

## Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham September 1623

Most loving and kind brother,

My promise doth put me in remembrance, with the first opportunity of a messenger, to write unto you. And if I were not by promise, yet that special nearness that is between us obliges me to the same, for as I have always to this time found your constant affections towards me, so have I, and shall continually, acknowledge the same.

And now, loving brother, since I have undertaken a voyage not altogether pleasing to some of my friends-and because of my forwardness in the same, I may be taxed with many censures -therefore, as it doth more nearly concern me, I will here lay down not what my ear hath heard, but what I have with my eyes seen to be true.

After our departure from the Cowes in the Isle of Wight, we recovered our desired passage three months and one day after, being the 5th of August, with many bitter a storm. And I have learned by this voyage that God hath made the seas more for use than pleasure, but I praise the Lord for his goodness that I never had my health better. And likewise by the blessings of God, I have and hope to learn that at sea which will prove for my extraordinary advantage. But everyone hath a time, although some sooner than others.

After our arrival in New England, we found all our plantation in good health, and neither man, woman or child sick. And here, likewise, we found the other ship set forth by the Company, who came from Portsmouth six days after us, and arrived here at New England ten days before, with all her people well, as we with our people did the like. And yet one good wife Jennings was brought aboard of a son aboard our ship and was very well. And then, we had an old woman in our ship about four score years of age, which was in good health—and this I speak not as needful to write of, but to show that God did give us our health when we looked not for it, and to those, likewise, that had not been well a year before on the shore.

And now to come more nearer to that I intend to write of, and first of the situation of the place- I mean the plantation at Patuxet. It is well situated upon a high hill close unto the seaside, and very commodious for shipping to come unto them. In this plantation is about twenty houses, four or five of which are very fair and pleasant, and the rest (as time will serve) shall be made better. And this town is in such manner that it makes a great street between the houses, and at the upper end of the town there is a strong fort, both by nature and art, with six pieces of reasonable good artillery mounted thereon; in which fort is continual watch, so that no Indian can come near thereabouts but he is presently seen. This town is paled round about with pale of eight foot long, or thereabouts, and in the pale are three great gates. Furthermore, here is belonging to the town six goats, about fifty hogs and pigs, also divers hens. And lastly, the town is furnished with a company of honest men, that do, in what lies in them, to get profit to the adventurers.

And now to speak more at large of the country and what profit is to be raised here; and first, to speak of the fishing that is in this country. Indeed it is beyond belief, but I can assure you thus much: that if a man be well provided with all things necessary

for to make a fishing voyage, he may easily make his voyage two for one. But lest this should seem incredible to some, I will give you an instance of the same. Before we got hither to Patuxet, we had many fogs at sea, insomuch that we were driven to lie at hull and to take down all our sails, and so went to fishing. In one hour we got 100 great cod, and if we would have but stayed after the fog broke up, we might quickly loaded our ship and, I am persuaded, had we been prepared with all things necessary for a fishing voyage, we might have loaded our ship in a week. I think we got 1000 in all. And indeed, when we had nothing else to do, my people took delight to catch them, although we threw them away again, as I think we did 300. One fish we got, I think, weighed 100 pound: it was as big a cod as ever was seen. We got many turbot, likewise, and one turbot we got gave all our ship a meal and to spare. And to speak what voyages of fishing hath been found and made this year, here hath been at Mohegan, Damariscove, Angawam, Pemaquid, Sagadahoc, and the Isles of Shoals, all principal places for fishing about 400 sail. And every one of them, by their confession, say that they have made good voyages, and now most of them are gone into Spain, to sell their fish where they have ready gold for it.

And now to speak what sorts of other fish are here to be had. Here are great store of sturgeon, I mean abundance; likewise great of salmon, bass, trout, eels, and lobsters such infinite that when we have them the very multitude of them cloy us. There are likewise great store of other fish which I cannot remember, as clams and oysters.

And now to speak somewhat of our store of beaver's skins that are round about us both to the northward and southward. And now at this present, we are going to the southward into Hudson's River, where the Dutchmen have all their skins of the savages. We hope there to get good store of beavers', otters' and martins' skins, as also fox skins and raccoon skins, all which will yield money good store in England. And towards Christmas we are to return to our plantation again. And then, before the fishermen come in February to the northward, we mean to go trade for all the skins that are to be had thereabout, and then to take the best stage for fishing in the country, and so to fish in the beginning of the year; and then about May, 1624, to go trading for furs again. And then it may be so, that we will come home about Christmas come twelvemonth, but look not for me before I come. Divers occasions of employments may fall out so that I may be hindered, and indeed, I shall not desire to come for England unless I bring good store of profit with me, which I make no doubt of, by God's help.

Thirdly, I will speak somewhat of the timber in the country, which will raise great profit to the Adventurers. We have here as good timber as ever I saw, of many sorts. We have here cedar, beech, pine, oak, and divers other sorts, of which we have here sent a sample of about two or three hundred pounds worth, and with it a good many beavers' skins and furs of divers sorts.

Fourthly, we will say somewhat of the sarsaparilla and sassafras, as also, alkermes berries, all which are worth good store of money in England, and of which, when I come myself, God willing, I will bring a pattern to London. For when I was at London, sarsaparilla was of two shillings a pound, at the least, and we have here enough to load a ship.

Fifthly, to speak of the profit that may arise by salt, and I make no doubt we shall make much salt before I come for England. And if we could but have salt to sell to the fishing ships that come hither yearly, I think we might compare our plantation to the

Spaniards' Indies. And we have good hopes of making salt about a mile from our plantation, and it shall be put in execution 'ere long.

