

HISTORICAL

**LETTERS**

ON THE

FIRST CHARTER

OF

Massachusetts Government.

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## P R E F A C E .

Few men are ignorant that our ancestors sought this country for protection of the rights of conscience and religious tranquillity ; and it is equally notorious, that when established here in power, they strangely violated in others those rights and that peace they once so highly prized.

The record of this inconsistency has stood for ages in our history, and has been used as evidence to discredit our modes of government.

Our gifted writers, too, have explained it, but rather by opinions comports with their own interests and political views, than by a detail of facts ; and so uniform has been the suppression of matter bearing upon the question for nearly a century, that it would seem to be settled by precedent, that this nation is not to be trusted with all portions of its own history.

But it seems to me that history should know no concealment ; the people have a right to the whole truth, and to the full benefit of our historical teachings ; and if, in the supposed discharge of imperative duty, I have detailed facts that politic men have concealed, let no man say I wantonly expose the errors of the fathers.

When they came over with their first charter of civil and religious liberty, they possessed sovereign power, as incident to their condition under the grant ;—but they seemed as unconscious of its dangerous seductions as of its true nature and functions.

It was popular sovereignty, and of most delicate and difficult use ; yet they rashly exercised it after the manner of sovereign princes and pre-

lates, and of course fell into their temptations and errors.

History had long shown that no sovereignty, christian or pagan, could ever establish religion by law without persecution ; yet our sovereign ancestors attempted it, and were guilty of persecution as these letters will show. It cost them more than a century's teaching, and much blood and treasure, to learn, that, to every individual, belongs the culture of his own religion ; and that the office of government is to protect him merely in that labor.

We, like our early ancestors, are in the possession of sovereign power ; and, like them, we use it after the manner of despotic kings—to build up and to destroy, and to grant privileges, immunities, and monopolies, to favored classes. In truth, we use the people's sovereignty as an arbitrary master, to control men's pursuits, when their right is protection merely in the acquisition of property.

No direct interference by the people's sovereignty, can aid the general interests of property more than those of religion. Our government, in its legitimate functions, operates like a mighty system of police, merely to establish justice between man and man, and keep the nations peace at home and abroad.

The following letters are designed to teach these truths by the examples of our history ; and any success, however limited, will reward the labor.

*Boston, March 13, 1839.*

# LETTERS

ON THE

## FIRST CHARTER.

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### CHAPTER 1.

A nation's own experience is its best political guide. The history of foreigners, or of distant and remote ages is very apt to mislead in our search for political truth, and especially in the art of self-government.

It seems to me that we have not improved by all the teachings of our own history—for the reason that our patriot writers and orators mostly bound their vision in retrospect by our revolutionary era. And yet all behind that, is not dark, barren and profitless. It should be known that the most important truths on which our free forms of government now rest, are not the discoveries of our revolutionary sages; but of the wise men and patriots living and acting through our whole line of history. At the framing of our present constitution, these truths were embodied indeed with marvellous aptitude and simplicity, and by as true men as ever blessed a nation's councils.

It was the fortune of our ancestors to have been taught the difficulties of government in two distinct schools, under the Colonial and Provin-

cial charters—in former times, called the first and second charters. But the history of the second charter is not so useful to us, of this age, as that of the first; having now no vice-kingly power, to oppose and overthrow, acting as the agent of a foreign, and to us, absolute despotism, as was the case with our ancestors during its authority. We of this day need lessons in the art of self government: and if we fail in this divine work, we are undone; and in this, the teachings of the first charter history may greatly aid us; and for this cause I have selected it as a subject of thought and discussion to the brethren.

This charter government, as moulded and modelled by our ancestors was as perfect as our own constitution. In theory it was as tender of common right, and as repulsive of special privilege to classes or interests, and as sensitive too, to all popular impulses, good or ill. And it is thus in all self governing communities, that their weal or woe being in their own keeping—the freest forms of Legislation written on parchment, are in themselves no protection, but will be instruments of blessing or suicide, as may befit the ruling influences or interests for the time being.

As communities are aptly denominated commercial, agricultural, or manufacturing—so our ancestors during the first charter should be called a religious community. Religion and its interests were the main topics of social and private consideration in that age, and at last as a secular power it ruled the community. And when the interests and influence of the Church ruled, the rulers of the Church ruled the people, and I shall show before we part, by historical narrative, an iron despotism set up by an ambitious priesthood, and ruling the people here in blood and that too, through the instrumentality of the people's own freest forms of self government under the first charter.

Now might we suppose, the love of wealth to absorb the mind of this generation as did the temporal interests of religion that of the men of the first charter, and that the influence of wealth rising above that of common right and common justice should seize on and usurp our free forms of government wherewith to rule and ruin the community, which is our present danger, then should we learn, as did our fathers, the perils of practical self government.

But I will give the forms of government under the first charter.

This Instrument was granted by King Charles the first, in 1628, to a company of adventurers in London, formed to plant and govern a colony on these shores. In terms and in effect it constituted them a body corporate as well as politic, by the name of the "Governor & Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England." It ordained that the officers of the government should be one Governor—one Deputy Governor and eighteen assistants—and these were to be annually chosen by the free men of the colony from their own body.

Before the company left England, Matthew Cradock was appointed the first Governor in London, and being sworn into office in chancery before the King, the governing principle was thus communicated to him and the corporation, as was supposed from the sovereignty of England itself.

The governor and seven at least of the assistants, were to hold four annual courts—afterwards altered to two—at which all the freemen of the company might attend and vote. This seems the exercise of a pure Democracy, but was practicable only for a short season. For by the rapid settlement of new towns, it became inconvenient for the freemen to attend at Boston in a body, and six years from the date of the Charter in 1634 the year after the Pequot war, at a

court of elections, twenty-four of the principal freemen appeared as the deputies of the whole body, and demanded a share in the government as such. After some opposition by the assistants, they at length succeeded. And this was the origin and commencement of a House of Representatives in this State.

But as yet the assistants and deputies sat together in the same house and acting jointly and by majorities. But as the people multiplied, the Deputies increased, whereas the number of assistants was limited by the Charter—and they soon found their power merged in that of the Deputies. And here a struggle began. The assistants knew that by the charter they were recognized as a distinct body, and as such, they strove to balance the body of Deputies in legislation; and these in their turn were successful; for about 1648 a law was past, directing the assistants to set apart from the Deputies—and thus they became a distinct and co-ordinate branch of the legislature, like our Senate at this day.

The Governor and assistants constituted the executive branch, and in most cases the judicial also, as a court of appeals. The Governor had no veto power but only a double vote in case of an equal division among the assistants. The idea of the executive negative upon both branches, was of kingly origin here, no one having ever enjoyed that power, until the introduction of the crown Governors under the second charter, and it was ever a great cause of strife and of final separation from Britain.

Thus carefully did our ancestors balance the machinery of their government, but whether it would produce good laws or not, depended on the equality of condition, intelligence and virtue of the people; who in effect administered that government upon themselves. In point of fact the



first charter produced some of the most equal and just laws when under the democratic influences of common right that ever blessed a people, but then, when under the aristocratic and special influences of Church power, it gave forth enactments, bloody and disgraceful in the highest degree.

But in a self governing community, the origin of good or bad laws is to be sought in the body of the people for there in truth are the efficient ballancing or disturbing influences. At first view the planters of New-England under the first charter seem specially fortunate in the harmony of their social state. They came over here as equals. They took up and cultivated the wild lands as equals. They met in social and political intercourse as equals for the advancement of knowledge and good government in short it was a well ballanced community and well constructed for self government.

But if we read further into the history of those times we shall find those fortunate balances materially disturbed, first in the community and then in the government—and that not by the inequalities of wealth as with us, but by a clerical power which rose and fell with the first charter, and the notice of which will be reserved for another letter.

## LETTER II.

It being then manifest, that in the first charter government all things on parchment were equal, just, and Democratic—we should next examine the disposition and customs of the people and their social state in those days.

I have said, that they considered religion and its interests, the chief purpose of life ; and this is proved by one of the first of their general laws. It was passed in 1631—probably the very year they carried the charter from Charlestown over to Boston ; and where as yet, there were set up only a few temporary hovels for human habitation—and it is thus :—

“That the body of freemen here, may be preserved of honest and good men ;—It is ordained ; that henceforth, no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this Commonwealth, but such as are members of some of the Churches within the limits of this jurisdiction.”

Upon the promulgation of this law, an old Democratic non-conformist, by the name of Blaxton, and who then lived at Boston, claiming to own the whole peninsula, declared, that he had come out from England because he abhorred the domination of the Lords Bishops ; and now he equally abhorred the domination of the Lords Brethren, here, and he forthwith quit his possessions in Boston and went south out of the jurisdiction near to a place afterwards called Providence, by Roger Williams. It is believed that he was once a minister of the Gospel. At this early period it is not probable that there were a thousand people in the whole colony ; and yet

the dominant spirits of that body, gave a tone to public sentiment in matters of Church and State in Massachusetts, which endured even beyond the authority of the first charter.

Two years after this, the Rev. John Cotton came over—being expelled from his charge in England, and a fugitive before the bitter persecutions of established Church authority there. On the other side of the water he was a non-conformist—that is, a Democratic Reformer in matters of religion—vindicating freedom of thought and action and human equality, but here, in this western world having tasted the luxury of power, we shall see what he was.

At the time of his arrival, the freemen here were in deep commotion upon the right of representation in the General Court. Cotton preached a sermon upon Government, which gave him great notoriety, and he soon established himself a political, as well as a church leader. His openly avowed sentiments, ran thus, and are even to this day recorded:—That whenever God, he said, allowed a commonwealth liberty to mould its own frame of Government, the scripture gave full directions for the right ordering thereof, but that in such sort as may best maintain the consequence and power of the Church. In the first charter there was too much of "Athenian Democracy," to suit his views. God, he affirmed, never ordained a Democracy as a fit government, either for Church or State, for said he, if the people be governors, who shall be governed? He forgot that the first charter was an instrument of self-government, merely, in the hands of the people. But he was bold enough to say that both Monarchy and Aristocracy were approved and even directed in scripture. And yet in these scripture governments, in the end, all sovereignty was referred to God himself, and upon the whole, he proposed to the people to seek after a

Theocracy in Church and State as nigh as might be to that which was the glory of Israel, God's peculiar people ; — and then, we of this day can finish the sense which his modesty forbid ; — that John Cotton and the clergy should be the Mosos and Aaron and whole tribe of Levi to our fathers, and approaching as they professed to do, nearer the great law-giver than other people, they could declare his will to their liking, with only one danger to their absolute domain—that they would not agree among themselves what that will was.

But brethren, Democrats, I will not treat this subject lightly, for I am writing to you true history. These sentiments however strange to your ears, were then real, and actually reduced to practice.

Mr. Cotton was requested by the government to commence his Theocracy and to form an abstract of the laws wherewith God governed his ancient people and which he considered of lasting equity. And this he did ; and that code was enacted by the government. I will give a portion of Cotton's Church Laws that you may compare them with those of Draco, and judge which were the most bloody . —

- 1—If any man shall have, or worship any other God but the Lord God—he shall be put to death.
- 2—If any man or woman be a witch, that is, hath, or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death.
- 3—If any person, within this jurisdiction, whether christian or pagan, shall willingly blaspheme the holy name of God, Father, Son, or Holy Ghost—either by denying the true God—or his creation, or government of the world ; or reproach the holy religion of God as if it were a politic device to keep ignorant men in awe, &c., they shall be put to death !

Then murder, rape, man-stealing, sodomy, treason, and adultery, are made punishable with death. So with children who curse or smite their parents, or stubborn and rebellious sons.

I will now notice those laws by which the Church brought within its grasp the elective franchise, by the aid of Mr. Cotton and the other clergy. By an act of 1643, if a man not a freeman, that is, not a church member, shall presume to vote for any charter officers, he shall pay a fine of ten pounds ; a thing almost impossible in those days.

Further, if any freeman should refuse to attend upon the public worship of God here established, he was not allowed to vote during such his wicked course.

Again, if a Deputy or representative of the people who was not orthodox upon the main points of the Christian religion, should be returned by the freemen of any town to the General Court, it was ordained that he should not be received. And any freeman voting for such Deputy, knowing his heretical character should be fined.

Church membership then, being indispensable to secure to a freeman the privilege of voting under the first charter, we should look into the laws relative to the mode of gathering churches and regulating their movements in those days—to learn by what authority and under what restrictions our ancestors essayed to practice self government.

By a series of acts respecting Ecclesiastical concerns, passed by the General Court between 1630—and 1646—it was provided in substance—That all the people of God within the jurisdiction—orthodox in judgment, of sober life, and not in a church way—might gather themselves into a church estate—observing the rules of Christ revealed in his word ; provided they acquaint three

or more magistrates dwelling next unto them and the elders of the neighboring churches—and have their approbation therein; and no person, member of a church gathered contrary to this rule shall be admitted to the freedom of this Commonwealth.

What those rules of Christ were upon which churches might be lawfully gathered were settled in ministerial Synods.

By further enactments every church had free liberty of admission, recommendation, dismissal and expulsion of its members upon due cause, with free exercise of the discipline and censures of Christ.

And moreover—the civil authority here established had power and liberty to see the peace, ordinances and rules of Christ be observed in every church according to his word.

It is very easy to discern the effect of all this special legislation in favor of churches and clerical interests and ambition—No man could vote at elections as a matter of right—of sacred right, as we now regard it; but it was sought as a privilege, and received as such of the Church, and granted by a church vote, after an examination of religious qualifications settled at Synods or Thursday lectures in Boston, or at other ministerial conventions or convocations. And then what was supposed fully to establish church dominion here, was the liberty to employ the civil power of the country to enforce its ordinances and rules.

