

STEPHEN HOPKINS

THE known and already published facts concerning this Pilgrim that are factors in his identification are his previous residence in London (*Mourt's Relation*) and the name of his wife, Elizabeth, stated to have been his second marriage (*Bradford*). The church register of St. Mary Matfellow (Whitechapel) records the marriage of Stephen Hopkins and Elizabeth Fisher, 19 February, 1617/18, which complies with the necessary factors just quoted. This places Hopkins in the parish on the highroad entering London at Aldgate near which Bradford, Carver, Cushman and Southworth lived in or near Heneage House, Aldgate Ward, as already shown, and thus provides the atmosphere and propinquity required to establish this probability. The name of his first wife is not known but he may be the same Stephen Hopkins, a resident in the parish of St. Stephens, Coleman St., who had a son Stephen, baptized 22 December, 1609, possibly by this first marriage. All other Stephen Hopkinses found in London have been followed to a point where they could be eliminated from consideration as the Pilgrim.

It seems possible to identify the Pilgrim, Stephen Hopkins, with one of his name who sailed for Virginia in the *Sea Adventure* which set sail 15 May, 1609, via Bermuda

and was wrecked on the shore of that island. This earlier Hopkins, in an account of this voyage, is described as one "who had much knowledge in the Scriptures and could reason well therein." The chaplain of the party chose him to be his assistant "to read the Psalmes and Chapters upon Sondayes" after they had become settled on the island. The narrator continues the story of this stranded company (which was originally bound for Virginia) and relates a mutiny among the passengers who were desirous to continue the voyage. This Stephen Hopkins was one of the ringleaders. Sir George Summers caused these mutineers to be arrested and tried. Hopkins with his associates was found guilty of rebellion, "but so penitent hee was and made soe much moane alledging the ruine of his Wife and Children," that upon the plea of the rest of the company the Governor pardoned him. After this a small bark was built and the company proceeded to Virginia. (*Purchas. His Pilgrimes, Book ix, pt. 2; comp. Gen. Reg. xxxiii, 305.*)

The significance of this and its connection with Stephen Hopkins, the Pilgrim, will be apparent from what is recorded of him after arrival of the *Mayflower* at Plymouth. He was of the first exploring party sent out to seek a suitable place for habitation and while on this errand they came across a sight which was curious to them—a small tree bent over and attached to boughs and grasses woven together covering a deep pit. Hopkins at once informed them that it was a trap used by the Indians to catch deer. Knowledge of this sort was not the common property of residents of London but must have been acquired by previous residence among the Indians such as we

know was the case with the Stephen Hopkins on the 1609 voyage. Doubtless he had seen the same device in Virginia. When Samoset came to Plymouth and welcomed the Pilgrims he was lodged overnight in Stephen Hopkins' house, doubtless because Hopkins could understand his language and converse with him. When the messenger of Canonicus brought the snake-skin full of arrows to Plymouth, Standish and Hopkins had charge of him (Standish in his capacity as military commander), and tried to get at the meaning of the message this snake symbolized. As Standish did not know the Indian language, Hopkins was chosen to learn from the Indian what it meant. In 1623 Hopkins accompanied Winslow on the mission to Massasoit just as he did in 1621, doubtless for the same purpose—his knowledge of the Indian tongue. These instances definitely confirm the view that Hopkins had been on this coast prior to his voyage on the *Mayflower*. It was always Hopkins when negotiations with the Indians were necessary and he could not have learned these things in London. It seems highly probable that Weston selected Hopkins to accompany the Pilgrims because of his previous knowledge of this coast.

One clue remains to be considered—the rare name of Giles, his son. The compiler has only found one instance of it—that of a Giles Hopkins, a tiler of Bristol, living there in 1639, aged 44 years. It is to be remembered that Francis Eaton also came from Bristol. The Militia list for Gloucestershire, 1608, shows a family of weavers and clothiers in the hamlet of Wortley in the parish of Wotton under Edge (16 miles from Bristol) bearing the names of Stephen Hopkins and his sons. Unfortunately, the parish

records of Wotton are imperfect for the years necessary for identifying our Stephen as of this family, but sufficient exists to show the baptism of a son William to Stephen Hopkins, 19 July, 1607, after which the name disappears from the register. Theoretically, this gives opportunity for the removal of this Stephen to London in time to join the *Sea Adventure* on her voyage to Bermuda as above related. An imperfect entry in the Wotton register records the baptism of —— Hopkins of Stephen Hopkins, 29 October, 1581, who was the fourth child and whose age would fit that of the Pilgrim. The record does not state whether a son or daughter, but as no child had been named Stephen for himself possibly this was the name of the child.

(See Sampson.)