Sixthly and lastly, here are many other things in this country to raise profit, as for example, at the place whereto we are now bound with our ship to the southward, the place is called Capawack, there is a mountain of bole armeniac and divers other metals. No English hath been there, but only one Captain Dermer whom was killed by the savages there; for the savages in this place are very strong and are men of very able bodies. But notwithstanding, we mean to put it upon trial and to go well armed among them. We hope there to get store of skins.

And now, having spoken what is but the truth concerning the profit that may with small labor be got for the Company of Adventurers, I will now, as briefly as I can, show you what good will redound to those that live here. And first, of the fish in the country, which, as I said before, is of all sorts in infinite number; and two, for the fowl that are in the country. Here are eagles of many sorts, pigeons, innumerable turkeys, geese, swans, duck, teal, partridge divers sorts, and many others fowl, that one man at six shoots hath killed 400. And then to speak of the healthfulness of the air. It lieth in 42 degrees of northerly latitude. We have here the wind come off the land all the day time, and in the night off the sea, which is wondrous wholesome. Some few have had agues at the first coming over, but not sick above a week, and myself was ill for three or four days, but I thank these good friends of mine at the plantation, I am recovered pretty well, thanks be to God. Thirdly, those that live here need never want wood, for here is great store. Fourthly, here is as good ground as ever I heard of, when as the ground yield five or six hundred for one; nay, some 1400! And this year they have great store of corn, as goodly corn as ever I saw, of which I have sent you six ears. And if God will, when I come myself, you nor my worshipful friend, Sir John Leventhorpe, shall not want so much beaver's skins as will make each of you a hat. But to our purpose, I say that none of these commodities can be got without a little pains, and the most pains and cost is to be stowed at the beginning; for men must provide for the worst, that they may have provision for themselves a twelvemonth if these things fail, and then they must take pains to build them houses and the like. And because I have spoken somewhat large of the country, and indeed I have good cause, because if I were well provided with all things necessary, as servants and the like, I could live here contentedly with great pleasure, but I shall better think and determine of such matters when more important business doth not call me aside.

And now I will speak somewhat of the savages in the country about: I mean the native Indians. The nearest that any dwell unto Plymouth is fourteen miles, and their town is called Manomet. Only without our pales dwells one Hobomok, his wives and his household (above ten persons), who is our friend and interpreter, and one whom we have found faithful and trusty. He I carry away with me to the southward. And now, likewise, in this bay wherein we live, in former time hath lived about 2000 Indians. Here is not one living now, nor not one living which belonged to this plantation before we came, so that the ground on which we are planted belongs to nobody.

And now to speak of the king of the country, who is a great emperor among his people. Upon the occasion of the Governor's marriage, since I came, Massasoit was sent for to the wedding, where came with him his wife, the queen, although he hath five wives. With him came four other kings and about six score men with their bows and

arrows, where when they came to our town, we saluted them with the shooting off of many muskets and training our men. And so all the bows and arrows was brought into the Governor's house, and he brought the Governor three or four bucks and a turkey. And so we had very good pastime in seeing them dance, which is in such manner, with such a noise that you would wonder. And at that time when we gave Massasoit his hat, coat, band and feather, I craved a boy of him for you, but he would not part with him; but I will bring you one hereafter.

And now to say somewhat of the great cheer we had at the Governor's marriage. We had about twelve pasty venisons, besides others, pieces of roasted venison and other such good cheer in such quantity that I could wish you some of our share. For here we have the best grapes that ever you saw, and the biggest, and divers sorts of plums and nuts which our business will not suffer us to look for.

And now to speak somewhat of Massasoit's stature. He is as proper a man as ever was seen in this country, and very courageous. He is very subtle for a savage, and he goes like the rest of his men, all naked but only a black wolf skin he wears upon his shoulder. And about the breadth of a span he wears beads about his middle. And these beads they make themselves, which they account as gold above silver before the beads we bring out of England.

Lastly, to speak a little in what peace and friendship we are with the savages, which peace we have had with Massasoit ever since our coming. And he never expressed his love more to us than of late; for in the Massachusetts there was a colony (I may rather say a company of idle persons) for they had no civil government among themselves, much less were they able to govern and rule Indians by them. And this plantation was begun about one year and one half since by one Mr. Weston, who came this year to see his plantation. But by many notorious deeds among themselves, and also having in their necessity stolen corn from the Indians, the Indians began to condemn them and would have killed all the English, but they feared that when the English of Patuxet did hear what they had done, then they would set upon the squaw sachem in the Massachusetts and so kill all the Indians in the Massachusetts. Whereupon they determined another resolution: to cut the English at Patuxet, whom they stand in fear of now, and the English at Massachusetts both at one time. But in the mean time, the great Massasoit sent to Patuxet for some physic, because he was fallen very sick, and so, by God's help, he was cured. And upon his recovery, he made known the plot of the Indians of Massachusetts against us, and told us that if we would not go fight with them, he would. So at the return of our surgeon from Massasoit, came a messenger from Mr. Weston's plantation at Massachusetts, telling us that there was a plot against us by the Indians of Massachusetts. Whereupon the Governor, Mr. William Bradford (well worthy the place), sent Captain Standish with some six or seven others to the Massachusetts to bring away the head of him that made the broil. And so, by God's goodness, he killed our chief enemy and five or six others without any hurt to our part, and brought away the head of the chiefest of them and is set on the top of our fort, and instead of an ancient, we have a piece of linen cloth dyed in the same Indian's blood, which was hung out upon the fort when Massasoit was here. And now the Indians are most of them fled from us, but they now seek to us to make peace. But we are informed by Hobomok that eight shallops of Indians, well provided, are coming this way. They say themselves that they come to fight with other Indians that have killed a friend of theirs, but if they come at us to offer any violence, I

doubt they will never carry their shallops back again, it may be, not with their lives. And these Indians, we hear, have muskets and fowling pieces, with powder and shot, which they have bought of the Frenchmen in Canada and of the Englishmen at the Isle of Mohegan; but that trade is already stopped by the King's proclamations concerning the same trade.

