspicion. The evidence that he was a Catholic was regarded as very significant of something; though exactly what, the magistrates could not make out. He was "a Snake which Lay Latent in the Tender Grass,"¹ as the half-crazy Scottow phrased it sixty years later, and Winthrop and the rest were evidently inclined to believe that there was some deep plot afoot against the "poore churches here."² Accordingly, with finger on lip and air of profoundest mystery, they went prying about in all directions.

Meanwhile there seems to have been no lack of courtesy in their treatment of the knight. They used him "according to his qualitie"; and that he was a man of quality, as the term then went, and not a mere jackdaw in peacocks' feathers, their treatment of him seems to establish. The early settlers

¹ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. iv. p. 293.

² Bradford, p. 296.

of Massachusetts—the Winthrops, Endicotts and Saltonstalls—knew a gentleman well enough when they met him, for they were gentlemen themselves. And now, though doubtless Sir Christopher had to submit to long examinations and rigid questioning before the council-board, not only was he allowed to remain at large, but he was even treated with marked consideration.

For instance, about six weeks after he was brought back to Boston, in what was then the middle of June, a very severe sentence was imposed on a man named Philip Ratcliff. The case affords a good illustration of Puritan criminal methods. Ratcliff was a servant of Governor Cradock, who, having a grant and interests in Massachusetts, had persons in his employ to look after them. Among these was Ratcliff,—probably an ugly-tempered, half-crazy fellow of unbridled speech. In any event, he got into trouble with his neighbors at Salem, and especially with Endicott. Winthrop says that he was convicted, *ore tenus*, of “most foul, scandalous invectives against our churches and government.”¹ His own account of the matter was very different, and we get it through Thomas Morton, who was afterward associated with him in London. Morton says that certain members of the Salem church, in prominent standing, tried to cozen Ratcliff in trade, and refused to pay their just debts; that thereupon he, being sick at the time and in sore need, impatiently exclaimed, “Are these your members? If they be all like these, I believe the devil was the setter-up of their church.”² Whether this was or was not the whole extent of his offending, Ratcliff was in June arraigned before the magistrates, and the record is that he was sentenced to “be whipped, have his ears cut off, fined forty pounds, and banished out of the limits of the jurisdiction.”³ Winthrop adds that this barbarous sentence, which subsequently occasioned much scandal in England, “was presently executed.” If, however, Morton is any authority on the point,—and here it may be presumed he spoke for Ratcliff,—the punishment “was

¹ Winthrop, vol. i. p. * 56.

² New English Canaan, p. 169.

³ Records of Mass., vol. i. p. 88.

stopped in part by Sir Christopher Gardiner (then present at the execution), by expostulating with Master Temperwell [Winthrop], who was content, with that whipping and the cutting of part of his ears, to send Innocence [Ratcliff] going; with the loss of all his goods to pay the fine imposed, and perpetual banishment out of their lands of New Canaan, *in terrorem populi*." The incident, whether wholly true or not, may be said to rest upon the authority of Gardiner, who had read Morton's book in manuscript,¹ and proves at least that he could not complain of any lack of consideration shown him at this period in Boston.

Exactly how long Sir Christopher now remained in Massachusetts does not appear, but it was until toward the end of the summer which followed his capture at Namasket. Nothing new was developed against him, and apparently the two wives in London took no further steps toward securing his return. Indeed, their sudden disappearance from the case has a suspicious look. Nothing more is heard from them. Meanwhile Gardiner made no pretence of friendliness to the Massachusetts Bay Company; on the contrary, he openly declared himself an ill-willer to their government.² It was during this period probably that, "to solace himself," or, in other words, to relieve his pent-up feelings, he composed and wrote down in his "table-book" that sonnet, as Morton calls it, which has been preserved to us in the New English Canaan. Morton further says that he composed it "as a testimony of his love toward them that were so ill affected towards him," by "them" having reference to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in general. "The sonnet" in question reads as follows, and is indicative of a queer sort of "love":—

"Wolves in sheep's clothing, why will ye
Think to deceive God that doth see
Your simulated sanctity?
For my part, I do wish you could
Your own infirmities behold,
For then you would not be so bold.