And thus the power and influence of the church prevailed having subdued all other influences in the community; and that too under a most democratic constitution written on parchment—Oliver Cromwell and the long Parliament who flourished in these times, had not more effectually usurped the government of England, than had the Rev. John Cotton and his brethren in that of this Commonwealth by these

special laws. Yet the means were very different as were the results: They subdued Kingly power; these, that of the people. And I cannot forbear here to notice the perfect similarity between the movements of the church interests under the first charter, and the monied interests of the present day under our own constitution—seeking as it now does to control the action of the people's government for private ends.

But our fathers learned that a bitter curse followed special legislation and law-made religion, and we have yet to learn and acknowledge too that law-made wealth is not without its curse also. No government yet discovered, can directly favor special interests without trespass on common right.

The church, now being armed with plenary power spiritual and secular, commenced its domination. But with its unlimited power, came a strong spirit of jealous rivalry and ambition; a sure sign that it sought—special interest—That ruling power which seeks the common good alone, has never jealous ambition. It is philanthropic duty. But usurpation of every character, is ever busy with its special monuments and shuns all common equity; and this was so in the case before us as is shown by the following laws against heresy—and their graceless administration.

These laws were passed at various times, between 1644 and 1662—And one of the earliest has this preamble—Although no human power be Lord over the faith and consciences of men—yet because such as bring in damnable heresies, subverting the Christian faith and destroying men's souls, ought to be restrained therefore it is ordered by the Court—That if any Christian in this jurisdiction shall deny the immortality of the soul—the resurrection of the body—or that the regenerate have any sin to repent of—or any evil done by the outward man to be accounted

sin—and shall continue obstinate and seduce others he shall be banished.

So if he affirm that we are justified by our own works—or condemn the baptism of infants—or purposely leave the meeting when they are baptized—or if he deny the ordinance of magistracy or their authority to make war.

Also—to deny, that holy men inspired by the Holy Ghost wrote the Scriptures was punishable by fine not exceeding fifty pounds—and whipping not exceeding forty strokes—and to revile the office or person of a minister or magistrate was made an offence equally punishable with denying the Word of God.

Then follow those sanguinary enactments against the Quakers—who are therein called a cursed set of heretics and were disposed of according to that denunciation. Some of these laws were as late as 1658—and they declare, that any person coming into the jurisdiction, and being convicted of being a Quaker shall be sentenced to banishment on pain of death—and if afterwards such person shall have been twice sentenced he shall suffer death.

Very nearly the same punishment was to be inflicted on any citizen who became a Quaker and continued obstinate.

It may seem strange that the common sense and justice of the community should have sustained such manifestly unjust and unequal laws; But we must notice that the church influence, controlled and guided public opinion—the mischief lay in the body of the community—it was not so much a bad government as a bad social state—a people under bad influences misgoverning themselves—and a free constitution was made an instrument to overthrow common right which it was expressly designed to protect.



The uses of government were directly perverted as they are in all our special legislation in favor of statute wealth.

In my next I shall detail the persecutions under these laws.

## LETTER III.

No laws can be more offensive to our sense of common justice than those which create the artificial crimes they aim to punish,—and it will not escape attention that this is signally the case with Mr. Cotton's abstract of the Theocracy and the other laws against heresy. In this the first Charter criminal code, was a code without intrinsic crime ;—a strange thing indeed, we might say, in a wise Republic, where the common sense and common justice of the people is the throned majesty of the State.

Those Church-made heretics never trespassed upon the natural rights of men, in person or property—they only hold obnoxious opinions upon some items of Church discipline and theology, as settled in Synods ;—and they opposed the Church assumption of civil power ; and for this we shall see they suffered and bled.

I shall proceed to notice some of the principle persecutions of heretics by the Massachusetts Church under, and through the instrumentality of the first charter. Its first essay upon Roger Williams, elicited and perfected practice, and aught this rising power its new founded strength, so that afterwards it became qualified to deal more freely and vigorously with the Antinomian heresy, and its celebrated female leader, Mrs. Ann Hutchinson.

The blood of Martyrs was first shed by the Church dominant, under the laws I have already cited, against Quakers.

But by far the most terrible of the persecu-

tions, was the witch. tragedy, about the end of the Charter and in the times of the Mathers. It was got up and urged forward under the pretence and perhaps veritable conviction even, that wicked men and women here had confederated and leagued with the Devil, expressly to overthrow the Church of Christ in New-England.—The particulars shall be detailed in their order.

Roger Williams came to this country from England about the year 1630, with the general reputation of a well educated and pious gospel Minister. Soon the people at Salem invited him to become their religious teacher ; but the Governor and Magistrates of Massachusetts interposed objections with effect, and Williams turned down to Plymouth and preached there two years. After this the Salem Church again invited him to come among them and settle, and again the Magistrates objected, and sent down from Boston a request that they would not call this man “to office”—but too late, for Williams this time obtained his election and ordination, notwithstanding the frowns of the Government—and for which he was never forgiven—and for which, also, the Salem people incurred the lasting suspicions of the “Lords brethren” as the end will show. Roger Williams being once firmly settled at Salem, saith his enemy, the Rev. Cotton Mather in his Church history ;—“*Hic se aperit Diabolus.*” The man presently discovered there, that he had in him much less light than heat ; and he compares him to a certain wind-mill in the Low Countries, which in a brisk gale first fired itself and then set a whole town in flames.

To be sure, impartial history represents Mr. Williams in the outset as very ardent and somewhat whimsical, but not deceptive, selfish, domineering or viscious. As he gathered light and mental power, he became a sound radical re-

former ; and who is ignorant of the perils which environ that office in all ages in Church and State. In civil liberty he advanced to points beyond the then current notions of liberality ; and in religion he would purify even the Puritans themselves. He was even then called a *leveller*, a term applied to all strong Democratic spirits, with great self-complacency by the dominant power, during the first charter. Those who now use the same name to designate Democrats have not the merit even of originality.

It is remarkable however that this grave Minister of the gospel should have essayed to reform and purify the kings Banner, the military standard of the Colony. But it was so. The sign of the cross was then painted upon it ; but as this, he maintained was a Popish idol, it ought not to wave over christian soldiers. His ceaseless denunciations at last took effect. A schism followed, not only among the citizens, but among the soldiers themselves ;—and some of them began to question whether they should honor this idol by marching and training under it even in the king's name ; in fine they said they would not. But the more prudent and loyal counselled differently. These advised to follow the cross in the Banner to show their fidelity to the crown—yet party spirit grew apace upon it. But pending this glowing controversy and no doubt under its influence, a member of the government and one of the charter assistants, as well as a member of Mr. Williams's church got possession of the Banner and with his knife cut out the obnoxious picture. For this offence he was soon cited before the court of assistants, and by these his peers sentenced to be suspended from his office for one year. Nevertheless Mr. Williams still pushed on the controversy ; and it is sober history that the cross in the Banner for a long time strongly excited all the talent and

learning in the country, and of this, let me say, there was no small portion. The combatants ransacked all early Christian and Pagan history in their efforts to vanquish and destroy each other. Their fury supplied them with Latin and Greek without stint, which they hurled at each other without mercy or compunction in a perfect storm of erudition. The people too took fire, and took sides and took up the discussion also, insomuch that, shortly, the Labarum of Constantine the Great, and other early and awful church enigmas, were topics as familiar in their mouths, as their own dinners.

It is not certain that Mr. Williams lived to see his final triumph over that Popish idol, yet it is certain that the cross was at last by common consent and in a peaceable Christian like way stricken from the banner of old Massachusetts but when the Indian that now so gracefully waves there, took its place history has not taught us.

Thus far in matters of civil and military government the "leveller" Williams found reform a pastime rather than a serious labor, yet it was far otherwise when he turned the process on what he conceived the current abuses of religion. The wily leaders of the Church would only smile to see him vent his impotent radicalism upon the cross in the Banner, but when he denied the efficacy of infant baptism, the lawfulness of joining in prayer with the unregenerate—the authority of the civil power to punish breaches of Church discipline and particularly when he charged the New England Churches with loose practices, and refusing communion with them himself, and encouraged others to do the same he at once was taught the different tempers of the two powers. His clerical brethren and the sister Churches first severed him from the confidence and communion of his own

Church at Salem, by repeated and formal missions to them of threats and promises, and by other devices and then having broken this tie which bound him to the community, they hurled him and his followers without ceremony, by a sentence of banishment, out of the jurisdiction. After many perils Williams and his company at last rested at a place they called Providence and thus early and happily commenced the settlement of the delightful and prosperous State of Rhode Island. And it is due to the memory of this man to notice, that when by a change of fortune, he was called to the honors and of course to the burthen of power, Williams the new ruler was true to the principles of Williams the humble and persecuted reformer at Salem in Massachusetts; thus showing to the world that his heart, his heart indeed, was touched with the natural and equal rights of his fellow men. Hence his colony in that day became notoriously the land of free minds and easy and equal government.

## LETTER IV.

You will see, brethren, that the expulsion of Roger Williams gave no quiet to the Massachusetts Church government. The tolerant and equal rights principle, still strove with aristocracy and conservatism, and the antinomian heresy, and persecution soon followed. This commoted the colony for nearly twenty years and involved all classes. It produced the first special interest convention which ever sat in America. It was called a Synod, convened ostensibly to sustain the honor of God, and the public interests, but like the famed Harrisburgh tariff-woollens-convention, or that of the bankers at New York—it was an assemblage of men holding a common interest of wealth or ambition, and pushing forward that interest under plea of patriotism.

This Synod was composed of the ministers and many church delegates; but under the latter title embracing all the magistracy and civil dignity of the land who undertook to ascertain, and by a hand vote to condemn errors, and to settle the rules of sound faith and church discipline for all time to come.

Female invention, quickened by public favor first gave impulse to this movement in Boston. Mrs. Ann Hutchinson was the agitator; and although the old church historians call her a “gossip” and her female meetings, “gossipings,” yet all agree that she possessed fine talents and elegant personal endowments. England was her native land; and whilst there, she dwelt in the neighborhood of Mr. John Cotton and had en-

joyed much of his pious council ; and when he at last fled before persecution, she and her husband quickly followed, in the light of his fame and piety, to this Western world. It is recorded that the godly man himself highly reciprocated her esteem ; and he has given under his own hand in a letter to a dear friend, this graphic and significant description of her :—"In England, she was well beloved ; —that all the faithful there, embraced her conference, and blessed God for her fruitful discourses."

From the time that the lady arrived, no person in the colony created an equal sensation.—Both sexes, young and old, all ranks, ministers, magistrates and assistants, deeply regarded her ; and as it had been in England, so here, the faithful "embraced her conference" gladly.

Even young Harry Vane, then in Boston, received her with marked attention.

This was the renowned Sir Harry Vane of the English long Parliament, the companion and equal of Cromwell in his early political fortunes ; and his terror too, when that bold usurper, in the act of dispersing that Parliament, cried out . — " O ! Sir Harry Vane ! Sir Harry Vane ! the Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane !! Vane was the son of a privy counsellor of the king ; and as a pious young man of quality, he so pleased the colonists, that they chose him their governor the first year of his arrival ; yet for a Democratic servant of him who had not where to lay his head, he assumed great state in office.—Whenever he went to court, or to church, four sergents marched before him, bearing halberds in their hands. Such a spectacle would appear quite odd in Boston streets at this day.

If however, Mrs. Hutchinson deeply excited the community of her adoption, so that community deeply excited her. Amongst her other efforts she held weekly female meetings at her



house, "under the rule in 'Titus,'" as she professed "that the elder women should instruct the younger," and where she repeated and expounded Mr. Cotton's sermons.

Her system was, that salvation was the free gift of God ; as much so as existence itself in this world—a matter which even now, rightly to discern, troubles the human head and no doubt ever will. But in her prolific fancy, this master proposition, generated conclusions innumerable, and quite overwhelming. Yet free grace she taught, and the voice of free grace she sang, fascinating indeed to those who could readily believe themselves the special favorites of Heaven, as young people, and especially young females, on whom the world smiles, more easily might.

It was natural, therefore, that Mrs. Hutchinson's beautiful antinomian pupils should rise up from her teachings, gratified with her and themselves, and bless the free grace that sent them into this pleasant world, and would make them so happy in the next ; and with one accord they circulated her notions and sayings with wonderful alacrity.

But the sterner fathers of the Church complained of this. It was affirmed that from the beginning, it was the work of a seducer, to lead captive the weaker sex. So Simon Magus, they said, traded with his Helena, and they might well add, the devil with his Eve;—Montanus with his Maximillia, to propagate heresy ; and Arrius, to give currency to his blasphemies, first taught them to seven hundred virgins—seductive apostles truly. But here, a woman herself, was the seducer ; a gentle-woman they confessed ; but of haughty carriage—busy spirit—competent wit, and a voluble tongue ; and they used to cry out in the words of Tertullian upon the Gnostics :—  
*"ipsæ mulieres hæreticæ quam sunt procaces !"*

Had Mrs. Hutchinson, in her teachings, confined herself to the harmless theory of free grace only, she might never have known persecution, or have been known in history. But success tempted her on ; and she came at last to point at some ministers of the colony, as not having the seal of the spirit ; and as preaching an unprofitable covenant of works,—and what was unlucky, she excepted Mr. Cotton and her Boston friends, out of her condemnations. This brought on a strong country jealousy and high party spirit, which about equally divided the people. Governor Vane and Mr. Cotton were involved in it ; and the election of the former, in May, 1637, was contested on these mazy questions. Mr. Vane was then discomforted at the court of elections, and Mr. Winthrop was chosen Governor, and Mr. Dudley, a bitter enemy of Mrs. Hutchinson and her party, was chosen Deputy Governor. On this occasion fierce speeches were made on both sides, and the members began to lay hands on each other, but the strong majority on the one side, caused the other to submit.