And now, loving brother, I have little else to write of unto you, but only one thing I thank you kindly for, and that was for the last letter you sent me in England, wherein you desire to hold fast to the truth and likewise to be diligent in my place. Of both which make no doubt, no! be persuaded that I will rather die a thousand deaths than once to shame God or my country. And now, seeing that I am entered into this place, doubt not but that I will always increase in knowledge. And indeed, when I undertook this voyage at first, I always held the art of navigation to be most hard and difficult, but now, through some practice and reading, I have attained to that I hope never to forget. And I hope by that time I see old England to be able to conduct a ship myself, safe into any harbor in New England. But God disposeth of all things. And truly, I never lived better to my content nor among those who can more respect me as the Company in old England and here likewise do, who think nothing too good for me. I praise God, I have my health 'till now that I wrote this letter, but I mended apace.

And now, loving brother, I must make an end, although I think no pains sufficient to express my love unto you. I doubt not but you will show yourself a friend to me in taking care for that little stock I have. I am desirous it should increase, and in your hands, if you think it profitable to you. I know you will deal the more providently for me, because of divers reasons well known to yourself. I pray let that same £100 be taken of my Mr. Hawes or his heirs when it is due (and that will be about March, 1624), and if you and my brother Hawtry think good, take it into your own hands. I have wrote to my brother Hawtry to buy me the books of English voyages, which will do me great good. I pray look that they be bought me, and send by this messenger that is come from New England and hath lived there three years. And he comes away about December from London, that he may come with the fishermen, to be here in February. I pray let those books be of the same voyages that is lately put forth by Mr. Purchas, minister about Ludgate.

Thus much I have thought good to let you understand concerning the estate of myself and New England, and now I will take my leave of you, desiring the God of hosts to guide you and yours in your going out and coming, so that all your labors may prosper under your hands, and that your life in this world of misery may be such a life that may prepare you to a better in the world to come.

And thus, my kindest love and best affections being remembered to you, desiring you to accept of this mite (being compared to my mind). Likewise, as I am bound to respect, so let my love be remembered to my sister your wife, and to my worthy friend, Sir John Leventhorpe, and to his good lady, and all the rest of that noble house, as to my Lady Fowle and Sir John Fowle, my brother Thomas, and my sister Mary. And I pray merrily tell her it will be no tarrying for me because I know not when I shall come into England. But I pray likewise tell [her] that I could here give her much land if she will come and live among this wild scene of Indians. I hope this will make her smile. And now, I pray let my love be remembered to my aunt Wolley, hoping that she will have me in her mind, although not in her eye; I mean I hope she will remember me at her death,

which must be one day. Pray remember me likewise to Mr. Denn and his wife and old good wife Stracy, and to my worthy Adventurer Henry Stracy, who, if he claims his money, let him have it, I pray you, for I see it will come in with profit. Pray likewise remember my love to Mr. Bland and William Watson, and pray tell them thus much: that because a ship could not be got when I had cattle in my hands, and likewise because I could get nobody to join with me, I put that money into the common stock; and it shall be answered in that, which, if they be not contented, I will repay again. The like, I pray, do to goodman Wells. Remember me to him and tell him I find great need of his cousin, the potter. I pray, sir, let them read this letter-either the same or a copy of the same -and so, likewise, I pray let my noble friend, Sir John Leventhorpe; although I have wrote to him, yet I refer him to particulars in your letters.

And so I take my leave of you; but I pray remember me to my father Adee and mother Adee, and to all the rest of my friends to whom I am by any way tied; as to Seth Haggar and Edward Skoles, whose so long continuance and good service in your house have caused me to speak well of them.

And thus I end, desiring the Lord to direct you in all your ways, words and actions, and to guide you by his Holy Spirit and so to enable you, that in what you have been wanting to glorify his name in this world among men, your heart may be more and more touched with the reverence of so great a God, and to labor more and more to glorify him here, that so you may be glorified by him in the world to come, where one day, if I see you not in this world, I make no doubt but to meet you, which God, for Christ Jesus' sake grant unto us. And so I bid you, Farewell! Farewell in the Lord; and the God of heaven, earth, seas and all things be with you and protect you in your going forth and coming in. And so, being guided and directed by God's holy angels, you may not be ashamed to show yourself before God and the Lord Christ at that great day of account when all things shall be made known. And so, even from my heart and soul, I take my leave of you and the rest of my other friends who are mentioned in my other letters. Vale!

I shall be glad to hear from you. In the beginning of December, pray send your letters to Mr. Sherley's in Crooked Lane. Divers matters I could write, but only this let me tell you: that I would entreat you to stir up a few friends to venture four or five hundred pounds with me when I come myself. For I then intend to make a voyage to fish, which I make no doubt but I can get two of one in eight months. This thing I thought good to impart to you, and do entreat you to provide such a course against I come home, if you can.

Forth, this is a most ordinary voyage undertaken.

Thus I rest,

your most loving brother,

EMMANUEL ALTHAM.

I have sent my sister Altham six ears of Indian corn and beans to sow in her garden. Also, I have sent you a tobacco pipe which I had of the Indians.

## Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham, March 1623/24

Loving and kind brother,

My love being remembered to you and the rest of my loving friends, these few words being caused by the fitness of a messenger, they are to let you understand that I am in good health and so have been a long time, as I hope also of you.