¹ This appears from the dedicatory verses to the New Canaan presently quoted.

² Winthrop, vol. i. p. *57.

Like Sophists, why will you dispute
 With wisdom so ? — You do confute
 None but yourselves. For shame, be mute!
 Lest great Jehovah, with his power,
 Do come upon you in an hour
 When you least think, and you devour.”¹

Not only had Gardiner frankly confessed himself, in the full spirit of this performance, to be no friend to the colony, but towards the end of June all doubt as to his connection with Gorges was dispelled, if indeed any doubt as to it had before existed. At that time a boat made its appearance from Piscataqua, bringing from Captain Neale, the Governor there, a packet of letters for Sir Christopher, which was placed in Winthrop's hands. These, being “directed to one who was our prisoner,” the Governor did not hesitate to open, and from them he learned that Sir Ferdinando was still maturing plans to maintain his claim to the Robert Gorges grant, and that Gardiner was his confidential agent.

Whether the letters thus made free with ever reached the person for whom they were intended does not appear. Whether they did or not made, however, little difference. The political significance, so to speak, of Sir Christopher's presence in New England was now apparent, and it must have long before become clear to him that, so far as the Gorges interests were concerned, nothing was to be gained by his remaining. Yet he seems to have been in no haste to go home. It might be inferred with at least an appearance of reason that any private grounds he may have had for absenting himself from England had not yet been removed. And now Mary Grove appears once more upon the scene.

This personage, no less than Sir Christopher himself, has been a veritable treasure-trove to the New England novelist. In Hope Leslie she is the natural child of an English nobleman by a distinguished French actress, brought up under the protection of her aunt, Lady Lunford. She is called Roslin in her male and Rosa in her female attire, and finally, in a paroxysm of jealous despair, sets fire to a barrel

¹ New English Canaan, p. 185.

of gunpowder in a ship in Boston Harbor, and instantaneously "the hapless girl,—her guilty destroyer,—his victim, — the crew, — the vessel, sent to fragments, were hurled into the air, and soon engulfed in the waves." Motley next, after elaborately working her up through many chapters of *Merrymount* as the youthful Jaspar, Sir Christopher's cousin, finally presents her as Magdalen Groves, the beautiful daughter of an English clergyman. As such she was betrothed to William Blackstone, "a worthy but eccentric young man," and falls a victim to Sir Fulk de Gorges, for such, it seems, was Gardiner's original name. She comes to New England with him, and is there at last brought before the magistrates in the manner described by Dudley. After being questioned, she is put in friendly hands for a not unkindly detention; but, overwhelmed with despair, she escapes from her guardians, and wandering aimlessly forth into a December snow-storm, she perishes miserably in the drifts: so "the driving hurricane wrapped her as she slept in an icy winding-sheet, and the wintry wind sounded her requiem in the tossing pine branches." Mr. Adams, even more ambitious than Motley, causes her, in his *Knight of the Golden Melice*, to masquerade in the wilderness under the names of the Lady Geraldine and Sister Celestina, a secret emissary of the Pope of Rome. Kinder, however, than Motley or Miss Sedgwick, he sends her at last back to Europe in noble company, and leaves her comfortably installed for life as the abbess of St. Idlewhim, of the exact locality of which convent we are left uninformed.

It would have been unnatural had the poets proved any more fact-restrained than the novelists. Mr. Whittier accordingly represents Margaret Smith as being affected "even unto tears" by the bundle of old letters, "stained and smoked and mice-eaten," which are brought to her from the recesses of an attic, one cloudy, wet day at Agamenticus. From them she learned that Mary Grove was "a young woman of quality from the North of England," whose course of true love had run by no means smoothly. She had followed Sir Christopher to New England, and he had procured

lodgings for her at Goodwife Nowell's house, at Agamenticus, coming "only once to see her." Finally they took leave of each other one evening on the roadside, and she came home "weeping and sobbing dolefully." Presently she followed him to Boston, and "a great and cruel scandal did arise from it, and he was looked upon as a man of evil life; though," adds the sympathizing Margaret Smith, "I find nothing to warrant such a notion, but much to the contrary thereof." Wiser, however, in his generation than the novelists, the poet in this case dismisses the knight and the lady by causing his own heroine prudently to remark, — "What became of him and the young woman, his cousin, in the end, I do not learn." Mr. Longfellow, on the other hand, in his treatment of the story, fairly revels in that glorious indifference to facts, dates and seasons which from time immemorial has been the poet's right. He depicts Sir Christopher as wearing, in 1631, a