In a few months Mr. Vane left the country for England ; and thus the antinomian party was supposed to have been deprived of its head ; and the anger of the victors fell more severely on those he left behind. Mrs. Hutchinson still lectured, but the Court took no notice of her, for the present, being resolved to wait the result of the Church synod, then about to be holden, and to make its decisions, the ground of their proceedings.

The synod had a stormy session, some of its members as justices of the peace had to preserve the peace of the assembly. There were produced before it eighty-two errors which had been current in the country. The authors of them were not enquired after, but the synod dealt with the errors only, and as an old church his-

torian informs us after this manner;—"the error was first fairly recited, and then a short reflection under it stating that it was contrary to a text of scripture then and there subjoined, which text unto all reasonable men did smite the error under the fifth rib, whereof it died." One minister, Mr. Hooker, would not attend the Synod for the reason, that those would be chief agents in that assembly, who were chief parties in the cause, and how unprofitable to make men judges in their own causes. This is every day practice in modern legislatures.

It was now the province of the civil power to give efficacy to the decrees of the Synod, and in the Nov. following, Mrs. Hutchinson was suddenly called from her family before the court. The charges against her were any thing but specific. Gov. Winthrop presided and he stated to her that she was known to be a woman who had great share in promoting those opinions, which were the causes of the present troubles, and had spoken things prejudicial to the honor of the churches and the ministers thereof.

*Mrs. Hutchinson.*—What have I said or done?

*Governor.*—Why, you countenance those of the faction you have heard of. "I only entertain the saints and that's matter of conscience Sir." Well madam, said the Governor you must keep your conscience or it must be kept for you.

*Gov.*—But why do you keep a meeting at your house every day in the week.

*Mrs. H.*—Is it not the practice of you all, why should I be condemned? But I conceive there is a clear rule in Titus, that the elder woman should instruct the younger; and then I must have a time to do it in.

*Gov.*—There was no meeting of women alone, there were sometimes men among you and this is not according to the rule in Titus.

*Mrs. H.*—There was never any man with us.

*Gov.*—If a hundred men should come to you to be instructed, would you forbear to do it?

*Mrs. H.*—If I cross a rule in it, I should.

*Gov.*—But if one man, should come and say,

*Mrs. H.* I hear you are a woman that God hath given his grace unto, I pray you instruct me a little, would you instruct this man?

*Mrs. H.*—I think I would. But why do you Sir, who say I may not teach women, ask me to teach the court?

*Gov.*—There is a rule in Corinthians which crosses yours from Titus, by which it would seem that the elder woman should instruct the younger about their business and to love their husbands &c.

*Mrs. H.*—I do not conceive it so.

*Gov.*—Well, well, we see how it is, we are your judges and must put it out of your power to continue this course.

The Court then went into proof of her slander of the ministers, from the mouths of those alleged to have been defamed; *Mrs. H.* wished to have them sworn, but the court refused as their character for truth was enough without oath. In the end she was sentenced to be banished, and in the mean while, was committed to the custody of Mr. Weld, until the court should further dispose of her.

The residue of her story is short. Banishment from civilized society in the beginning of a New England winter, to a woman with a numerous family of little ones about her, was a sore affliction. With her husband and other friends she passed over to Rhode Island, where it was said they dwelt in caves until the cold season was past. In the mean time her husband died, and the Massachusetts government made some stir that she was yet in this jurisdiction, whereupon, she again took up her family and sought a place yet further south, but here the

Indians being at war with the Dutch came suddenly upon her, murdered herself and all her family except one, which they carried into captivity; and thus ended her trials and sufferings, a desolate end indeed to the once delicate and accomplished Mrs. Ann Hutchinson.

## LETTER V.

The Antimonian excitement was not subdued by the banishment of Mrs. Hutchinson, but with the schism about infant and adult baptism continued throughout the first charter authority and both receiving their full share of discouragement from the dominant power.

But of all heresies, the old Foxonian Quakerism most deeply excited the vengeance [of our first charter-church-Commonwealth; nothing could be more simple and common-sense-like than the professed Quaker tenets. They too were professed children of peace as well as of light; and when smitten on one cheek would turn the other also, and could not therefore be in any way formidable to jealous civil power. Their bold crimination and denunciation of evil was irritating indeed, but not deserving imprisonment and death as was administered to them.

George Fox the first Quaker came into notice in England about the year 1648; in the times of the Commonwealth, and both he and his followers were bitterly persecuted under the authority of the long parliament and Oliver Cromwell. This new sect it seems had made advances in religious freedom and simplicity much beyond the Independants of whom Cromwell and Sir Harry Vane were then at the head, and who had themselves acquired their popularity with the army by advances upon the old parliamentary Presbyterians, who had oaths on their part come out from the conservative and despotic church of England, and which last in the

times of Henry the VIIIth was herself a seceder from Rome, that common terror of all dissenters; and what should be noted, by all readers of history, and Democrats especially, is the fact that each of these sects in turn persecuted those that presumed to advance beyond them; however justly, and to set up for themselves. And so it is at this day in the advances made in political truth.

But religionists persecute for a temporal interest as well as others,—no men having done with all things here below would hate each other for the love of God.

The Foxonians discarded all teaching by profession as also the use of churches, which in derision they called steeple-houses. They maintained that the light of Christ shining in the heart was amply sufficient for all Christian uses, and would, if implicitly followed, produce even a sinless life. This doctrine was most offensive to those whose subsistence and consequence in the world depended entirely on the necessity of religious teaching. These ranters, said they, essay to teach men that they need not be taught; very wise, truly, and at first they nicknamed them new-lights, but afterwards one Bennet a justice of Nottinghamshire, and a persecuting Independant, having signed a warrant of commitment against Mr. Fox, this latter bade him forbear, and to *quake* and tremble at the word of God, as pronounced by him, having, no doubt, the great case of Paul and Felix in his mind. But the Christian magistrate very unlike the Roman, only scoffed at his prisoner, and called him *Quaker*, and the name stuck to him and his followers ever after.

The idea of a self-teaching sect of christians was very novel and very seductive to the English people. Those were times of strange conceits and inventions, and there were those we are told, who professed to believe that women

had no souls; but Fox sharply rebuked these and said, did not the blessed Virgin Mary once sing and say "*my soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,*" which ready and pertinent answer silenced his ungallant adversaries and brought him much female favor.

About the same time they told him of a woman in Lancashire, named Elizabeth Hooton who had fasted twenty-two days, and he went to see her, and he said he found her under great temptation and he spoke to her freely of her condition, and with such effect that in the end she became one of his most devoted converts, and was the first Quakeress, who on motion of the spirit, stood up for public exhortation of the brethren and sisters; and she proved in the end a most devout and successful laborer in the cause. This same person being moved by the same spirit to come to Massachusetts and denounce the bloody laws then existing and executed against Quakers, was arrested and whipped through the first charter jurisdiction at a cart's tail for her pains. Free forms of government here did not respect her personal rights, any more than they now do the rights of property.

The allowance of female exhortation, by the Quakers highly stimulated female ambition and enterprise and opened a wide field for its exercise. But it was not to be bounded by the realm of England, it sought the most distant and hazardous missions to other countries, and Quakeresses visited Spain, Malta, Italy, Holland &c.

But a maiden Quakeress, Mary Fisher, of humble origin, outdid them all; she was moved in spirit to go even to the Grand Turk and to communicate to him the light of Christ. And upon this design she left England and arrived by sea at Smyrna; and from thence she purposed to depart for Adrianople; where the Sul-



tan then was. But the English consul here found her out and her mission, and sent her back to Venice. This was a severe rebuke to her spirit, yet she was resolute; and alone and unprotected she at last found her way into the Turkish encampment, where Mahomet the IVth then lay with a great army before Adrianople. Here she had the address to persuade a messenger to go to the tent of the Grand Vizier with the information that an English woman had come into his army with a message from the Great God to the Sultan, Upon this the Grand Vizier returned for answer, that on the following morning he would procure for her the desired interview with his master, and he kept his word. At the appointed time Mary Fisher again repaired to the camp and was soon brought into the presence of the Sultan. Here she found surrounded by his officers and dignitaries and in a state and surpassing splendor of which before she had no conception; and he sat ready with three interpreters to receive her message, and to communicate with her. But here her courage failed her, and she became confused and hesitated. This the Sultan observing, he kindly asked her if it were true as had been told him that she had a message to him from the Great God?—and she answered yea. He then asked her whether those present should retire before she spake; and she said nay. He then told her to speak the word of God to them all without fear, and to keep back nothing, for they had good hearts and were willing to hear it whatever it might be.

Upon this encouragement she spake, and the Turks listened with gravity and attention.—When she paused, the Sultan asked her if she had any thing more to say, she answered that she had not, if he had understood her. He said he understood every word and that what she had

spoken was the truth. He also invited her to stay in his country, as all, he said, would respect a woman who had come so far, to deliver a message from the Lord God to the Sultan. This she declined. He then offered her a guard to conduct her safely to Constantinople, saying that he would not, on any account, that harm should befall her in his dominions, but that it was dangerous for a lone female like her to travel through hostile nations. This she also declined and the audience broke up.

The Turks then gathered round her and began to enquire what she thought of their Prophet; but she replied that she did not know him but Christ the Son of God she knew, and he was the light of the world, but a Prophet she said was known by the truth of the prophecies he spake. This they all confessed to be true, and having accomplished her mission, Mary Fisher departed to Constantinople and from thence to England in safety.

Thus much for the despotic Turk; we will now pass to this land of free forms of government. It was in July 1656 when this same Mary Fisher with Ann Austin her companion arrived in Boston harbor. There were then no colonial laws authorizing magistrates to arrest Quakers coming into the country. Ship masters had been forbid to bring them in under a severe penalty.

John Endicott was then Governor, but he being out of town, Bellingham the deputy acted in his stead. As soon as he learned that Quakers were in the vessel, he sent officers on board with orders to have them kept prisoners there, and to search their trunks. Whereupon about a hundred books were found, seized and burnt by the hangman in the market place. They were no doubt Muggleton's works, against which a severe law was passed. Mary and her companions were

next brought on shore and committed to prison and forbidden to converse with any one, or to have the use of pen and ink, or lights in the night season. It has been further affirmed and not denied, that they examined the bodies of the two damsels in prison to learn whether or not they might be witches, but no tokens were found on them but those of health and innocence.—The times of witch persecutions had not yet arrived.

An aged citizen of Boston then in good repute and a church member by the name of Upshall being grieved at the treatment of these lone females, requested that he might supply them with food from his own table,—this was denied, and he then contracted with the jailor to supply them at five shillings a week. When in October 1658 a law was passed for the punishment of Quakers he raised his voice against it, warning the ministers and magistrates who planned the measure, to desist lest they should be found fighting against God, but without effect. In disgust at the wrong he withdrew from meeting; but he forgot that this, by law was then a highly penal offence,—he was fined twenty-three pounds in hard money, but still continuing obstinate he was banished the jurisdiction; and wandered forth into the wilderness towards Rhode Island.—Here an Indian chief found him, and learning the cause of his troubles, offered to make him a warm house if he would stay with him, and said how strange, that Englishmen should fight each other so about their God. Upshall's persecutors were then ardently engaged in Christianizing the Indians.

After being imprisoned about five weeks and debarred all intercourse with the people Mary Fisher with her companion was put on board a vessel and sent back; the jailor retaining the beds which they brought over and their bible for

his fees. This Mary Fisher was afterwards married to Wm. Bayle, first a Baptist and then a Quaker teacher and whose works remain to this day, and she proved a Christam-like mother and wife.

Within a month after this there came into Boston from England eight other Quakers four men and four women. These were also arrested and treated much after the manner of Mary Fisher, for about eleven weeks, when a ship-master by the name of Lock was put under bonds to take them out of the country and land them nowhere but in England.

## LETTER VI.

There can be no doubt but the early Quakers who came into the first charter jurisdiction from England, were conscientious missionaries acting under a supposed divine commission.— Perhaps no missionaries in any age or country, were ever more sincere. And what a modicum of true Christianity or humanity, even, would have taught those to whom they came, to bear with them. Could the powers of the Church-Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have copied the custom of their Indian neighbors, when missionaries come to enlighten them, and like them have set and heard their religious notions criticised and vilified too, with composure; how differently would they have stood in history, and how honored would have been the cause of the people's self-government in their keeping. It is easy to discern what kind of influences ruled here, under free forms of government, when the advent to these shores of six female and two men Quakers should have caused a law in substance thus,—

That any citizen causing a Quaker to come into the country should, on conviction, pay a penalty of one hundred pounds;—and for entertaining a Quaker knowing him to be such, was fineable at the rate of forty shillings an hour. For the first offence of Quakerism, within the charter limits, by citizen or stranger,—if a man, he should have one ear cut off;—and for the second offence the other ear; if a woman, first to be whipped, and put into the house of correction, and for the second offence to lose one of her

ears:—and for the third offence, by man or woman, to have his or her tongue bored through with a hot iron !

The first application of this law was to two English women, Sarah Gibbons and Dorothy Waugh. These coming to Boston, ventured to address the people on Thursday lecture day after the regular services were over, and they were taken up, thrust into the house of correction and whipped.

Not long after a Mrs. Gardner, coming to Weymouth with her infant child, was proved to be a Quakeress. She was carried to Boston and whipped, as also a young damsel her companion, with a three corded knotted whip, and after the punishment she kneeled down and prayed to the Lord to forgive her persecutors.