I have been upon a voyage to the southward of New England, where we have discovered many brave places where never any Christians were before. And this part of the country (I mean to the southward of New England) is far better land and more commodious places for situation than are in any part of this country besides. For there is not only good ground in abundance, with excellent good timber, but here are great store of furs which now the Dutchmen get because our Company of New England have not sent by us so good trucking stuff as they should have, and so have disappointed themselves much. Insomuch that whereas we thought for to have got with our pinnace three or four hundred pounds worth of skins, we have now got small store, to my exceeding great grief.

But this is not all they have hindered themselves of, for in their plantation is the better half women and children, and divers of the rest are very unwilling, so that only the burden of the plantation lieth on the shoulders of some few who are both honest, wise and careful. And if it were not for them few, the plantation would fall, and come to nothing, yea long before this time; and it is so much the more likely because that now by a sudden fire one half of the plantation was burnt down by fire, upon the 5th of November last, wherein was burnt and spoiled the goods of all such that came this last time into New England and are now by reason of this loss forced to come again for England.

But, although it hath pleased God to lay his heavy hand on these poor people and plantation, yet the fault is neither in some of the planters here nor in the unfruitfulness of the country. For I assure thus much: that a better country was never seen nor heard of, for here are a multitude of God's blessings; but they are not to be enjoyed by idle people that think to have all things at wishing for. But if men will take pains at first, they may live afterwards bravely. Indeed, in this country is no clothes to be had, nor divers other things which a man may make a good shift without. Yea, here is all things to be had to a contented mind; and it is not for men to live here that think of their former prosperity and company, friends and kinsfolk, but it is good for such that resolve to forget and leave all these things for a time, and do labor as they think to live by it hereafter.

Neither can I speak but well of the profits that are to be raised here by fishing; indeed, it is such that you would admire. But the best actions whatsoever, being badly undertaken, come to little or no effect. So this plantation, being undertaken by men unexperienced in plantations, is like to feel the smart of it. And also, how is it possible that those men that never saw fishing in their lives should raise profit by fishing? And if they had known it never so well, yet if they had not able of body, they could not perform any matter; for how shall women and children do men's labors? The reason, in conclusion: this I say to you, that unless some other means be taken, which to do is impossible, no means of profit can be raised to the Adventurers for their money again.

If any man thinks to adventure money to have land, this I tell thee: that if they will give me a very small matter, I will make sure to them 10,000 acres of as good land as any in England. And this I am sure of. But although at this time I do fully declare to you the estate of this plantation, yet I pray conceal it 'till others have reported the like. And although these matters may seem strange to you, in regard of the ample relations that have been made in the praise of this plantation, yet take it no otherwise than thus: that it hath been the Company's fault in England, who have sent over so many helpless people that the Governor here (who is a wise gentleman) will not entertain some of them. And secondly, their fault hath been that the planters here have not had good trucking stuff to please the Indians. Indeed, no question, if we had commodity, we might have skins great store. And now I hope this is apparent to you, that the fault is not in the country, which is so good that if my ability would reach, I would settle some plantation; and yet, I hope I would not over-reach myself with hopes, but until that time I do resolve, if I can conveniently, to come hither a-fishing yearly, if God bless me homewards. And I do not doubt but to do the like that other men do, for other ships that come the last year (and this year) have got more fish than their ships could carry; and so carry it for Spain and sell it for great rates. But of this hereafter, if God bless me now home.

Indeed, the Lord hath preserved me miraculously. For, coming to anchor by a great many sands, when it was little wind, it proved at last great store of wind and a great storm, insomuch that our anchors came home and almost laid us upon the sands. And the storm increasing, we were fain to cut our mainmast overboard, and had much ado to save our lives in our ship. But thanks be to God, we were saved and our ship, and are at this time in a good harbor at Patuxet, blessed be God! And here in this harbor we are to stay this winter, for this country is subject to wonderful storms in the winter time; and here it is very cold weather. Yet we have very poor fare here all this winter, being cold water and beef, sometimes, because we have but little of it; and now and then we have good store of fowl. But for all these crosses and disheartenings, I was never better nor better contented in my life, which I thank God for, for I know it cannot be mended with wishes and wailings.

Thus much have I declared unto you concerning our plantation, entreating you to keep it close from the Company and not to think the worse of this country, in which nature hath almost emptied herself to replenish it. And although our beginning is bad, yet I hope that the fishing voyage I am now bound out upon will bring somewhat to the Adventurers, and also enable my own judgment to undertake the like for myself, if God prosper me now. Indeed, if the making of salt here did not require a greater charge of money from the Company, it would do well; but this I say: that if salt be made here to reap store of profit, it requires a greater charge than hath been laid out already, which I think the Company will not disburse without seeing more hopes of profit.

Thus entreating you not to expect me before I come, for when it will be I know not; indeed, I do not desire to come before I have made what profit I can to the Adventurers; which, if it may not be, I have done my utmost and I hope they will accept of it. In the mean time, my love and well wishes being remembered to you, to my sister and to all your children, especially to my three cousins, James, John and Leventhorpe. I pray likewise remember my service to my most worthy and kind friend, Sir John Leventhorpe and his Lady, to both whose services I acknowledge myself bound many ways. Likewise, pray remember me to Sir John Fowle and his Lady, and to my brother

Thomas, and also to my sister Mary, and to all the rest of that worthy stock. Also, pray have my love remembered to Mr. Denn and his wife, and also to Henry Stracy, goodman Watson, and Mr. Bland and Thomas Wells. And pray tell them that if they mislike their adventure I have put into the Company for them, I will return them their monies again; but I pray do you agree with them as you will. I pray, good sir, be as a loving brother to me (which I doubt not of) in increasing my little stock which, if God take me away, may be the better for yours. But whether I live or die, you shall never be the worse for it. Thus, loving, loving brother, have I wrote in haste, entreating you to hold me excused if I have done anything that might not seem worthy of your love. Thus taking my leave of you, of the rest of my good friends, I bid you farewell, entreating the Lord to be with you and to guide you in your ways; that so, you having dealt honestly and conscionably here, serving the Lord in truth and uprightness of heart, you may for the same be rewarded in the kingdom of heaven, where all tears and sorrows shall pass away; which God, for Christ's sake, grant unto us. Even so, Farewell, loving brother; and, if it be God's will, to send us once again to meet.