" Prince Rupert hat with ostrich plume ";

and then refers to Mary Grove as

" A little lady with golden hair,"

whom "the marshal on his gallant steed, followed by all his bailiffs bold," goes out to arrest. As there was no road to the Neponset at that time, and as all we know of the arrest is that the officers attempting it went by water, it would thus seem that they must have been a detachment of Governor Winthrop's Horse-marines. The most surprising feature of all in the affair was, however, that the "marshal" found the "little lady," in the early days of March, and only six miles from Boston, —

" Gathering, in the bright sunshine,
The sweet alyssum and columbine."

And this "little lady," he goes on to tell, was by the magistrates subsequently

" sent away in a ship that sailed
For merry England over the sea,
To the other two wives in the old countree."

But, while Mary Grove has thus been foolishness to the novelist and the poet, to the antiquary and the historian both she and Sir Christopher have proved a stumbling-block. Savage and Palfrey, for instance, not to speak of others, though decidedly less imaginative than Motley and Longfellow, are only in degree less incorrect. Savage, in his notes to Winthrop, says: "Having extorted confession from this paramour, [the magistrates] sent her for examination to London, in the same ship with Saltonstall, Coddington and Wilson."¹ They did nothing of the kind. In making this statement Savage carelessly followed the remark of Dudley, already quoted from his letter to the Countess of Lincoln, to the effect that order had been taken to send the woman back to the two wives in Old England. But this order, if ever made, certainly was not carried out. Saltonstall and the others went out in the *Lyon*, which sailed from Salem on the 1st of April, while Gardiner was still lying concealed in the Plymouth woods; but Mary Grove did not go in her. Palfrey is even more unfortunate in dealing with Sir Christopher than Savage was in disposing of Mary Grove. When it comes to petty details it is impossible for the historian on the large scale to be always accurate. Dr. Palfrey was a most careful, conscientious writer, sparing himself no pains; yet of Sir Christopher Gardiner he says: "The master of the *Lion* could not be persuaded to take charge of him, and it was some months longer before he could be gotten rid of."² Here are four errors in less than three lines. The case of Gardiner is confounded with that of Morton, and the master of the *Gift* with the master of the *Lyon*; the *Lyon* was five weeks on her voyage before Sir Christopher was brought back to Boston, and we have Winthrop's authority for saying that Gardiner never was "gotten rid of" at all, but went away of his own free will.³

¹ Note to Winthrop, vol. i. p. *54.

² New England, vol. i. p. 330.

³ The really instructive feature in this matter is that Palfrey meant, apparently, to correct Hutchinson, who says that Gardiner "was sent home under confinement" in the *Lyon* (Massachusetts, vol. i. p. 24); and in thus correcting one error of his predecessor he makes or implies four new errors of his own.