The next two were Wm. Brend and Wm. Leddra. These were taken up at Salem for being Quakers wrongfully in the jurisdiction; they were carried to Boston, and put into the house of correction and ordered to work. This they refused, and for which they were whipped twenty blows each with a three corded whip, and then commanded to depart from the charter limits. This they were ready to do. But the marshal's fees were demanded of them. They declined paying the costs of their own punishments, and were still detained, to work it out. The next morning Brend still refusing to work, the jailor in a rage seized a tarred rope, and beat him therewith until the prisoner fainted. Upon this a report went abroad that the man was killed in prison; and a tumult among the people was feared, whereupon Endicott the Governor and the magistrates posted notices on the church doors and other public places that Brend had revived and was well, but that the jailor should be punished for his cruelty.

But the Rev. J. Norton, a mortal enemy to

Quakers, and a great instrument of the laws against them, declared publicly, that the stripes were good enough, for men who had come here to beat their gospel ordinances black and blue.

John Copeland and Christopher Holder came over about the time of Mary Fisher; and two years after they were arrested at Dedham, carried to Boston and imprisoned with one Rouse. At the next court of assistants they were brought in for trial, Endicot presiding, who said, "since you three, in contempt of the magistrates and ministers, have come here to seduce the people, whether you loose your ears or your lives, your blood will be on yourselves."

To this the Quakers boldly answered that the Lord God had sent them here.

Nay, said the Governor, but under pretence of peace you have come, to poison the people.—How do you prove the Lord hath sent you?

You scourge and persecute us, was the reply; and Christ told his disciples, they should suffer such things for his name's sake.

Then, said Major Denison, one of the assistants, every malefactor who is whipped, suffers for Christ's sake!

But do ye not know, said Rouse, that if we were malefactors, God's judgments would be far heavier upon us than your punishments?—

John Rouse, John Rouse, again said the major (whose manifest shrewdness and skill, should, on this occasion have taught him liberality and humanity) you are yet a youth and I hear are well borne and bred, your father being a king's officer at Barbadoes, and a gentleman, what heavier judgment of God do you look for, unless it be a halter, than to be driven from home, and to run about here with a set of vagabonds and deceivers.

I was not driven from my father's house, said Rouse, but at the command of the Lord I left it,

and when he shall clear me of this land I will gladly return home again.

But why do we parley, said Endicot. You see these Quakers have no commission but the spirit within them, and that's the devil;—Mr. Secretary read the law to the prisoners; and when this was done, one of them said, we have seen many of your laws having much scripture reference in their margin, but what scripture have you for cutting off ears?

What scripture is there for hanging people, said Endicot.

Perhaps, said, Denison, they would like to be crucified; there's scripture enough for that. After consultation, Endicott called the prisoners by name and said the sentence of the court is, that each of you have his right ear cut off by the hangman.

Here the Quakers earnestly protested against the proceeding. They declared that they were Englishmen and not subject to the colonial laws; they were subject only to English laws and the English court. But Endicot called out no appeal to England; we shall allow of no appeal to England, and the prisoners were forthwith remanded.

The Marshall then took them to the apartment where execution was to be done, and when he had let in the hangman and one or two others, he locked the door, and read the following order.

“To the Marshall General or his Deputy;—You are to take with you the executioner, and repair to the house of correction and there see him cut off the right ears of John Copeland, Christopher Holder and John Rouse, Quakers, in execution of the sentence of the court of assistants, for the breach of the law entitled—Quakers.”

Signed,

EDWARD RAWSON, Secretary,



Again these three protested against the illegality and injustice of the procedure; and Holder further said that such an execution should not be done in private; but they told him it was to prevent their appealing to the people.

There is no doubt that Norton, Endicot and their associates feared a public execution of this character. There was even then a strong Democratic spirit abroad opposed to the church aristocracy then ruling in blood, and it might rescue the Quakers. And there was never a time when Democracy was more detested by the dominant power in Massachusetts than those of which we treat; not even excepting those of the crown Governors, and our own.

The executioner then took Holder by the head, and as he brushed away the hair to come at the ear, the marshall turned away from the sight, in manifest disgust and sorrow, but Rouse said, Sir you must turn again and see the execution, for such is your order;—true, true, indeed, said he, I was to see it done, we must look on; and he saw the blood follow the hangman's knife most profusely, as he threw the ear on the floor.

Thus these three unresisting Quakers, suffered this ignominious mutilation with patience and even without a sigh.

When it was over, they declared, that the ignorant they forgave, but for those who had done this thing maliciously, that every drop of their blood wou'd sit heavy on their souls like a millstone at the great day of accounts.

After this, they were ordered out of the jurisdiction.

Yet all this cruelty did not deter Quakers from coming into Massachusetts, nor the spread of their religion. Death was now the only remaining punishment and we shall see how the usurping rulers, hardened themselves to that measure also.

## LETTER VII.

Democrats, for the honor of our countrymen let us not believe that the law of death against Quakers was easily obtained. The people needed preparation. The pulpit was the press of that age and the church power controlled it, as does the money power in these times; and no combination of suspension banks conscious of guilt and fearing justice, could labor more sedulously at the polls to secure a pliant legislature, than did the church confederacy on this occasion. An intelligent witness of their movements, declared that "he who could not whip and persecute those who differed from the rulers in matters of religion, could not sit on the bench, or sustain any office in the Commonwealth." How much the people's common sense of justice was perverted by the ruling power, we can learn from the fact that, the judges who condemned to stripes, imprisonment and death, were elected by the people. And yet the men in those days who corrupted popular justice professed great terror lest the people's minds should be perverted by demagogues and heretics. So wealth now in power trembles lest the poor be excited against the rich; and yet law-made wealth is ever extorted from the poor and the laboring classes.

The Rev. John Norton and the leading ministers of the colony first petitioned the General Court for a law to banish Quakers on pain of death.

In the aristocratic branch or court of assistants there was no difficulty. They passed the law to punish by death even without a jury, and

at County Courts where three magistrates only sat. But the popular branch, the deputies were of different minds. These were then twenty-five in number. A portion of them refused to sanction a law so contrary to common justice and their charter, and by which a majority of three might hang at pleasure. Yet it passed 13 to 12, the Speaker of the House of Deputies voting against it.

The minority thus strong resolved to enter their dissent upon the record; this the ruling power feared, and contrived to insert the clause "to be tried by a special jury," to make it popular. Yet were the dissenting deputies much distressed, by the measure and particularly one Worzel who was sick and absent, and who wept for grief when he learned the result, saying he would rather have crept on his hands and knees to court, than such a law should have passed.

This act is a legislative curiosity; about as much so as the charter of the first bank under our present constitution, and some later charters. It begins with the preamble, "*That whereas no one hath a right to Lord it over men's consciences*" &c. and under this specious declaration of equal rights, stands as great an outrage of all rights of person and property, as the records of despotism can produce, and the administration of it was as cruel as its provisions were derogatory to just and democratic legislation; and yet the plea was then as now the public good and to destroy the destructives—the levellers.

This contemptuous enactment greatly exasperated the Quakers; and within one year two of them sealed their testimony against it with their blood.

Marmaduke Stephenson was in youth an humble ploughman in old Yorkshire in England, and whilst on a certain time in 1655 he walked after

his plough, the power of the living God, as he declared after his condemnation, so filled him as did ravish his heart; and the word came to his conscience, saying,—*I have ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

At the appointed time Barbadoes was set before him as the place to which he must go; and without delay he made ready to depart; and bade farwell to his kind wife and four tender children for the last time, for the Lord had said he would take care of them; and he took passage for the designated Island. Here whilst at his master's work he heard of the Massachusetts law to put his brethren to death, and his heart burned within him; and finding a vessel bound to Rhode Island he went thither. And here whilst he visited the seed which the Lord had blessed, the word came to him a second time, to go to Boston with his brother, Wm. Robinson who had come there as a merchant from London, and to do business.

But scarcely were the two arrived in Boston when they were seized and imprisoned; as also one Nicholas Davis who had the temerity to come from the Plymouth patent into the charter limits. Mrs. Mary Dyer also, who came from Rhode Island to see and encourage these prisoners, was herself imprisoned with them.

At the next court of assistants these four were sentenced to banishment on pain of death; and two days only allowed them to free the jurisdiction from their hated presence. Mrs. Dyer and Davis returned home, but the other two being bound in spirit to remain, went down to Salem to build up their friends in the faith.

But their movements were narrowly watched, and they were soon brought back to Boston and cast into prison, and in less than a month Mrs. Dyer returning, was cast into prison also. And thus the charter government, had in their custo-

dy, three persons whose lives, by the Quaker law, were forfeited; and all sober and moderate men regarded the event with intense anxiety.

It was on the 20th of October 1659 that they were brought before the court of magistrates to receive their sentence, Gov. Endicot, then presiding, first ordered the officer to pluck off their hats; (these Quaker hats seemed as disagreeable to the charter authorities as their tenets) he then said, as no punishments hitherto could keep the Quakers away, and although the court did not desire the death of any, yet they must now give ear and hearken to their sentence. Here Robinson desired to read divers reasons which he had prepared why he had not left the jurisdiction, but his request was refused.

The paper was published after his execution, and was in substance,—that being in Rhode Island the Lord commanded him to go to Boston and testify against the rulers there, and to offer his life for the truth. He did not hesitate to obey as a child, believing it became him thus to show his obedience to the Lord; and that at the time of his banishment on pain of death, he was still under God's command.

The sentence pronounced on him was this:—“Wm. Robinson, you shall be led back to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, and to be hanged on the gallows until you are dead;” and he was taken away.

The Governor then said, Marmaduke Stephenson, you are at liberty to speak; but he seeing how Robinson had been treated was silent.

But after sentence he thus addressed the court; “give ear all ye that are guilty, for the same day that ye put the servants of the Lord to death, your visitation will come, and you will be accursed forever. If you put us to death our blood will be upon your own heads, take war-

ing then, in love I exhort you, before it is too late, that so the curse may be removed, for the Lord hath spoken it, and will perform his word upon you."

Mrs. Dyer next received sentence, to which she only responded, the will of the Lord be done; she seemed even joyous and said to the marshall, as he offered to take her away, that he might let her alone as she would go back to prison without him. I believe you Mrs. Dyer, said he, but I must obey my orders.

Seven days after, these three were led out to execution. A multitude attended, anxious to learn the end; still doubtful whether their free charter rulers would proceed to blood; but when they saw a strong body of horse guards moving in front and two hundred foot soldiers in the rear of the prisoners, with drums near them, to drown their voices if necessary, many became sad, and queried what manner of people's self-government this might be; and whether a mob of freemen who should have delivered these innocent sufferers from the grasp of *legal* authority, would not have had the juster cause of the two; but they were over-awed by the ensigns of their own authority, a very common deception in a nominal people's government, and suffered the wrong to pass. The secret of popular freedom is to respect popular sovereignty.

Mrs. Dyer it is true could not denounce the woes of guiltiness, upon her destroyers, in bold and solemn strains like her companions, yet in this death scene, she manifested the superiority of her sex in patient suffering. She was now turned of sixty, a widow and a mother of pious sons and daughters, settled in Rhode Island; and to her companions she appeared as a mother, holding even by the hand as she walked to the gallows between them, and strengthening them by her example and her words. She said, "that

prieve, the woman is reprieved; and it was so; her life was saved at this time by the intercession of her son, which plainly shows that Endicot and his councillors, had power over the lives of their fellow citizens,—a dreadful power in individuals under free forms of government, for their cruelty was in the name of the people.

In the mean time Mrs. Dyer's purpose was not shaken. She seemed to hesitate, and with the rope yet about her neck she declared that she was willing to suffer like her brethren there before her, unless they would repeal their wicked law, but as the people began to cry, "take her away," she was conveyed back to prison; from whence she wrote to the court the next day that she did not wish to receive her life from those, who with wicked hands had shed the blood of her friends. "*I choose to die rather than to live as from you, as Guilty of their innocent blood!*" were her own words. But notwithstanding this the Massachusetts rulers saw fit to send her home to Rhode Island at their own charge; hoping, no doubt, to see her face no more.

But they had to deal with one of the most remarkable of recorded martyrs, for in the following May she came again to Boston, and appearing openly, they were constrained to notice her. And when she was brought before the court, Endicot said, are you the Mary Dyer sentenced here the last court? and she said, yea, I am; and when he told her that to-morrow at nine o'clock she must go to the gallows and be hanged until she was dead, she replied, "thou saidst this before. I came here before to warn you to repeal your wicked law. I am upon the same work now;" take her away, take her away, said the Governor. On the following day she was led out to execution guarded by horsemen and soldiers as at the former time. When she was put up on the ladder, and prepared for execution, it

was intimated to her that if she would recant she might save her life. "Nay," said she, "I cannot, for in obedience to the will of the Lord God I came and in his will I abide faithful to the death." What, said they, will you be guilty of your own blood. "Nay, she replied, I come to keep you from blood guiltiness—repeal your unrighteous law against the servants of the Lord."

They asked her if she would have the prayers of the Elders. She said, "I know never an Elder here." Will you have any of the people pray for you? I desire the prayers of all God's people,—and being now ready to depart she signified the same to the executioner, and he swung her off, and she died without a struggle. "She hangs like a flag, to warn all Quakers," said a church partizan.



## LETTER VIII.

William Leddra was the fourth Quaker hung for his religion in Boston. He also was a missionary to Massachusetts to warn the people of their errors; and he was a very talented and popular teacher. But during his three years residence among them, our first charter rulers ceased not to ply him with hot persecution; oftentimes they imprisoned,—oftentimes they scourged him, and during the whole winter preceding his execution they kept him in irons like a burglar or a robber. Yet as himself declares, “he never turned his cheek from the smiter, nor his feet from following the flock;—and the whip on his back and all his imprisonments and banishments on pain of death, and even loud threatenings of a halter, did no more move him than if they had bound a spider’s web upon his finger.” When brought before his persecutors who were also his judges and his judges counsellors, he demanded to know his crime.