Your ever-loving and kind brother, till death,

EMMANUEL ALTHAM.

I pray remember my love to Edward Skoles and Seth Haggar. And I pray let Edward Skoles know I would have wrote to him, but my leisure would not give me leave.

## Emmanuel Altham to James Sherley [May 1624]

Most worthy friends,

Your loving letters I have both received much about one time (being about the middle of April, 1624), wherein I conceive both your great love and care over me, which for my part shall never be rewarded with ingratitude. It pleased God that your ship called the *Charity* arrived at Plymouth in New England about five weeks after her departure from the English coast, but the certain day I know not, because I was at that time sixty leagues from thence at Pemaquid a-fishing. But after she had delivered her passengers and goods, she went immediately to Cape Anne, where, in all likelihoods, they are like to make a good voyage, if God withhold it not. For in all possibility, the settled course which yourself and the Company had taken will bring in much profit; for indeed, it is the only means above all other. Yet notwithstanding, the trade of furs may help, but that is not so sure a thing, by reason of divers (as I may call them) interlopers.

So soon as Mr. Pierce his coming into land came to my ears, I was forced much against my mind, both by the importunity of Mr. Bridge and insolences of all our company, to make a voyage from Pemaquid to Plymouth; which, had I not undertaken, although with much hazard of my person, all our company had and would have dispersed themselves. And if either myself or the master would detain them, they openly threatened a more speedy revenge: either to kill us or to blow our ship up. But these things are past, and the party dead who spake it, and I fear that God who knoweth all hearts, prevented him by death from acting those villainous projects which, by his words in his life, he professed to do. The occasions of this was two: first, in regard provisions went very hard with us, and the next was a foolish and needless fear they had of their wages. To prevent all this and farther mischief, I went to Plymouth about the beginning of April; where, by the way, I was forced with contrary winds and foul weather to stay somewhat longer than I wished. But at my coming to Cape Anne, I there found Mr. Winslow and master Peirce, for which I was very joyful. And so, having received of them divers commendations and letters from yourself and my other friends, I went with all possible speed to Plymouth to know the Governor's resolution. For thus it was, that provisions we had but very few before Christmas, but were fain to have some peas out of Plymouth store. And so, because we were going to fish among our countrymen, we thought to get divers things by reason of Mr. Bridge his acquaintance, but these our hopes were much frustrated. For, coming to the fishermen, we could have no provision without present pay, which I was destitute of, notwithstanding I offered to become bond for anything I took up. But they not regarding neither the Company's nor my word did rather solicit our men to come work with them, for their victuals, and to leave the ship, than to show any love or friendship to us in helping us. Therefore, rather than our company should go away and our voyage be overthrown, we were constrained to use a present, though unwilling means to get some provisions (bread and peas) which before we were destitute of. So, having dispatched my business at Plymouth and received my order from the Governor, Mr. Bradford, and his Assistants, which was that look what fish

we had caught in our pinnace should be brought to Cape Anne and to deliver it to Mr. Peirce, and afterwards to aid and help Mr. Peirce in his voyage, in what we could, both with our men and boats. To all which, as I am in duty bound, so I consented unto it, and with all convenient speed went away to our ship, Mr. Winslow being with me.

And by this time, which was about the last of April, I thought Mr. Bridge had killed about 10,000 fish, for more I think our salt would not have saved; but by the backwardness of our people, and strange mishap, these hopes were quite altered. For, coming within one day's journey of our ship, this untimely news came to me that our pinnace was cast away and Mr. Bridge and two of our men drowned, being John Vow and Peter Morrett. All which news did not a little trouble me, knowing what great cost and charge you have been at for us, and also knowing that upon the good and prosperity of the ship and voyage depended part of my reputation and profit. But this unwelcome news did, in conceit, deprive of both. But coming home to our ship, I there found this news true thus far: that Mr. Bridge, our master, was drowned and the two men, and the ship in a very strange manner spoiled. For thus it fortuned that upon the 10th of April, 1624, happened a great storm, and some of our cables that we were moored withal gave way and slip off on the place they were made fast to ashore. And so, the wind and sea being very high, drove our ship ashore upon rocks where she beat. In the meantime, being night, the master and company arose, and every man shifted for themselves to save life; but the master going into his cabin to fetch his whistle, could not get into any boat about the ship, the sea brake so over the ship. And so by that means, before a boat could come, the ship overset and drowned him and the other two. And the rest, that were got into our shallows and hung about the ship, had much ado to recover the shore, your cousin, for one. For the ship oversetting, pitch her mainyard into one boat where were six or seven of our men, and so sunk her. For those that could then swim got to the shore with much hurt; the rest that could not swim were drowned. And so, before the next morning, our ship was quite under water sunk, and nothing to be seen save only the tops of her masts sometimes, for the sea did rake her to and fro upon the rocks. All which disasters did not a little trouble me, for our ship was not only spoiled, our men drowned, but we that were saved lost the most part of what we had in the ship. Myself, especially, lost my books and some clothes, and most of what I had. But my comfort is that God will restore me something one day again, for afflictions are but trials of his love. We lost three shallows, and our ship's boat and another shallop we borrowed which we. [sentence abruptly ends].