As a matter of history the fate of "this Gardiner's wench,"¹ as another contemporaneous writer most disrespectfully calls Mary Grove, is of no great moment. Nevertheless, for the benefit of the future poet and novelist, it may be well once for all to state the facts about her and Sir Christopher in all their realistic hardness. There was in them, so far as they are known, little either of poetry or of romance. If those facts are beneath the notice of the future historian, he can leave them alone; but, if he does refer to them, he will at least have no excuse for not referring to them correctly. For the actual facts we are indebted to a letter from Thomas Wiggin, of Piscataqua, to Emanuel Downing, of the Inner Temple, London, Governor Winthrop's brother-in-law. This letter was written at Bristol, "the last of August, 1632." In it Wiggin says that during the summer of 1631, Thomas Purchase, who had come over from England in 1624, and in 1628 had settled on the Androscoggin, within the limits of what is now the town of Brunswick, had occasion to be in Boston. A man of good standing, it is possible that he came to Massachusetts in search of a wife; for, as will presently be seen, marriageable women were then much sought after in Maine. But whether he came on purpose to find a wife or not, he seems to have fallen in with Mary Grove, and she, notwithstanding the scandalous charges concerning her, and the unexplained nature of her relations with Sir Christopher, found favor in his eyes. Presently they were married, and then he took her back to his home in Maine; and not her only, but Gardiner also. At the present time such a proceeding on the part of a bridegroom from the Eastward would undoubtedly excite surprise. In the early days, however, the absence of help-mates was so severely felt by the settlers of Maine, more hardy than refined, that, in 1665, the Royal Commissioners, in their official report to Sir Henry Bennet, the English Secretary of State, made the following remarkable and, perhaps, even offensive statement: "They [the Maine plantations] are inhabited by the worst of men . . . for the most part they are fishermen, and share in their wives as

¹ Wiggin's letter, next cited.

they do in their boats.”¹ This otherwise than commendable practice in domestic relations is here described as having prevailed a third of a century after the Purchase marriage; it would be rash, therefore, to infer that a precedent for it was in that case established. None the less it would seem that either there must have been a very clear understanding all round, or else Thomas Purchase had a soul above suspicion. In any event, Sir Christopher, accompanying the newly married pair, freely went his way to Maine, and professed, besides, “much engagement for the great courtesy” with which he had been treated in Boston. This seems to have been in August, 1631.

Of him during the months which now succeeded I find but one trace, and that, it must be admitted, not a very knightly one; but then a companion of the brotherhood of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre must in those early days have found himself somewhat out of place on the Androscoggin. It was winter, too, and the nights, as well as the knight, were doubtless very cold. This single foot-print of Sir Christopher as a sojourner in Maine is preserved in the records of the first General Court of that province, held at Saco, by “the Worshipful Thomas Gorges,” in 1640. The record reads as follows:—

“Richard Tucker cometh into this Court and declareth that nine years since, or thereabouts, there came one Sir Christopher Gardiner to the plaintiff in the name of the defendant, Thomas Purchase, and borrowed of him a warming-pan, which cost here in this country 12s. 6d., which the defendant hath all this time and still doth wrongfully detain from the plaintiff. And also the said Sir Christopher did six months after, or thereabouts, buy of the plaintiff a new fowling-piece for 40s., which he promised to pay within a month after, which money both for the warming-pan and the piece the plaintiff hath oftentimes demanded of the defendant, who doth still refuse to pay the same, to the damage of the plaintiff at least 5*l.* sterling, for which the plaintiff commenceth his action of trespass in the case, against the defendant in this court, and humbly desireth a legal hearing according to law. T. Purchase denies ever authorizing Sir C. Gardiner to buy

¹ Documents relating to Col. Hist. of New York, vol. iii. p. 101.

any warming-pan or fowling-piece for him, etc. Verdict for the plaintiff, £2 12s. 6d. for the two articles. 2d. damages. 12s. 6d. costs of court.”¹

It would thus appear that the court held Thomas Purchase responsible for the contracts of Sir Christopher during the sojourn of the latter with him. Considering all the circumstances of the case, — the inclemency of the season and the place, and the agency through which Sir Christopher's couch had been widowed, — the intrinsic justice of the finding is apparent. It may even, in those remote days and that simple community, have been looked upon as a restitution under some converse doctrine of *cy-pres*, which modern courts have as yet failed to amplify. This episode of the warming-pan has, however, up to the present time, inexplicably escaped the notice of both poet and novelist. It will, of course, have due prominence given to it hereafter. Meanwhile, it is of interest to further note that, upon the death of Thomas Purchase, thirty-seven years later, a warming-pan — in all human probability the historical Gardiner warming-pan — was found among his effects, and to this day stands duly inventoried as part thereof.²