You stand with your hat on, said they, you say thee and thou and are a Quaker, and you, moreover, have declared those Quakers, whom we have executed, to be innocent. “What,” said Leddra, will you hang a man for speaking good English, and defending the servants of the Lord?” “A man,” said Dennison, “may speak treason in good English.”

“Will you go to England and trouble us no more?” said Bradstreet. “I have no business there,” said Leddra;—“then you shall go that way,” said this merciful judge pointing towards the gallows.

"I understand you," said Leddra; "I am to die for breathing the air of your jurisdiction, but mark me, I am an Englishman and your fellow subject, and I appeal to the laws of my own nation and country and if by them I am criminal, I am ready to suffer." "Appeal to England three thousand miles off," said Dennison with a sneer, "and what will you gain by that? Send over your complaint—the next year Parliament will send over here to know what's the matter;—and the third year the government of England will be changed. Be better advised—renounce your errors, and save your life." "What," said Leddra, with indignation, "and join such murderers as you!—then let every one who meets me point and say lo! this is the man who has forsaken the God of his salvation." As he said this Wenlock Christison who was also sentenced to banishment on pain of death, walked into court and stood by the prisoner. For a moment the judges were silent and seemed confounded, at this voluntary offer of human life, and which they now began to dread the necessity of taking.

Here's another Quaker, said one.

Bring him forward, Mr. Marshall, said Secretary Rawson. Sir, is your name Wenlock Christison? Yea, said Wenlock. Were you not banished at the last court on pain of death?—Yea, said Wenlock. Then what doest thou here, said Governor Endicot, fiercely. I came here, said Wenlock with a loud voice, to warn you to shed no more innocent blood, and to see my friend; for the blood you have already shed now cries to the Lord God for vengeance. Take him away jailer, said Endicot, and as they seized him he struggled to remain with his friend William, whom he boldly affirmed they were about to murder.

But the faith and courage of Leddra, and the fidelity of Christison—virtues which savages

even worship, were powerless upon the charter assistants and their advisers, so full of holy zeal were they and so blind to mere carnal virtue, though of the highest order, and without delay they passed sentence of death upon the prisoner; and on the 14th of March, 1661, it being Lecture-day, and after divine service he was led out to be hung, and to preserve the public peace and to keep off the mob, the levelers, and to maintain the supremacy of first charter law, Endicot himself with a strong military guard conducted the victim from prison to the gallows.

When he arrived at the foot of the ladder, he saw Edward Wharton in earnest expostulation with the multitude against the execution and the injustice of the rulers, and he said, "friend Wharton, remember that all who would be Christ's disciples must take up the cross;" and to the people he said, "for the testimony of Jesus and for testifying against deceivers, I am brought here to suffer." This Wharton was a Salem man, and under banishment on pain of death. As the martyr went up the ladder one in the crowd regarded him with peculiar interest;—Leddra called to him also and said, "friend know that this day I am willing to offer up my life as a witness of Jesus." Upon this the man became greatly agitated, and begged that he might speak. "Gentlemen, said he, I am a stranger to you and your country, and yet a friend to both; but for Jesus' sake, for the Lord's sake I pray you take not away that man's life, but remember Gamaliel's council to the Jews. I am a seaman, and lately arrived from England and when I heard this man was to die for his religion, I went to see him in prison, and methought the Lord did mightily appear in his words. I then sought out one of the magistrates who condemned him, and asked, what was his crime? He is a rogue, said he, a very

rogue and has also abused magistracy. But I said, what is that to do with the question? Why do you kill the man? What is your rule, your law, your authority? But he did not answer. Gentlemen, you have no rule, no warrant from the word of God, no precedent from England, nor have you authority from the king, whose name you presume to use, to hang that man."

"But they tell me he may go away if he will. Is it so? Then let him go—let me have him; I command a stout ship, and will gladly take him away from your country. William Leddra come down, come down from that cursed tree, they say you may go away if you will, come down to me William, and I will take care of you."

Here a murmur of applause ran through the crowd, but to quiet the execution, the Rev. Mr. Allen minister of Boston, and who probably on that day had preached the Thursday lecture, called out to the people, that such willingness to die in the criminal, should not move them; for the apostle had said, "that some should be given up to strong delusions, and even dare to die for them."

And the captain of the guard said to the stranger, sir what have you to do in this matter, William cannot go away, *you* may go away, and if you take my advice, you will do so quickly. I shall go away, said the seaman, for of all sights, to my eyes this is the most cruel.

Orders were then given to make haste, and as the ladder was suddenly turned to throw him off, Leddra had only time to say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit;" and these were his last words.

And when he was dead and about to be cut down, Wharton, whose own life was then forfeit and at the mercy of the charter rulers, with other friends stood under; and as the body fell they caught it in their arms; and after he was stripped by the hangman, they laid him in his grave.

## LETTER IX.

The March term of the court of assistants for 1661 closed with the execution of Wm. Leddra, and that too under circumstances the most gloomy and terrible. If madness ruled the oppressor, desperation sustained the persecuted, and every philanthropist must regard such a conflict with horror.

The government in their apology to the king had professed only to stand at the entrance and to have offered "the point" to intruders in self-defence; those therefore, who rushed upon it, they said, were 'colons de se,' whose absence only they desired.

Four we have seen had already rushed upon that point and perished; and five others were ready, walking openly to and fro within the charter limits after sentence of banishment on pain of death, and some of these last were freemen of the colony. And now whose turn next? was the general and anxious enquiry. If the Quakers would so freely offer themselves for sacrifice, would the ministering priests and magistrates at all shrink from the slaughter, acting as the agents, and in the name of the people and of the people's government, and making the whole community responsible for their doings—and to the world the popular government of Massachusetts seemed engaged in the work of popular persecution, and well might it excite the special wonder of that age. But when the Massachusetts Quakers seemed without defence before their enemies, save in the common sympathy which their sufferings might excite, and acting

on the fears of the charter authorities, salvation came suddenly from another quarter.

The news of Lедdra's death, with the danger of others, reached England, and the brethren there, in their alarm applied to the king for protection, and the result was most happy.

Charles the second was not fond of our first charter ancestors. They held their patent of self-government by the gift of his father, yet they belonged to that school of politics and religion which cut off his head;—and they favored Cromwell, and cherished the regicides who fled to America. All this the English Quakers well knew, and they put into the monarch's hands George Bishop's book on the cruelties to their sect here. It was in the thirteenth year of his reign, and when he read the famed sarcasm of Mr. Assistant Denison on the stability of his throne, to those Quakers who claimed an English trial, "that this year they apply to England, the next, Parliament will send over to inquire, and the third year the government of England will be changed;"—Charles noted the passage, and calling to the lords and dignitaries about him, read it aloud, saying, "lo! these are my loving subjects of New England, they seem already to see with delight my throne shaken, as my father's, but I'll stop their career." Whilst in this turn of mind, Edward Burroughs a great Quaker, obtained an audience and thus addressed him. "O king, there is a vein of innocent blood opened in your dominions, which if not stopped will overflow the whole realm." But I will stop that vein, he replied. Then for the love of God, said Burroughs, may it be done speedily. As speedily as you will, said the monarch. And after further explanation he commanded the Secretary to be called, and he further directed that a mandamus should be made out, of which the following is the substance;—it was directed to

*John Endicot* and all other *Governors of New England*, and to the *ministers and officers* of all plantations there.

CHARLES R.

Trusty and well beloved, we greet you well. Having been informed that several of our subjects among you called *Quakers*, have been, and are imprisoned by you, whereof some have been executed, and others in danger to undergo the like, we do hereby require that if there be any of those people among you called *Quakers* now condemned to suffer death or other corporal punishment, or that are imprisoned and obnoxious to the like condemnation, you are to forbear and proceed no further therein, but forthwith to send said persons (whether condemned, or imprisoned) over into this our kingdom of England together with the respective crimes or offences laid to their charge, to the end that they may be dealt with agreeable to our laws and their own demerits; and for so doing, this shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge.

Given at our Court at Whitehall the  
9th day of Sept. 1661.

By his Majesty's command

William Morris.

Democrats, this lesson deserves your special attention. The irreligious and profligate Charles the second commanding our puritan ancestors, through their chosen agents, to take their hands from each other's throats; and to take care and govern themselves with a better respect for each other's rights !

Strange mandate indeed from a despotic throne, and to a self-governing community. Of what value is mere parchment liberty without ceaseless democratic vigilance? What tyranny is worse, than that of a special interest in power, operating through free forms, be it of wealth, of the church or combinations of monopolists.

It now remained to pass the royal mandamus over to the colony, and for this purpose it pleased the king to grant his deputation to Samnel Shattuck, a Quaker of Boston, and then in London under banishment from his native land on pain of death, and as the business required haste, a ship was chartered, Ralph Goldsmith, another Quaker, master, for three hundred pounds, to sail in ten days, goods or no goods.

In June 1661, Wenlock Christison was brought before the court of assistants; there, both Endicot and Bellingham told him that unless he would renounce his Quakerism he should surely die. Nay, said he firmly, do not deceive yourselves, I shall not change my religion, or seek to save my life; you can take it when you will. But to the surprise of all, instead of proceeding to trial he was ordered back to prison.

The court went into consultation how they should dispose of him. But they were divided and for two weeks sat in debate, during which time it was said the sun shone not in the firmament, as if in sadness at the guilty work. A sure token of the feelings of the people, who always on like occasions attribute to heaven their own sentiments.

At last intolerant pride prevailed, and Christison was put on trial, and the jury soon returned a verdict of guilty; and when asked what he had to say why sentence of death should not be passed on him, he said because he had done nothing worthy of death. But, said they, you come among us in rebellion, which is like the sin of witchcraft, and should be punished.

*Christison.*—By what law do you put me to death?

*Endicot.*—We have a law which condemns you to death?

*C.*—Who empowered you to make that law?



*E.*—We have a patent, and are the patentees;—judge if we may not make laws.

*C.*—But can you make laws repugnant to those of England?

*E.*—Surely not.

*C.*—Then in your laws against Quakers, you have gone beyond your bounds and have forfeited your charter. Tell me, are you the king's subjects? Yea or nay.

What good will an answer do you, said Secretary Rawson. To know, said Christison, if you will own your late petition to the king, wherein you desire to kneel among his most loyal subjects.

We are among his most loyal subjects, said Endicot.

So am I, said Christison, and for aught I know as good as yourselves, if not better; for did the king but know your hearts as God knows them, he would soon see their rottenness towards himself; but as we are equally subject to the same king and laws, what have you to do with my life here, upon a law of your own making, and not approved by our king or nation. I never yet heard of English law to hang Quakers.

But there is to hang Jesuits though, said Endicot.

But you presume to hang me as a Quaker and not as a Jesuit, therefore I appeal to the laws of my own nation.

We have you in our power, said a surly assistant, and shall dispose of you whether you will or no.

Hold up your head, said secretary Rawson.

I will not, said Wenlock; speak, I can hear thee.

Guilty or not guilty, said the Secretary.

I deny all guilt.

But the law condemns thee, said Endicot.

And the Lord doth justify me, said Wenlock. Who art thou that condemnest?

The vote for sentence of death was then put but there was a division among the assistants; a number would not vote to sentence the prisoner. Endicot seeing this, became angry, and declared that he could find it in his heart to go home.

Far better for thee to be at home than here, said Wenlock, for thou art about a bloody work.

Even the second vote was confused and uncertain, which so incensed the Governor, that he stood up and said, I thank God I am not afraid to give judgment, and he then pronounced sentence of death, to which Christison replied, the will of the Lord be done.

But to the court he said, "note my words, if you have power to take my life being as I am in your hands; yet this will be your last, you shall never more have power to take Quakers' lives from them. Do not think to weary the living God by slaying his servants. For the last man you have put to death, here are five come in his room—if you kill me God can send others of his servants in my room, that you may have torment upon torment, which is your portion—there is no peace for the wicked, saith my God."

Brethren upon this scene comment is unnecessary. Wenlock was sent back to prison, and in five days after, the marshall and constable came with orders for his liberation, with *twenty-seven* more of his suffering companions, who had long pined in a dungeon in Boston, for their testimony of what they conceived the truth.

What means this? said Wenlock, when they told him he was at liberty. We have a new law, said they.

"What, said he, have you given up your gallows, that last weapon of your defence? Your rulers have declared that your old law was good and necessary for the peace and safety of the country. How have your hands become weak;

but the power of God is over you all." This biting sarcasm under circumstances the most trying to human courage, reveals clearly the spirit of the man, the charter government had to deal with on this occasion. If all Quakers were such, persecution itself would require some courage; though usually a most cowardly office.

And even now the prison doors were thrown open spitefully. For of the twenty-seven to be liberated, they took Peter Pierson and Judith Brown, stripped them both to the middle, man and woman, fastened them to a cart's tail side by side, and whipped them through the town of Boston, twenty stripes each, the cart driving slowly that the lash might be put on deliberately. The peculiar offence of Peter and Judith was refusing to plead to the charges brought against them in court, and remaining dumb before their persecutors.

## LETTER X.

Ralph Goldsmith's ship arrived in Boston harbor about the first of December, 1661; it being also on the Sabbath day. On board was Samuel Shattuck the banished Quaker, but now the king's deputy and having charge of the royal mandamus to the colonial officers and ministers. And to preserve the secrecy of the mission, no intercourse was allowed by the captain between the ship's company and the town's people on the day of their arrival. Early on the following morning Ralph and Shattuck repaired to John Endicot's house and on knocking at the door, a man came from his Excellency to know their business. They bid him say to his master that they had a message from king Charles of England to the governor, and which they could communicate in person only.

On being introduced, Endicot's countenance changed, when his eye fell upon Shattuck, he knew that Quaker, for he had pronounced his sentence of banishment; and he ordered his hat to be taken off. But when he read the deputation and the mandamus his countenance changed again and the parties seemed suddenly to change their relative position, for they gave Shattuck his hat and Endicot took off his own, in respect to the vice royal deputy.