After my coming to our ship and seeing how all things stood, and that although the ship were much spoiled and bruised, insomuch that some of our neighbors very dishonestly enticed our men to leave the ship and to seek out for their victuals, showing them that the ship was unrecoverable and using many arguments of disuasion to them, God knoweth, who were willing to entertain anything against us before, but now laying hold on of this opportunity rejoicing or I here departed. But at my coming home, I got them all together and sought far and near for help to recover our ship, if it were possible, which to do seemed difficult. But by the help of one Mr. Cooke of Barnstable and divers of his friends and my acquaintance, weighed her out of the water, and so by the help of many hands we got the ship into a place nearby, convenient to see what possibility there was of saving the ship. So, having viewed her, there was broken of her starboard side six or seven planks and some timbers, which we mended with help; and on her larboard side,

half her plank, timbers and knees were broken in such sort that then she was thought impossible to hold together, by reason of the hurt she had received outward and the shaking of the beams and timbers inwardly. But blessed be God, by the help and means that I have got of carpenters, she is now made up as strong and sufficient for the sea as ever she was. And if not one of our company come in her, yet by the help of God, we being fitted with a sufficient man master, I will come in her.

And do not doubt but, through God's mercies, to do well in her, although for this time we shall not make so good a voyage as is expected. For whereas we thought to have got ten or twelve thousand fish, we had scarce one thousand, and some of that was lost, and all our salt. For the ship being beat ashore, brake down our stages, and there we lost both the salt and fish that was in it. And all the rest of the salt, powder, provision, and many other things (which, if God spare my life, I will give account of) were lost. The rest of the things that we saved shall safely and truly be delivered by me to you, with an account of all our men's carriages and behaviors, that so you may reward some and reprove others.

And now, loving sir, since that I have troubled you with writing thus far, pardon me if I be too tedious; for it makes me continually be the more larger to you in writing, because I know both you and many other good men have laid out much money upon Plymouth plantation, and especially as for the goods upon this ship. So do I conceive and know your eyes are upon us in a more especial manner. And for that this voyage that not begun nor ended so well as either you or I could wish, yet I pray pardon me for a while in the same, until I shall come to speak with you and the rest of the Company. For until then, I will neither commend my care and diligence, nor discommend the want of either of them, for full soon may a man err. But as my labor and care was never wanting heretofore, so until I shall make a full accomplishment of this troublesome voyage and then to deliver all things into your own hand, I will continue the same. And as at this time I have no man to assist me that I can trust (the master being gone), so will I strain to the uttermost of my knowledge to bring everything to the same order it was, and then to come for England, if our Governor pleaseth. And he hath sent me word that he will provide me a sufficient man for master, notwithstanding Richard Gardinar hath earnestly requested it, claiming it as his due by place, but some say not by sufficiency. I will say no more concerning him because I know you shall understand it by others; only thus much I must needs say: that so far as he could, he was willing to help us with the ship. And now he takes it somewhat unkindly that, seeing the Company have sent our ship's company assurance for their wage, that he is not intimated therein. So much for that, which is to be left to your and the Company's wisdom.

And once again let me be pardoned if I seem to be overbold. I understand by your letter to Mr. Bridge that you are somewhat discontented with me for not taking a Frenchman which we met withal; but to the contrary, wonderfully commend and extol Mr. Bridge for his courage and forwardness in the same, notwithstanding my backwardness. To answer which, I will do in few words. It so happened that about 400 leagues off the Lands End of England, we met with a small Frenchman. As I take it, he was of Rochelle. In the morning we had sight of one of another and he stood right with us and we with him. Coming near us, he spied us to be an Englishman, so he stood away from us and by a sudden puff of wind brake his mainmast. For we being desirous to hear news and also to see if he had any skins aboard or if he had been a-trading on the coast of

New England, we stood after him and hailed him what he was and whence for. He told us he was of Rochelle and that he had but 7000 of cor-fish aboard of him and that he was come from the Bank of Newfoundland a-fishing; and also that his ship was leaky, so he made the more haste home before he had made his voyage. But we mistrusting him, sent our boat aboard him to see if he had skins, but in conclusion we saw he was very poor and had not been ashore on no place; and so gave us some fish which at that time we stood in great need of as also of wood (of which he had none because he had not been on land nowhere). All these things being considered, I hope you will not blame me, for I would do in your behalf in that kind rather more than less than my commission would bear me out in. But this ship was 500 leagues from any part of New England when we met her and if I should have done it, I had brought a great trouble both upon you and myself. For I will assure you and all the Company that if you will but get a letter of mart and a safe protection from His Majesty in England for taking of Frenchmen on Newfoundland Bank, you might easily with this pinnace take and leave what ships you list. For we had sight of twenty sail of Frenchmen at one time, and I believe never a one had any ordinance. But to end, pray pardon me if I have done amiss, but what I did, I have done (in my opinion and in the opinion of all the companies at Plymouth) for your peace and my own safety. For the Governor hath seen my commission and saith, himself, I could not have answered it. Therefore, pray blame me not for my good will and care, for I should be very loath to lose a friend for nothing and upon no occasion, especially when friends are hard to get. And as at this time, although I might complain of my time all spent because it hath been a troublesome time to me, yet I am quite of another mind; for as I was called by God to this place, so, through his blessing, I will discharge it honestly, whether I lose or get it.

But out of all question, the course that you have settled now will bring in profit enough, for they make salt at Plymouth, and have good store of boats, all which is means to profit. And I make no question now but that New Plymouth will quickly return your money again. For the most part they are honest and careful men. However, they have had many crosses; yet now they will flourish, God blessing them, which God grant.