Gardiner appears to have remained at Brunswick all through the winter of 1631–32, and far into the succeeding summer. It was his second winter in New England; and that he faced it and went through it affords strong presumptive evidence that he had very good reasons of his own for not going back to England. It is true that he was then in Sir Ferdinando Gorges's domain; but there is no reason to suppose that he was clothed with any authority there, and he certainly exercised none. That he was to the last degree impecunious may be inferred from the incident of the warming-pan. Whatever objections existed to his going back to England in 1631, they seem to have been shortly after removed. Perhaps one or both of his wives died; or possibly he may have effected a compromise with one, and a reconciliation with

¹ Folsom's Hist. of Saco and Biddeford, p. 56; Wheeler's Brunswick, p. 794.

² Wheeler's Brunswick, p. 791.

the other. In any event, he is next heard of as landing in Bristol, England, newly arrived from Maine, on the 15th of August, 1632. He had been away from the Old World some thirty months in all. He returned just in time to take part in a most formidable attack on the Massachusetts Bay Company; in fact, he may have been recalled for the very purpose of having him take part in it. Morton and Ratcliff had preceded him to England, and had there for some time been in close communication with Gorges and Captain John Mason, who directed the assault. It was to be made before the Privy Council, and looked to nothing less than the revocation of the Company's charter. Whether recalled for the purpose of taking part in these proceedings or not, Gardiner signaled his arrival in Bristol by at once indulging in unstinted denunciation of Governor Winthrop, the magistrates, and the people generally of Massachusetts. He declared that they were "traitors and rebels against his Majesty, with divers other most scandalous and opprobrious speeches," dilating freely on the wrongs he had himself suffered at their hands, even to the extent of being "driven to swim for his life." Captain Thomas Wiggin, of Piscataqua,¹ it has been seen, was then

¹ This personage was one of the strong men of early New England history, — a typical Puritan. The exact time of his coming over is not known, and very possibly it was with Winthrop. In any event, he from the beginning stood high, not only in Winthrop's confidence, but in that of Lord Say and Sele, Lord Brooke, and other leaders of the Parliamentary party in England. Almost immediately after the settlement at Boston was effected, questions of boundary under the conflicting grants of the Council for New England began to present themselves. (See Lowell Institute Lectures of Mass. Hist. Soc., pp. 127-162.) Under one of these grants a settlement had already been effected at Piscataqua, in New Hampshire. The Massachusetts Bay Company contended that, under the proper construction of the charter of 1629, their boundary reached a parallel of latitude drawn three miles above the most northerly point on the Merrimack River. This, of course, included the settlement on the Piscataqua.

Either Captain Wiggin was sent to New Hampshire by the Massachusetts magistrates as a suitable person to look after their interests in that quarter, or he went there to explore the country with a view to its settlement. In October, 1631, he had certainly been there some time, and in correspondence with Winthrop, for on the 22d of that month the latter received a letter from him in relation to the murder of Walter Bagnall by the Indians, at Richmond Island. The next year (1632) Wiggin, who lived at Hilton Point, was in collision with

at Bristol. He at once wrote to Emanuel Downing, who acted as an agent for the Massachusetts Company, the letter already referred to. In this letter Wiggin advised Downing of what Gardiner was saying, and suggested that some means should be found "to stop this fellow's mouth." The story of Gardiner's two wives was revived, and Downing was urged to inform himself as to their whereabouts, with a view to proceeding against him for the crime of bigamy. Either the women had never existed, or they could no longer be found, or the evidence somehow broke down; for though Sir Christopher was the head and front of the proceedings which now took place, nothing more seems to have been heard of his marriages, either of that with her who wished to convert him, or that with her who wished to destroy him.