Endicot then left the two and sought out Beltingham for consultation; and they soon returned an answer that they would obey his Majesty's commands. Goldsmith and Shattuck then returned to the ship and delivered their letters from England, and all the company, which was sup-

posed to consist of Quakers, went on shore and with their friends in town returned thanks to God for their great deliverance.

At this time the assistants were in session; the subject was brought before them, and in a short time there was a general jail delivery of the Quakers then imprisoned in Boston, by the following order.

*To William Salter, keeper of the prison in Boston:*

You are required by authority and order of the General Court forthwith to release and discharge the Quakers who are at present in your custody. See that you don't neglect this.

By order of the Court,

EDWARD RAWSON *Secretary:*

The king's mandate produced a great sensation in the colony. They knew that Charles was jealous of their loyalty, and would lend a willing ear to the numerous complaints now gathering against them. They therefore appointed two agents to London; the Rev. Mr. Norton of the first church in Boston, and Bradstreet, the distinguished persecuting assistant. These were to learn the king's suspicions against them, and to represent the people here as his most faithful subjects. The supposed dangers of the mission may be learned from the fact, that the agents took surety of the government to make good all damage, by detention of their persons in England. They sailed February 10th, 1662.

At Whitehall it was said that their reception was most flattering; but to the English Quakers they were objects of great interest, as a sample of their most virulent persecutors. And in London many of these, with George Fox, gathered round them, to learn what part they sustained in the cruelties to the Friends in America.—Norton it was said, denied any participation in

those cruelties, but Bradstreet confessed his acts and defended them. And when Fox, the father of the sect, asked him by what law they put his friends to death, he replied, by the English law against Jesuits. But, said Fox, did you believe those you hung were Jesuits or Jesuitically affected? and Bradstreet was constrained to say no. Then, said Fox, you murdered them! The charge of murder in London, was unpleasant to the charter ruler, and he exclaimed, what have you come here to entrap and catch us? "Thou hast caught thyself, said the shrewd Quaker, and upon thine own admission, may be brought to answer here in England for the lives of those men. The father of Wm. Robinson is now in being and no Quaker, and were he in London and found thee out, he would not scruple to prosecute thee; and we are daily advised to bring thee to answer, by the most loyal of his Majesty's servants, but we shall leave thee with the Lord."

This was a most startling intimation. The idea of a trial for murder in England was a vision of terror to the charter agents; who saw at once, in the then state of the public mind, a strong token of the most fatal result. In their new position the subject assumed a new and frightful aspect; alone and friendless in a distant land they now could appreciate the feelings of those Quakers they had slain in Massachusetts.

Upon Norton's more susceptible mind, the impression was never effaced, for from the time of their return, which was quite hasty after this, all accounts agree, that he pined, and not long after died in melancholy mood. From the reception of the king's mandamus the charter powers ceased capital prosecutions for religion; but as if loth to take their hands off the Quakers, they for a long season and almost to the end of the charter, continued to whip, fine and imprison them almost without measure. By a law as late

as 1677, the year after Philip's war, they renewed the slumbering fires of persecution, because as they alleged God's judgments were upon them, in that calamity, for their toleration of Quakers. In these persecutions more than three hundred citizens of the republic suffered in their persons and estates, and many were ruined by heavy fines, whippings and imprisonments, and in discouragement left the country. So numerous were the law-made offences against the church power, a man could hardly speak or move without hazard. To go to a Quaker meeting was penal, to stay at home was penal, and Quakers could not be made to attend the regular charter worship in company with their persecutors; hence prosecutions and punishment were of almost daily occurrence. Those who had property would rather see it wasted than submit, and when they had none, they were doomed to hard labor, and in one case two were ordered to be sold out of the country as slaves to pay their fines, for not attending the regular divine worship!

Lawrence Southic and Cassandra his wife were sober and industrious Quakers of Boston, and whom God had blessed with two dutiful children, a son and a daughter. They once had property of lands and cattle, but by long and continued prosecutions, and the law against their sect, and by banishment they were now very poor. This oppression the children resented and refused to attend the established church worship on the Lord's day. Upon this they were taken before a magistrate and fined, and having no property were ordered to work, this they also refused, and the public treasury was like to lose its dues, and thus the case was carried before the general court, which to raise the money, made the following order.

"Whereas Daniel Southic and Provided Southic, son and daughter of Lawrence Southic,

absenting themselves from the public ordinances, have been fined by the courts of Salem and Ipswich, pretending to have no estate and refusing to work; the court upon perusal of a law which *was made upon the account of debts*, in answer to what should be done, for the satisfaction of the fines, resolves; that the Treasurers of the several counties are, and shall be fully empowered to sell the said persons to any of the English nation at Virginia or Barbadoes, to answer for said fines."

EDWARD RAWSON, *Secretary*.

Under this order, one of the Treasurers actually sought to send Southic's children to a slave market at Barbadoes. But to the lasting honor of the profession, no ship master could be found to take them; and one especially affirmed that should he be tempted to engage in so foul a business, he would never trust himself at sea again in the best ship that ever swam, and he bade the wicked treasurer to go home and repent.

Democrats, how soft a word is religious intolerance, for such an act of charter despotism as this.

There was a law in those days also, by which Quakers might be whipped as vagabonds from town to town through the charter limits, and the several constables as they passed them on from hand to hand whipped them southerly into the wilderness between Dedham and Rhode Island.

On a certain time three young and delicate Quakeresses went down to Dover, then the most northerly town in Massachusetts, and where there were many Quakers. Here their movements and exhortations became offensive to Richard Waldron one of the charter magistrates, and the following order issued by him will serve as



a sample of many others, and of itself conveys more knowledge of the temper of the times than any description.

“To the constables of Dover, Hampton, Salisbury, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham, Lynn, Boston, Roxbury and Dedham, and until these vagabond Quakers are carried out of this jurisdiction.”

“You and every of you are required in the king’s name to take these vagabond Quakers, Anne Coleman, Mary Tompkins, and Olive Ambrose and make them fast to the cart’s tail, and driving the cart through your several towns, to whip them upon their naked backs, not exceeding ten stripes apiece in each town, and so to convey them from constable to constable till they are out of this jurisdiction, as you will answer it at your peril; and this shall be your warrant

Per me, RICHARD WALDRON.”

In Dover on a cold day in December Waldron saw the execution of his own order. The young Quakeresses were stripped to the waist before him, tied to a cart’s tail and whipped, and when some present ventured to condemn the cruelty he put two of them in the stocks. From Dover they were passed on to Hampton and there whipped; and from thence to Salisbury. At Salisbury Walter Barefoot through compassion persuaded the constable to give him the warrant to take the prisoners to Newbury; but having obtained it, he set the females at liberty; and thus no doubt saved their lives. For by the order they could be whipped through eleven towns, and ten stripes in each and over a distance of eighty miles!

This cruelty soon built up a Quaker society in Dover, which long outlived the charter despotism; and this is the Waldron who was tomahawked in his own bedchamber by the Indians,

for his cruelty and treachery to them, they not being of Quaker forbearance. And to such agents was committed the lives and liberties of the freemen of the republic.

## LETTER XI.

Although I do not propose to detail further the Quaker persecutions, yet it is not for lack of matter of narrative. The collections of fines in those days, for mere law-made offences, was a lucrative business. The constables and marshalls levied upon the cattle, wearing apparel, the farming and household utensils, of the people by appraisal. It was, at the hard money standard of course, as a paper currency was unknown under the first charter ; that was the invention of the crown governors to fill their pockets from the earnings of the people.

So numerous were these appraisments, that as they now stand recorded, a correct estimate may be formed of the gold and silver value of all the necessaries of life under the first charter. The result proves that similar products were then nearly fifty per cent lower than at present. Contemporary writers affirm that more than forty thousand pounds were thus levied upon heretics and various defaulters in their religious obligations, for the use of the charter government and the ministry ; an immense sum when we consider the poverty of the country. It brought down a wide-spread ruin although many fattened upon the spoils of their fellow citizens.

Property in those days changed hands not by virtuous arts of thrift but by the artificial operation of law merely, as under a bank or tariff dispensation. The sacred rights of property were violated by that government which was designed to protect it. It might, therefore be lost without sloth or improvidence, or won without

industry or virtue. This is the essence of despotism.

But the most deplorable wrong was the corruption of the public mind, which under free forms of government is the ruling power. It was the pollution of the fountains of justice, and to sustain those high persecuting measures, required the stimulating of the worst of passions among the people, and that by the worst appliances.

In 1665, John Endicot was Governor, and he died in the office that year. He was older than the charter, being one of those to whom it was originally granted. He was nominated a first assistant in 1629 by the king in London, and came over here soon after.

His companions Bellingham and Bradstreet, were also original patentees, and the three seemed to look upon the patent as their own instrument by which to govern the people. With offices annually elective, they contrived to keep themselves in place and influence for nearly half a century, whilst old England passed through two severe revolutions and four reigns. Indeed they boasted that their personal influence was hardly subject to change in this republic, and they even scoffed at the instability of legitimacy itself in the parent government.

The close of Endicot's life and administration was marked by the prosecution of five anabaptists. On trial it was charged against them "that they had gathered themselves into a pretended church estate, in opposition to Christ's churches in the colony;" which was contrary to law and against the peace. The accused confessed that they had been rebaptized, established a Baptist church, and that one of them had administered the Lord's supper. Upon this the assistants degraded and deprived them of their power to vote as freemen, and when these Baptists would

not ~~cease the~~ exercise of their religion, the charter government first imprisoned, and then banished them.

This, then despised and persecuted sect, is now the most numerous in the United States.

From the time that the charter rules attracted the unfavorable notice of King Charles by the capital punishment of his subjects found in the jurisdiction, he never forgot or forgave the necessity of his mandamus. In the law and the act, thus taking away the lives of Englishmen, not for any crime known to British law, statute or common, that jealous monarch saw the assumption of sovereignty in his own dominions and by his own subjects. Well might they then tremble for that charter under which they had in very deed committed two of the most fearful crimes, treason and murder; as the English Quakers had charged against them.

In the king's letter to the Colony in 1662 sent by Norton and Bradstreet, among other things he commanded "that in the choice of Governor and assistants, the only consideration to be had should be the wisdom, virtue and integrity of the candidates, that all free-holders of competent estates, not vicious though of different persuasions concerning church government, should have their votes in the election of all officers civil and military, and that his letter should be published.

Yet none of the king's injunctions were obeyed. Church power would not trust the elective franchise in dissenters hands; and whom they could not control through the machinery of church discipline. Nay, they would not trust the liberty of the press, for this same year they placed it under the control of two licensers created by law, and thus under a people's self-government, the people were made to distrust their own judgment as to what they ought to read!

In lieu of obedience, they sent the king over a ship load of mats for his royal navy, with a most loyal letter, and then continued their old practices.

From this period we date the decline of the charter. Three years after, the king sent over five commissioners to regulate the colony upon a plan he drew up embracing toleration, but after a long and anxious mission, they returned an unfavorable report.

From 1666 to '72, Bellingham was annually Governor ; and in '73, Mr. Leverett was called to the office, and which he administered faithfully to 1678, and through that bloody conflict with the New-England Indians called Philip's war. It was waged for extermination on both sides ; and bore more heavily on Massachusetts in precious lives and treasure, in proportion to its means, than did the revolutionary struggle.

In 1679, Bradstreet, at the age of 76, first obtained the executive office, having sought it for fifty years, and he was annually elected, whilst the government stood.

It was under this Governor that effective measures were first moved in England against the charter ; and in connection with these, the notorious Edward Randolph first appears in our history. He came here in Philip's war, the year of the bloody Narraganset swamp fight, and as an illomened messenger, he seemed a portion of the public distress. He presented to the governor and magistrates the king's letter, calling them to answer divers complaints, copies of which were also transmitted, and from the time of his first mission to the country he seems to have resolved the overthrow of the charter government. In the nine following years he made eight voyages to New England, and all, as was supposed, on errands of mischief and disturbance between the colony and the crown.

The manifest failure of the charter government to secure to the people their rights of person and property, brought great scandal upon the cause of popular self government, and of which Randolph and his master Charles, carefully availed themselves.

And it was so, that this British king, both tyrannical and intolerant at home of all that crossed his interest, seemed here the advocate of all good freedom, and the great refuge of all here oppressed, under a republican government ! A novel spectacle in those times ; but men had yet to learn the despotism of all special interests in power under republican forms. Now it is a common lesson. In 1683, Randolph brought over the Quo Warranto against the charter ; but with the king's promise, that if the colony would submit he would regulate the government merely, but not destroy it.

Upon this the assistants, as was quaintly said "showed more of the willow than the oak," and they passed a resolve, "that they would not contend in law with his Majesty, but would humbly lay themselves at his royal feet in submission to his pleasure." They needed some of the courage of old Mary Dyer whom they slew in the days of their power.

One impulse of Democracy alone appeared on this occasion. The House of Deputies indorsed on this lowly resolve the following :—

" Nov. 30, 1683, The Deputies consent not.  
WILLIAM TORRY, Clerk."

The prosecution proceeded ; the Quo Warranto was returned, a Scire Facias issued, and was returned also, and on the 18th June, 1684, judgment was entered up upon default for his Majesty, the charter decreed void, and the franchise seized on for the crown, and the colony then forced to submit to such government as

was imposed on it. But Charles never saw the settlement of that government for he survived the charter but a short time.

Nor did his unfortunate successor, James the second; during whose short reign the colony was governed under two royal commissioners, the first to Mr. Dudley as president of a council of government, which lasted but a few months, and the second to Sir Edmund Andros for all New England.

Sir Edmund arrived in Boston harbor in a fifty gun ship called the Kingfisher, December 19, 1686, and immediately took upon himself the government; in which he continued for about three years.