I do understand that Thomas Dawson, the surgeon, hath been very large on his tongue concerning myself, or that I should be displaced by Mr. Bradford, and many other contumelious speeches, as also he informed you about the Frenchman. For all which, I pray, sir, if you see him, certify him that I will make him answer it in England; and although it cost £100, I will make him see the jail for it. And there he shall lie, if God bless me homeward. If it please God to deal otherwise with me, I pray God give him more grace, but I hope you will not believe him. But I would wish you rather suspect him, for he is the veriest villain that I ever knew, as hath been testified by his carriage both to Plymouth company, your own self and Company, and also to me. And truly, I fear that I shall justly lay that to his charge which if it be prosecuted will go near to hang him.

At this time I do expect news from our Governor, Mr. Bradford, and as I think, he will determine that we shall bring home Mr. Peirce his cor-fish and train. But I think it will fall out otherwise, for I have at this present received a letter from one of my acquaintance that is owner of a ship in this country, and he proffers me for to hire our ship and to take our men out and to put them into his own ship, which goeth for the Straits. And so by this means I hope to get a good freight and to save wages and

provisions for some of my own company. And this answer I have returned him: that I demand £140 for our ship, and to come for England presently; so that then we shall be defrayed of all charge and have our ship brought home for nothing. And indeed, we must be forced to come for England very soon, because we have no provisions nor have any means to get any. But of all these things I write in what I think, for I have (and ever will do) refer all these matters concerning your ship to the Governor and his Assistants' directions; and if good suffer me, they shall be followed.

I pray, sir, let the 40s I gave Mr. Mastige a bill for be paid at first sight, for he did me a great kindness in it; for otherwise I could not have got some bread which I did.

Thus my love remembered to yourself and wife, with thanks for your token I received by Mr. Winslow, being three gallons of "hot water." Pray remember my love Mr. Terrill Bacco, Mr. Stubs and his wife, your brother Robert, and Mr. John Sherley and his wife, to Mr. Brewer, Mr. Collier, Dr. Ran, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Thorrell, and to Mr. Pocop (my good friend), and especially to Robert Cushman, and all these the rest of my loving friends of the Company and out of the Company.

And I pray, sir, if you please, let the Company see my letter. For look, what I have wrote to you in particular, so much would I have wrote to them in general, but time did wonderfully prevent me, in such manner that I am put to straits every way.

I pray remember me kindly to my two brothers and my sister, and the rest of my loving friends; and pray let them know I could not have time to write them. Only I pray tell them I am well, and that I hope one day to see them again, but the time is uncertain. Yet I fear we shall come sooner than I desire, since our great expectation is so hindered by misfortune. But I do not doubt of the profit that may be raised the next year, for now you have laid as good a ground-plot as ever was—and better than before, for without this course of fishing, you cannot have your monies again. Thus, praying to God daily for them and you and for all well-willers to this foreign plantation, I ever rest yours and others', to my power,

Emmanuel Altham

I pray tell Mrs. Bridge I will save her husband's things for her, so much as we saved, it being almost all lost.

The haste of this messenger makes me forget divers things which I should have wrote to you of; but I hope all things will be for the best, seeing it can be no better. For be not discouraged at this bad news, but hope the next year for better, which I do promise, if you hold on the course begun.

## Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham June 1624

Loving brother,

In regard of that near bond wherewith I am tied to you, I cannot but seek all opportunities to inform you how it fareth with me; and at this time the more, in regard I am so far separated from you in the remotest parts of the west. And at this time I desire to be the more large, knowing your expectations will be frustrated by me, by not coming into England, the cause of which hath happened accidentally. For considering with myself of the many troubles and crosses and losses, with much hindrance of my time, which happened unto me at my last being there, upon serious consideration with myself, I durst not put myself so soon upon the same so rawly again. For first, thinking with myself how ill I was dealt withal by Mr. Pemberton and his associates, for whose good I was up early and late, and whose ship I furnished with all manner of provisions, ready to take her voyage to sea; yet, because there was a jar between him and the Adventurers I formerly served (whom I found always loving unto me and in whose service I being, I employed my body and mind for their good), he thought I had concealed some things from him, whereby he took himself prejudiced. Whereas I, meaning well, stood as neuter; which, if I had sticked to one side, I had done better; but if to him, not with a good conscience. For as heretofore I have related, he sought the overthrow of a whole colony of people, which since hath appeared more apparent. For at the arrival of Mr. Pemberton's ship and ours in this country, we both lighted upon one harbor, where the New Plymouth Colony kept a stage for their fishing. Which stage they of Pemberton's ship, by order from him, seized upon by awhile; but in the interim were glad to compound, or else it had cost them the loss of their lives and ship. For the plantation sent twenty men in arms to regain it by land, and our ship lay by theirs to fight with them if any onset were given. But they, loving to sleep in a whole skin, laid down their arms and abandoned the plantation's right; otherwise it had cost them some blood, if not their lives. Since which time, their agents here do trouble this poor people, and have set factions among them, which I fear, in time, will be their overthrow, if God prevent it not in time. After which falling off with the one side in London, the other promised me more if I would serve them than I had demanded of the other; but they, as foolishly as the other side knavishly, admitted so many of the Company for adventuring; and upon such terms which are too large to write, disheartened me from them likewise. For they would have had me to adventure with them in ready money, whereas others adventuring the like sum had a receipt for ten or twenty pounds more being upon old accounts. So in conclusion, I had cause to refuse both, or else to adventure my money I knew not how. After all which, it being left to my choice till the last, I made choice of this course: to expend some money in provisions for myself, and to live in the country here a little, that so I might not be censured for leaving off my voyage so fully intended. And although I went not in that nature I made account of, yet since my arrival here, which was upon the 4th of March, and seeing how things have been carried, I repent no whit, but rejoice in that I dealt with neither.