The attack on the Massachusetts Colony was made on the 19th of December, 1632, and it was a formidable one. The charter of 1629 — King Charles's charter, as it is called — was the *Magna Charta* of Massachusetts. As such it is still jealously preserved as the most precious archive of the Commonwealth. The Lords of the Privy Council were now called upon to inquire into the methods through which the charter had been obtained, as well as into the grave abuses which had, as it was alleged, been subsequently practised

Captain Neale, the governor of the lower Plantation for the Laconia associates (Mason and Gorges), on the question of jurisdiction. (Hubbard, p. 217.) Wiggin then, acting in concert with Winthrop, went out to England, and induced certain leading men among the Puritans to buy up the so-called Hilton patent of 1629-30. (Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 1876, pp. 364, 365.) It was while he was in England on this business that Wiggin wrote the letter to Downing (3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. iv. p. 320) referred to in the text. Returning to New England with reinforcements and supplies the next year, Wiggin landed at Salem, Oct. 10, 1633. He at once established himself with his people at Hilton's Point, or Dover, where he was governor for a number of years. As such he exerted himself to bring the towns on the Piscataqua under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, which was effected in 1641 and 1643. Captain Wiggin died in 1667; but for over thirty years he was the mainstay of the pretensions of Massachusetts Bay in the region of the Piscataqua. For fourteen years he held the office of assistant to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay, and is said to have been the only Piscataqua man ever chosen to that position. A strong Puritan and Commonwealth man, he passed his life among Episcopalians and royalists, in endless contention with them. See Jenness's Notes on the First Planting of New Hampshire, pp. 39-70.

under it. Besides many injuries inflicted on individuals in their property and persons, the Company was charged with seditious and rebellious designs, subversive alike of sound principles whether in church or in state. The various allegations were based on the affidavits of three witnesses, — Thomas Morton, Philip Ratcliff and Sir Christopher Gardiner.

It would not be easy to exaggerate the alarm occasioned by this move among the friends of the Company in England. It was only exceeded by the alarm felt in New England when, four months later, news of it had crossed the Atlantic. The petition was referred to a committee of twelve Lords of the Council for investigation and report, and this committee was authorized to send for persons and papers. A long and apparently angry hearing ensued, in which it may safely be assumed that Sir Christopher Gardiner took a prominent part. Doubtless he told to eager ears the story of his encounter with the savages; while Morton described how he was set in the stocks, and had his house burned down before his eyes; and Ratcliff excited murmurs of sympathy by showing on his person the deep scars of lash and of knife. On the other side, exerting themselves in the defence of their associates, were Cradock and Saltonstall and Humfrey, potently aided by Downing.¹

The last-named, Winthrop says, was especially serviceable in this emergency. It may well have been that he had access to influential personages at court. Perhaps, also, he knew exactly where to place those bribes which were then freely taken by every one about the king. Only a little while before, Isaac Allerton, representing the poor Plymouth Colony, had found that at Whitehall "many riddles must be resolved, and many locks must be opened with the silver — nay, with the golden — key."² Emanuel Downing may have understood the skilful use of these keys; but, whether he did or not, this hearing before the committee of the Privy Council was made to result disastrously for the complainants. That

¹ Mem. Hist. of Boston, vol. i. p. 336; New English Canaan, Prince Soc. ed., pp. 49-53.

² Bradford, p. 251.

it should have so resulted astonished every one at the time, and Edward Howes even went so far as to say, in writing to John Winthrop, Jr., that the friends of the colony would have been "utterly overthrown had not God, as it were, wrought a miraculous interference."¹ That secret influences were at work is plain, but what those influences were, and who it was that wielded them, is still a mystery. Gorges certainly was no mean antagonist at court. In that quarter at least he thereafter never failed to carry every point. Perhaps on this occasion he made the dangerous mistake of underestimating his opponents, — as Morton subsequently expressed it, he "effected the business but superficially."² Whatever the cause, he certainly did fail, and failed conspicuously. The Committee presently reported against any interference with the Massachusetts Company. Nor was that all. King Charles himself had evidently been labored with, and by no means without effect. Giving an emphatic approval to the report of the committee, he also threatened condign punishment upon those "who did abuse his governor and the plantation."