He was in fact a Viceroy, and proved a tyrant. He turned upon the old charter rulers with bitter persecution. He threatened to shut up their meeting houses declaring that their congregational religion was worse than none; and he demanded conformity to the Church of England. The validity of their marriages and their titles to the lands he also called in question—the former because their ministers were mere laymen and could not celebrate marriage, and the latter because, when the first charter was made void, all titles under it perished also; and he required great sums for a renewal of titles.—At last his manifold tyrannies and exactions aroused the people and in April 1689, they arrested and imprisoned and finally sent him to England.

The accession of William and Mary to the English throne about the same time saved all bad consequences from that strong measure.

From this period, to the arrival of the second charter in 1692, the old charter forms were in a measure revived, and with them came in the old charter influences of church and clergy pend-



ing which commenced the celebrated witch persecution, a detail of which is reserved for other letters.

## LETTER XII.

We now commence some detail of the witch persecutions from 1645 to the 2d charter, 1692.

It is democratic doctrine, that sanity, benevolence and justice, are the natural attributes of the public mind. Were it otherwise, we may see at once that men would lack the power of self-government and could not dwell together in society, or as a nation. Therefore that government is the most perfect, which gives the freest action to the public wisdom and goodness upon its policy ; for in these and these alone, all our rights find rest, by a common protection. But whenever private, special interest acts directly upon the policy of the government, and controls it, we are not under the protection of the public wisdom and goodness, but exposed to the tyranny of private avarice or ambition, or perhaps both. It was not for the common interest of religion, but to quiet the jealousy of the church political, the party of privilege, that the blood of martyrs flowed. And we may well suppose that great labor and art were necessary to deprave and corrupt the public mind, to sustain the costly sacrifice. And it is profitable for us to learn those means by which this was effected.

And among the first we may name panic making ; to torture the public mind as they did in those days, by ceaseless alarms of coming judgments and a prostration of all religion ; as in 1678, it resounded from all the pulpits, that the terrible scourge of Philip's war, was a judgment sent to punish the toleration of Quakers.

To this end bold and vigorous fiction was employed. I may well say bold, because in the

portion of history I shall now recite, they stretched over all minor conceptions, and imaged Satan himself as a restless, roving minister of evil, let loose among the people of the colony.

Of course he hated all holiness, and more especially the New England churches.

For it was famed that the Indians here were his worshippers, and their powows were his priests, and that he exceedingly delighted in their rude and amic devotion; and as it is a rule with Pagan divinities to claim the country of their devotees, so this American Satan looked upon all pious people here as wrongful intruders upon his domains and watched them sharply for mischief.

We indeed may smile at this hypothesis, but it suited the times and was pat to the purpose of its inventors, and they regularly explained by it, all the opposition to first charter domination.

This is shown by a reference to authorities. Cotton Mather says in his church history, that the devil appeared in the sedition of Roger Williams. Of Mrs. Hutchinson he wrote, that witchcraft was in her family and played around her bed; and that in her exile, she bore as many monsters as she had invented wicked heresies. So said the Rev. Mr. Weld, of Roxbury, and also the great Hooker of Connecticut. And another minister publicly declared that the "Quaker light" was but a filthy hell-vapor. Gov. Endicott, as I have stated when he ordered their ears to be cut off, said they had no commission to come into this jurisdiction, but from the devil. And above all there stood upon the statute book the old Cottonian law of 1645, against witchcraft already cited, a false recognition, by the highest authority of the devil's power to appear in the colony; nay, by a strange construction it was made an act of conjuration, a summons to come forth, and which he was well pleased to obey.

But never did priest or king, or any special interest, employ a more potent or treacherous agent to sustain unhallowed power. They verified to the letter, and in bloody records the truth of the old adage, that, "whoso deals with the devil, will have a hard master." For from the time that policy loosed him within the charter limits, he, or evil-minded men in his name, held not only the peace of the country, but the lives and fortunes of the citizens, at will; and he roamed in terror through the land. And thus those who most vigorously pushed harmless religionists like the Quakers, Baptists, &c. from the jurisdiction, let in the father of all mischief, by solemn law; so short-sighted are all, who employ bad agents or public evils or embarrassments, to sustain or acquire, political power.

Within one year after the statute recognition of witchcraft, in the jurisdiction, a case occurred. It was in Springfield upon the Connecticut river, and in the family of the Rev. Mr. Moxam. Two of his children betook themselves to extreme oddities in speech and behaviour, and it was readily supposed they were bewitched, but there was no proof to fix the sorcery upon any one, until three or four years afterwards, when an old woman of settled witch reputation, upon close examination was said to have confessed her guilt, and here the matter rested.

The case of Mrs. Margaret Jones of Charlestown was fatal. She was reputed a witch of such extraordinary malignity, that her touch would produce deafness, blindness, sickness at the stomach and violent pains, and in 1648 she was tried and executed.

In disgust and distress, her husband went on board a vessel to leave the country, and then the vessel began to rock as if it would upset, and so continued for twelve hours. Upon this the enemies of Jones procured a warrant of arrest

from the Governor and assistants, then sitting at Boston; and when he was imprisoned, the vessel became quiet. There were on board this vessel at the time as she lay in Charles River, eighty horses, shipped for Barbadoes, and this was the witchcraft that rocked the vessel; and as we hear no more of Jones, no doubt the assistants saw the error and released him.

In 1652, the year that old Massasoit and the Rev. John Cotton died there was another case at Springfield. Hugh Parsons was indicted for witchcraft. The jury found him guilty; but the magistrates who tried the cause would not agree to it and under a law of 1651, it was carried to the general court, where the man was discharged.

The next, was the case of the widow Hibbins, whom Gov. Endicott and the assistants hung for witchcraft May 27, 1656. Her husband was a rich Boston merchant, and an assistant when the law against witchcraft was passed, and thus he qualified his enemies in the devil's name, to put a halter about his wife's neck. She was a haughty dame and was not, they thought, sufficiently humbled by her husband's great loss of property in later life, and she came under church discipline and censure. But this only inflamed her hot temper, and a witch prosecution could alone reduce her to reason. At her trial it was proved, that having once seen two persons in the street talking, she said she knew it was about her, and unhappily she guessed right.— This turned the case against her, and she thus lost her life. At her trial they searched her body for the devil's mark as they did the Quaker maidens, Mary Fisher and her friends in less than two months after; but none were found. Before execution Mrs. Hibbens made her will, and therein begged her friends to respect her body, and give it Christian burial. But the whole colony

rang with her story. It was exceedingly alarming to the rulers that Satan should presume so high as an assistant's widow, and for more than thirty years there were no witch executions here, although there were many supposed cases of the offence.

In 1662 witchcraft passed over to Connecticut. In Hartford at that time, there was imprisoned as a witch, a Mrs. Greensmith and the peculiar art that was used to entrap and convict her deserves our notice.

In the same place there lived a girl whom they called Ann Cole, and much admired for her beauty and ingenuity. She understood the Dutch and French languages, rare attainments then, but which of themselves would hardly excite suspicion to her prejudice, even in the realm of blue laws. But she possessed in addition to these, the power of ventriloquism in a high degree, and all combined, came very near to her own undoing; indeed they quite undid old Mrs. Greensmith.

Ann Cole at first only amused herself with the little ones of her own family, and when she practiced the deceptive art in the Dutch language, the unearthly jargon seeming to come from no visible object, it afforded her great amusement to see the terrified urchins gather round the very cause of their alarm for protection. Success tempted her on, and she began to amuse herself with her neighbors. When they came in and were seated perhaps the chair would seem to compliment them with "how do you do?" and if they started up in surprise, "pray keep your seat," would follow in a low coaxing tone; and then the house cat seated in Ann's lap would sing melodiously. But although the facetious maiden never suffered these pastimes to pass without explanation, yet some doubted, and eyed her with jealousy and circulated strange stories,

and before she had thought of consequences, rumor had declared her a sort of Magdalene, and that her demons talked to each other, in a strange variety of languages. These reports excited the attention of two clergymen of the place and they obtained Miss Ann's consent to approach her so near when a conference of her spirits took place, as to hear and write down the particulars; and herein commenced the only veritable witchcraft of the case; for Ann Cole's ventriloquism or the listening ministers, feigned the supposed demons to converse with Mrs. Greensmith as one in league with them to do mischief, a foul slander in either case, and which cost the poor woman her life. The clergymen then repaired to prison, they said the accused was much agitated upon learning the discovery they had made, and by sharp interrogatories was made to confess her familiarity with the devil. She had not signed his book, or made a covenant with him, but at the then coming Christmass, she was to be ready for a high frolic and then all was to have been finished. Strange hymenials for a woman of seventy-five and the mother of ten sons and daughters and abundance of grandchildren; and it does not even appear that she was a widow. However the poor woman was hung without scruple, or space for repentance, and without apparant pity for her future state; or whether in her execution they were doing the devil a good or ill service.

## LETTER XIII.

In October 1671 a demon, it was said entered into Elizabeth Knapp, an unmarried girl of Groton, and he caused her alternately to weep and laugh, and then in great agitation to call out money, money, like a modern paper banker.— On the 17th of December following this demon began again to speak in the young woman and to utter horrid railings against the minister of the town, but without harm to his character, as the people would not believe him.

He next made Elizabeth accuse the minister's wife as the cause of all her woes; but in this also he obtained no credit; for the pious woman, after prayers with her accuser made her confess the slander; and the devil had to shift his quarters, for he can never do his business unless he can maintain some reputation.

In 1679 a demon probably the same infested a house in Newbury. Sticks and stones were thrown at the family, by an invisible hand; and a staff which hung against the wall, began to swing of its own accord; and then leaped down and danced on the hearth, and when they seized it to burn, it could hardly be held on the fire.— So a dish, when the owner of the house was writing, leaped into the pail and threw water on his work. At length the terrified family cried to God for help; and then the demons were heard to say mournfully that they had no more power, and soon departed.

In 1682 one Desborough of Hartford was possessed of a chest of clothes, claimed by his neighbor, but which he would not give up. Soon af-



ter many stones, and corn cobs, were thrown at him by an invisible hand. They came in at the doors of the house, and through the windows and sometimes even down chimney. At length fires were set on his lands which did him much damage. Whereupon he gave up the clothes and his vexations ceased.

So about the same time, a Quaker at Portsmouth, withheld from an old woman of his town, a lot of land which she claimed as her own; and stones soon began to be thrown at his house by an invisible hand. When they were picked up, it was said they were found hot, and smelt of brimstone, by which it was readily known from whence they came. Upon this the subdued and terrified Quaker settled with the woman and his troubles ceased. Both these cases are recorded, as examples of witchcraft. Yet to us they seem to be those where claimants of property, seek other remedies than courts of law.

But among these examples of foolery, there is recorded one tale of horror. It appears that at Hartford, and about the time of Ann Cole's case, one Mary Johnson a young girl in her minority, was indicted and tried by the supreme court for *familiarity with the devil* !

The jury returned her guilty; and that mainly upon her alleged confessions. I will transcribe a portion of Cotton Mather's history of this case. "The girl said that her first familiarity with the devil began in her discontent, and by her often saying the devil take this and that, and sometimes wishing the devil would do this or that for her, until at last the devil did appear and tendered her what services might best content her. Then if her master blamed her for not carrying out the ashes, the devil would come and clear the hearth for her. So when she was sent to drive the hogs out of the corn-field, the devil would so chase and frighten them as to make

her laugh most merrily. She further confessed that she had murdered a child and committed uncleanness with both men and devils;" and it was for an illicit intercourse with the latter, that the Connecticut governor hung this young woman.

After her sentence the Rev. Mr. Stone of Hartford visited her in prison and as he verily thought was successful in turning her heart towards the true God. So that when led out to execution she expressed a humble hope in the mercies of redemption; and died much to the satisfaction of those gathered round the gallows.

In this black transaction who does not see the full success of some vile seducer of female virtue, in an apparent legalized destruction of his victim. Yet it is called a case of lamentable witchcraft. So it was with those who slew the innocent.

In 1685 or 6 a book was published at Boston with the approbation of the ministers and magistrates. It recited the cases I have named with many others and contained various arguments to fortify their credibility. The Rev. Cotton Mather of Boston, a man of great influence in church and state was the author; though he at the time withheld his name. He was then a young minister of about five and twenty, the son of Mr. Increase Mather then president of Cambridge college,—a position then of greater civil and church power than any other in the land, he was also the grandson of the great John Cotton. Cotton Mather's opinions and turn of thought were in harmony with those who then ruled in Massachusetts, and we thus consider him.

This book produced the notorious witch case of the Godwins, of which he also published an account commencing thus. "*Haec ipse miserrima vidi.*" John Godwin was a Boston merchant, a character of the first respectability, and

he sat under the teachings of Mather himself.— A poor Irish woman called Glover, with her daughter lived near him. The young Glover often served in Godwin's family, and on a certain time being accused by his eldest daughter of some little theft, she cast back a denial and abuse for the accusation. The mother came up also and defended her child, and her passion and wild Irish accent, so terrified the little Godwin that she was thrown into hystericks, and they were kept up from day to day. Her case excited great commiseration in the neighborhood and the physicians who were called in, being puzzled, pronounced it a "preternatural visitation;" a very significant phrase, by which all understood that the little maid was bewitched. Next her little sister, and two brothers seeing what was going on, had fits also and were afflicted by the invisibles. They declared they were pinched and pricked by some one whom they knew not; and then at times they would seem deaf, dumb and blind; and sometimes their mouths would be forced wide open and then suddenly brought together with great violence, to the great hazard of their tongues.