For my being here awhile and marking the carriages of these fishing affairs, I doubt not but in time to manage them without the direct of others, which thing is the chiefest cause of my stay. For it is my resolution to adventure this ways again, but never to have any other but myself to be the chief manager of it, for a honest man had better deal with savages than with seamen, whose god is all manner of wickedness. And although the expense of my time will be much, yet as I shall not be any great gainer, so shall I be no great spender; yet I doubt not to be a safer, if God bless me in those courses that I will take. For I intend not to sit idle, but to use all means to help myself; and the next year, I hope to be settled in some certain course of plantation. It may be your acquaintance with Sir Samuel Argall (if it be any) may do me some good, for I hear he intends to adventure for a plantation in this country the next year; in which business I doubt not but I could do him some good by reason of my acquaintance here with the natives. To which purpose I have writ to a merchant in London named Mr. Cross in Bartholomew Lane, who is of my acquaintance and the principal agent in that adventure. If you see it convenient, I pray speak to Sir Samuel, who I know to be judicious and discreet and a lover to all plantations.

But for all this, I am not so wedded to my own desires as to reject your good advice. For if you think it better for me to leave this country than to tarry in it, showing your reasons, I will come home to my own country the next year. But if I be not advised by you to that purpose, my resolutions are settled here for some longer time if I see any good to come of it. And in the mean time, I pray excuse me to my friends who have expected me this year, and according to your own discretion, frame them answer. However, I desire you, if Mr. Bland and William Watson enquire of me, I pray pay them their monies for their adventure, if they do in any sort suspect it or desire it; as also Goodman Stracy and Wells who, I know, long look for it, and from whose censures I desire to be freed, although of right they should stand to the hazard of profit and loss. But seeing it was adventured by my means, I desire to repay them again, for I think that by reason of Mr. Pemberton and his factions, a £10 share will never yield twenty shillings. For he by his falsities made the Company in England leave from supplying this people here, and now they here will not join again with the Adventurers, but will live of themselves. I am right sorry that I have adventured so much myself; much more that I persuaded you and some other friends to adventure your monies in a business so strange to us all. But it is too late; only I shall be more cautious while I live, and look to my own better, for although that by these many mishaps I have been a loser, yet I hope that my stock at home in your hands will increase: if I be dealt honestly by, by them who had it when I came this way, which I hope you will take to your care. And for the more security of it, I desire you to take £400 of mine into your hands and to allow me an yearly annuity for it, such as in reason shall be thought fit by my brother Hawtry, my cousin Banks and yourself. The other part of my means I will reserve to adventure when I see an opportunity, as being sufficient; which money, likewise, I refer to the care of you and my brother Hawtry to dispose of it as you think most for my good. But I pray you that those things I have sent for, which things are specified in a note here enclosed, let them all be bought for me, and let your man help Mr. Sherley to put them up for me in very good cask, for fear of wet. All which things are not for my private spending, but are to barter away to others to my most advantage. And to that end, let Mr. Sherley be furnished with monies, so that I may not fail of my expectations by the next shipping. I

have also given Mr. Sherley order to receive £20 for me of one William Peirce, master of that ship I went over in the last year, being called the *Hopewell*. The said Peirce his bond I left with one Mr. Richard Tapper, grocer at Plymouth by the town hall, who is my friend and did promise me to deliver it, it being enclosed in a letter directed to Mr. Sherley, if he were living, or to Mr. Nathaniel Hawes at the Three Cocks. Which bond, I hope, come long before this time; but if it should not, I have given order to Mr. Sherley to send to him for it at the first receipt of my letter. And to Mr. Sherley hath Peirce promised me to deliver the money at his first coming into England, which will be about the 1st of September, 1625. In the meantime, pray solicit Mr. Sherley to do his best for me. Also to this Mr. Richard Tapper, grocer at Plymouth, and to one goodman Cheire, a throwster, who are both known to Mr. Sherley and are my friends. To them I have written to send me two hogsheads of white peas, two hogsheads of meal, four bushels of oatmeal, five hundred weight of biscuit, three or four she-goats, and four pair of leather buskins (to keep one free from the mosquitoes which are here infinite) .

I pray, sir, do your best that these commodities be bought for me, which, if they come safe to me, I hope to make a good voyage of it. For all these things in the note are for the most part to trade with the Indians, which will make a good return, if God give me life and health: specially those knives and beads, of all which I have sent Mr. Sherley patterns of, with notes of their quantities, that I might have such as I have wrote for. I could have at this time sent home £20 worth of beaver, but I keep it by me for my more necessary occasions in trading. And if I can do nothing worthy my stay, I intend, if possibly, to see Virginia, and in my way homewards, to see Spain and France, that so I may be complete in travel, which will be worth my time.

Thus remembering my true love unto you with thankful acknowledgment of your continual care and love towards me, I desire you to remember my love to your wife, my sister, my aunt Wolley, Mr. Denn, and the rest of my friends whose names want of time makes me not mention. Especially, as I am most bound, pray forget me not, but remember my love and service to the right worshipful Sir John Leventhorpe and his Lady, and to all my brothers and sisters there.

Farewell!

So, committing you to the Lord protection, I rest your truly loving brother 'till death,

EMMANUEL ALTHAM.

Patuxet, this 10th of June, 1625.

This is my first letter.

I have sent you an Indian tobacco pipe, being the first and rarest that ever I saw. I desire you to keep it for my sake, it being a great king's pipe in this country. I have sent it by Mr. Winslow to deliver you with his own hands; who, if he doth meet you at London, pray gratify his pains with a pint of wine, for he is my loving friend, and one who cometh this way again about next November, by whom I do much desire to hear from you, and in whom I have put my trust to buy my commodities to trade with the Indians here. The pipe cannot be transformed to a better smell, for it doth stink exceedingly of Indian tobacco.