It was a great victory for the Company. And when in May, 1633, information of it reached Governor Winthrop, he at once sat down to communicate the glad tidings to Governor Bradford; and he invited him to join "in a day of thanksgiving to our merciful God, who, as he hath humbled us by his late correction, so he hath lifted us up by an abundant rejoicing in our deliverance out of so desperate a danger." The result, he added, had fallen out "against all men's expectations"; and Bradford in his turn wrote³ that "God had prevented him," — meaning by "him" Sir Christopher Gardiner.

At this point Gardiner finally disappears from sight. In the letter to the younger Winthrop, just quoted, Howes had expressed a confident hope that they would be able "to *pendere* Gardiner ere long"; but as nothing further is heard

¹ 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. ix. p. 253.

² New English Canaan, Prince Soc. ed., pp. 51-54, 61.

³ Bradford, p. 295.

on that point it may fairly be inferred that this hope was not realized. Like many others, Gardiner owes his mention in history to the fact that he came to America in those very early days when every individual counted ; and the moment he returned to Europe he was merged again in the larger volume of human life. All trace of him is lost. That he was still in London in 1634 may be inferred from the fact that Morton then wrote his *New English Canaan*, the manuscript of which was seen by Sir Christopher, who liked it so much that he composed for it some more verses — this time of a prefatory character — “*in laudem auctoris.*” When, a few years later, the *New Canaan* was printed at Amsterdam, these verses, in company with all the rest of the copy, suffered unmerciful treatment at the hands of the Dutch compositors of Jacob Frederick Stam, the printer. Repunctuated and emended, they would seem to read as follows : —

“ This work a matchless mirror is, that shows
 The humors of the Separatist, and those
 So truly personated by thy pen.
 I was amaz'd to see 't; herein all men
 May plainly see, as in an interlude,
 Each actor figure: and the scene well view'd
 In comic, tragic, and in pastoral strife,
 For tyth of mint and cummin, shows their life
 Nothing but opposition 'gainst the right
 Of sacred Majesty: men full of spite,
 Goodness abusing, turning virtue out
 Of doors to whipping, stocking, and full bent
 To plotting mischief 'gainst the innocent,
 Burning their houses, as if ordained by fate,
 In spite of law, to be made ruinate.
 This task is well performed, and patience be
 Thy present comfort, and thy constancy
 Thine honor; and this glass, where it shall come,
 Shall sing thy praises to the day of doom.”

These verses show that Gardiner when he wrote them was acting in close sympathy with Morton and Gorges, and they were then preparing their second and more carefully devised assault on the Massachusetts charter. Into the details of this assault it is not necessary to enter here ; they have been re-

counted elsewhere, and they fill a prominent page in the early annals of New England.¹ There can be little doubt that in February, 1634, Gardiner, again in company with Morton and Ratcliff, appeared before the Lords of the Privy Council, and repeated the story of his wrongs. Archbishop Laud now sat at the head of the Council table, and it is unnecessary to say that he lent a ready ear to all complaints against Puritans. It was certainly so on this occasion, upon which, if we can believe Thomas Morton, who alone has given us any account of what took place, Laud soundly rated Cradock and Humfrey, who again appeared for the Company. Indeed, when Cradock told him that the charter had gone to America, the Archbishop did not hesitate to call the former Governor of the Company "an imposterous knave," and to sharply bid him to send for it back at once. As for Ratcliff, he did not now lack sympathizers, to all appearances not less able than they were eager to do him justice. On the spot he was "comforted with the cropping of Mr. Winthrop's ears." Morton, however, in his rambling account nowhere mentions Gardiner's name, and it cannot be positively asserted that he took any part in the proceedings. He may have died in the interval between the time when he wrote the verses in praise of the author of the New Canaan, and the time of the hearing before the Council; or he may again have wandered away to Jerusalem, or to Rome. At any rate, it is not certain that he was present in the Council-chamber on February 28, 1634, and no further record of him has yet come to light. He simply fades from view.

It only remains to say a word of the subsequent fate of the companion of his earlier sojourn in Massachusetts, Mrs. Thomas Purchase. This much consideration is certainly due her, for perhaps no other female in American annals has appeared under so many names and in so many books. Roslin, Jaspar, and Magdalen Groves; the nameless "young woman of quality from the North of England"; Lady Geraldine, Sister Clementina, and the "little lady with golden hair," — figuring before posterity under all these *aliases*, plain Mary Grove,

¹ New English Canaan, Prince Soc. ed., pp. 53-65.

from Boirdly, in Salopshire, England,¹ has certainly enjoyed a queer posthumous fate. Returning, however, to her life in the flesh, it would seem — for nothing certainly is known of her — that, having safely outlived her parlous time of youthful indiscretion, she settled down to the somewhat hard-faring every-day existence common to all those who at that early time were fated to subdue the rugged coast of Maine. Thomas Purchase, her husband, is described by Savage as “an adventurer of good discretion and perseverance.” Some three or four localities in the town of Brunswick contend for the honor of having been his place of abode; but, wherever he lived, he was a frontier’s-man engaged in the fur trade and the salmon fishery. Josselyn also, in his *Two Voyages*, makes mention of him as having undergone a somewhat remarkable course of medical treatment, inasmuch as he “cured himself of the sciatica with Bears-grease, keeping some of it continually in his groin.”² He was twice married, his second wife surviving him, though he is said to have arrived at the age of one hundred and one years. His first wife, Mary, is recorded as having died in Boston on the 7th of January, 1656; and it is not definitely known that by this marriage there were any children.³ Indeed, I find but one further mention of her name; and that,⁴ curiously enough, in connection, though in no way to her own discredit, with a wretched case of maternal infanticide. This was in 1647, and she was then apparently living at Brunswick.

It is fair to presume that the Mary Purchase who died in Boston in 1656 was identical with the Mary Grove who had been married there to Thomas Purchase twenty-five years before. It is also to be hoped that her husband never had occasion to repent his choice. He certainly entered into the married state with his eyes open; but beggars proverbially cannot be choosers, and the exceeding straits to which the

¹ Dudley in Young’s Chron. of Mass., p. 335.

² *Two Voyages*, p. 92.

³ A sufficient biographical account of Thomas Purchase can be found in Wheeler’s History of Brunswick, pp. 788–797.

⁴ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. vii. p. 375.

earliest settlers of Maine were put in their search for wives has already been perhaps more than sufficiently indicated. But there were scandalous stories afloat about the antenuptial life of other matrons in that neighborhood besides Mistress Purchase; and the husband of that lady, if he ever experienced any misgivings on that score, would certainly have found a sympathetic spiritual adviser in the Rev. Richard Gibson, the settled minister of his former home of Saco. This gentleman also took unto himself a wife in 1638, and shortly after, under date of Jan. 14, 1639, I find him writing as follows to Governor Winthrop at Boston; and it is the Christian spirit of the last lines of the extract which might have been commended to Thomas Purchase, if he ever felt a regret that he had interfered with Sir Christopher Gardiner's domestic arrangements. Of his wife the Rev. Richard Gibson wrote thus:¹—

“By the providence of God and the counsel of friends, I have lately married Mary, daughter of Mr. Thomas Lewis, of Saco. . . . Howbeit, so it is for the present that some troublous spirits out of misaffection, others, as is supposed, for hire, have cast an aspersion upon her, and generally avouch that she so behaved herself in the ship which brought her from England hither some two years ago that the block was reeved at the mainyard to have ducked her, and that she was kept close in the ship's cabin forty-eight hours for shelter and rescue, which tends to her utter infamy, the grief of her friends, and my very great infamy and hinderance. . . .

“My humble suit unto your Worship is that you would please to call before you [certain persons named] which came over in the ship with her, and examine them of these things whereof she is accused, and I humbly entreat that you would give a testimonial of these examinations. I married the maid upon long demurs by advice of friends, and if these imputations be justly charged upon her, I shall reverence God's afflicting hand, and possess myself in patience under God's chastising.”

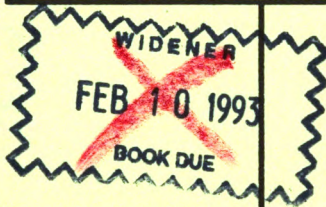
¹ 5 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. i. p. 267.





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