In great trepidation, the Boston and Charlestown ministers kept a full day of fasting and prayer at Godwin's afflicted house; this cured the youngest and mildest innocent, who said that she was now quite well, but the others, less pliant, denied that they were any better, and nought remained but to seek out and punish the witch, according to law. But by what law? Sir Edmund Andros now ruled all New England as viceroy under James II. The old Cottonian law against witchcraft under which they hung Mrs. Margaret Jones and the widow Hibbins, perished with the old charter in 1685, and no other law had been passed; and it was not a common law offence. Stoughton and Dudley, both first

charter rulers, were now also supreme judges, lately commissioned by Sir Edmund; and these at the solicitation of Mather and others, ventured to arraign and to try Mistress Glover for witch practices on the Godwin family. But she was a stranger to the language and too ignorant to understand legal proceedings, and when asked to plead to her indictment, her answer was unintelligible. The court then swore an interpreter, and he soon confessed himself puzzled declaring that he believed some other witch, or the devil himself had confounded her language, lest she should tell tales. They then searched Glover's house and some rag babies were found stuffed with goats hair. We must know that the woman was a Catholic and sold toys.

When one of these images or puppets was brought into court, the witch swiftly and oddly started up and seized it, and immediately one of the children had a sad fit before the court and assembly. The judges noted the fact; and repeated the experiment and with the same result, as it was said, the children saw not when Glover laid her hand on the baby images. In the end the court were satisfied that she used these dolls mysteriously in her work of torment. She owned also that there was one who was her prince, but did not say whether he were the pope or the devil. It was suggested that she might be crazed; but a jury of doctors returned, that she was *compos mentis*. She was finally sentenced to death and executed in Boston; yet the afflicted children did not recover but rather grow worse, or they improved by practice, for they would now bark at each other like dogs and then they would purr like cats. They would pretend to be in a red hot oven, and panted and sweat accordingly; and then that they were cast into cold water and appeared very chilly.

But as there were many who doubted the hon-

esty of the Godwins, Mather informs us that he took the eldest to his own house, that he might have a critical knowledge of those things, which would qualify him to refute the infidelity of the debauched age, as he called it, in which he lived; and he there experimented with the little damsel and much to his satisfaction,

It was current doctrine then, that all pious books were very offensive to witches and those under the power of witchcraft; and Mather found that his Miss Godwin abhorred the Bible, the Assembly's Catechism, and his grandfather Cotton's "Milk for Babies," a little work, once quite popular. But Popish books, Quaker books and the book of common prayer gave her no offence. This last she called her Bible, and gave it more than ordinary respect. Books in proof of witchcraft she would not touch, but such as ridiculed the notion, and jest books gave her great delight, and the more profane they were, the merrier they made her. And Cotton marvelled at her discernment.

Sometimes the devil would bring Miss Godwin a horse, and then she had all the graceful motions of an equestrian. One day she rode up stairs into the minister's study, whereupon she suddenly cried out as if surprised, "they are gone: God won't let them come here;" and she was at once cured, and sat reading the Bible and other good books for a long time. But when she left the study the demons returned, with her horse, and she frolicked as before.—This experiment of the charmed study, was tried before many visitors and with the like success. Mather's experiments further satisfied him that Miss Godwin's demons understood Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but none of the Indian languages. The ministers of Boston and Charlestown now kept another day of fasting and prayer at Godwin's house and this cured the children there.

But still the one at Mr. Mather's was not improved. From long indulgence she waxed wanton and endeavored to play tricks upon her benefactor. She seemed to think his credulity endless, and played off upon him some disrespectful and manifest deceptions. This the devout man could not endure and he sat about her cure in good earnest; and accordingly, as he says, he besought the Lord thrice in three days of prayer, with fasting, and the Godwin family saw their deliverance perfected. This seems a near approach to some of the scripture miracles.

The printed narrative of these things was fully attested by all the Boston and Charlestown ministers; and even the famed Richard Baxter wrote a preface to the work in London, and therein declared, that he must be a Sadducee indeed, who would not believe it.

## LETTER XIV.

It is manifest, that the publication of the witch cases I have named, with the approbation of the magistrates and ministers, and the turn thereby given to the whole subject, gave sanction to all witch prosecutions, as both pious and patriotic. Yet the natural effects of this measure did not immediately appear. The tyranny of Sir Edmund Andros then began to engross the public mind. He presumed to tread upon that church power, which had so long ruled the land; and being a vigilant and potent enemy, witchcraft for a while remained unheeded.

The viceroy and his creature Randolph was imprisoned by the people as I have already stated, in 1689; and immediately a council of safety was formed, and which was virtually the government. These chose for their president, the old charter governor, Bradstreet.

In June that year, the representatives of the people met at Boston. They renewed the old charter form of the government, but it was powerless. They could not resume the charter itself, for it had been made void in chancery. Indeed, for more than two years, there was no legitimate government, and the colony was expecting a new patent from William and Mary.— Yet it was during this interval, when there was no law against it, statute or common, or magistrates qualified for the inquisition, that witchcraft began to be prosecuted at Salem village.— This is a startling fact in our history, and shows how ill understood were the just and equitable principles of a democratic government.

This tragedy also began in a minister's family.

The Rev. Samuel Parris, was educated at Cambridge. He first engaged in trade, but being unsuccessful he turned to the ministry and was settled at Salem village. At the time now in view, his parish was in a high quarrel of which his arts to obtain the fee instead of the improvement for life only of the parsonage farm, was the cause. And whilst thus warm with mutual malevolence, pastor and flock, the current notions of witchcraft suddenly placed in their power the means of mutual revenge; and they were at once fully delivered over to the effects of their own excited wrath. A very natural but very terrible punishment.

It was a horrid policy in the charter government to ever use the devil to overawe the people. A boundless power of evil, which a child, as well as a minister, or a charter ruler, could set in motion; and then whoever could might lay him.

In the latter part of February, 1692, two children in the Parris family, both about ten years old, Elizabeth his daughter, and Abigail Williams his niece, began to behave in a strange manner; they would creep under chairs, sit in uncommon attitudes and utter language which none could understand; and as they were pitied and indulged, their freaks increased until it was thought they were very like the Godwins and must be bewitched; and the physicians when called in confirmed the opinion. Mr. Parris only increased their malady by holding a day of solemn prayer at his house with the neighboring ministers.

But he had in his family two slaves, John and Tituba his wife. The squaw was from New Spain and once a subject of the old Montezumian empire and probably was imbued with some of its gloomy and unfathomable superstitions.—



Her thoughts too seemed as busy as her master's, and she told him that although no witch herself, she once served a mistress who was, and who taught her how to find them out; and she would try upon the children without hurting them. Parris greedily took with her scheme, and he saw her whilst she took rye meal and kneaded a cake, which she salted in a peculiar manner, and which she said, when baked in green cabbage leaves in the embers, and eaten by the two girls, would make them see their tormentors; and she continued the experiment. But although both she and her master affected to act and talk mysteriously, yet the children as they crept about shrewdly under the chairs, eyed the cookery with a very jealous interest, and when they became conscious that the unsavory morsel was for their mouths they grew restive; for no necromancy could satisfy them that Tituba's briny bread was like gingerbread, or any thing good, and they began to show a rational opposition. But Tituba said they must eat, and Mr. Parris began to use authority. "I'll smell on't," said little Elizabeth, "now won't that do? say yes, say yes, do good Titty." But she shook her head. Bless me, said the father, how natural they seem; and about the same time the slave pulled the rank cake from the embers, and as the hot scent filled the room, Abigail cried out, there! there! I see them, I see them as plain as day, and so do I, said little Elizabeth:—O how many! and there's old Tit too, she torments us, old Tit torments us, said they both.

It was now all over with the Mexican. In vain she frowned and coaxed by turns; or denied that the girls could see witch spectres by the smell of her cake only. She discredited her own magic and which they would sustain for self defence, and the more she labored thus, the more they professed to be tormented, until Parris himself

took their part and threatened Tituba with punishment unless she confessed and disclosed her confederate witches.

And John too, her husband, when he saw her in distress, meanly deserted her. He told master Parris that the girls no doubt spoke the truth; that she had for a long time tormented him and was an old hand at it. But discouraged and deserted as she was, her master's whip alone, as she afterwards affirmed, brought her to lie, and to confess that the devil engaged her to sign his book, and to afflict the children.

And thus was acquired the spectral vision by the afflicted so much used, and so fatally for the peace of the country, as we shall hereafter see. Tituba was imprisoned, and so continued, until sold to pay her prison fees! And again Mr. Parris fasted and prayed at his house a whole day.

His family now excited a general sympathy and consideration, which others were willing to share. Their persecutions, Satan being the author, were somewhat honorable, and Ann Putnam an older girl of the neighborhood, instigated by her mother no doubt, pretended to be afflicted also. Thus fortified, they now complained of Sarah Good, and a Mrs. Osborn. It was supposed that the equivocal characters of these, caused the accusation; and it was the more readily credited. They were committed by two Salem magistrates, the first week in March. Of Osborn we hear no more; but Mrs. Good was finally executed.

It is almost incredible, and yet it is sober history, that a little daughter of Sarah Good five years old only, was accused by the afflicted of tormenting them; and they showed what they pretended were the prints of the child's little teeth on their arms! The Salem magistrates committed this mere infant for witchcraft, but as we hear no more of her, she was probably liberated without further harm.

About this time there was a great fast at Salem; and another proclaimed by the government throughout the colony, "that the Lord would effectually rebuke Satan and save his people." And the afflicted accusers multiplied daily, and there were added to the number Ann Putnam's mother, goodwives, Pope, Bibber and Goodall, maidens, Mary Walcott and Mary Lewis; also Tituba's husband John; he turning accuser to save himself from being accused.

About the same time, a society was formed in Salem for the detection of witches, and those procured the accusation and commitment of many. This formidable band of accusers now cried out against two aged females who were church members, by the names of Corey and Nurse. Mrs. Nurse belonged to the church in Salem under the Rev. Mr. Noyes; and Mrs. Corey was of Mr. Parris' flock. This was a dark business. It was supposed that Parris instigated the accusation. For when made, he gave it publicity and strength; and on the following Lord's day he preached in his pulpit from this text: "Have I not chosen twelve and one of you is a devil."

A Mrs. Cloyes, sister to Nurse, was at the meeting and during the furious and uncharitable sermon which followed her distress for her sister's life, which it much endangered, constrained her to leave the meeting. A high wind closed the door suddenly after her and it was said that she showed temper; and on the following Monday an accusation for witchcraft by the Parris family, and those under its control, went after her, upon which she was carried before Hathorn and Currier for examination. This charge, we know must have been both malicious and false, as it was sustained by perjury.

A further knowledge of the temper and insolence of those, in whose power the lives and lib-

erties of the citizens were now placed, may be gathered from this incident. On the 9th of March a Mr. Lawson, minister of Scituate, preached for Mr. Parris, it being the Sabbath day, and the bewitched band were present. After the psalm had been sung, Abigail Williams called out to him to stand up and name his text, and when he did so, she said it was very long indeed. In the discourse, he explained some point of doctrine at considerable length, when Mrs. Pope said loudly, "now take up some other point, the people have had enough of that." In his improvement he made reference to doctrines which he said he had established. "Pray," said Abigail again, "what doctrines do you mean?" And then Ann Putnam suddenly cried out, there! there! I see a little yellow bird sitting on the minister's cocked up hat; there where it hangs on the peg in the pulpit. This was spectral vision, nobody else saw it and it seemed to be considered that the devil thus scoffed and jeered the congregation through the mouths of the afflicted.

## LETTER XV.

The six commitments now made of the females—Tituba, Osborn, Good, Corey, Nurse, and Sarah Good's little daughter, were upon the assumed authority of the two Salem magistrates alone, instigated by Parris. On the 11th of April, Danforth the Deputy Governor, with the council came down from Boston and sat formally with Hathorn and Curwin in the place of power.—The Governor Bradstreet the old patentee, who bung the Quakers, was now almost ninety; and ill qualified for the new service. Many of the neighboring ministers were also present.

This terrible witch inquisition gave a sanction to the delusive and malicious prosecutions, and sealed the doom of many innocent victims.

The inquisitors, the accused and a cloud of spectators, met in a large meeting house, Mr. Samuel Parris being employed as clerk, and assuming also a leading part in the production and examination of witnesses. The Rev. Mr. Noyes of Salem, an enthusiast in witch hunting opened the business with prayer. After which one of the accused begged that she might go to prayer also; but Danforth told her, they had come there to examine into her witchcrafts, and not to hear her pray! and she gave it up.

Mr. Parris then began business by calling up as a witness Tituba's husband John. That cunning treacherous slave knew well how to please his master and save his own neck; and living in the Parris family he knew also the views and wishes of those who now controlled the witch accusations.

*Question.*—John; who hurts you?

*A.*—Goody Procter first, and then Goody Cloyes.

*Q.*—What did *she* do to you?

*A.*—*She* (who?) brought the book to me, and choked me.

*Q.*—John, tell the truth now, who hurts you; have you been hurt?

*A.*—The first I saw was a gentlewoman.—(This was no doubt, a dark hint at Mrs. Mary English, the wife of one of the first merchants in Salem, and who was afterwards arrested and committed.)

This was the woman, who, when the constables were at the door to seize and carry her to prison, called her little ones round her, gave them her parting blessing and advice, prayed with them, and wept over them, as she supposed for the last time, and then gave herself up quietly to her fate.

*Q.*—John, who did you see next?

*A.*—Goody Cloyes.

*Q.*—How often did she torment you?

*A.*—A good many times.

*Q.*—Do the women come to you mostly in the daytime or in the night?

*A.*—They come most in the daytime.

*Q.*—John, do you know Cloyes and Procter?

*A.*—Yes, there is Goody Cloyes.

Upon this Mrs. Cloyes looked sharply at him and said,—tell me when did I ever come to thee, or hurt thee?

*John.*—(a little abashed,) O, a great many times.

O, said Cloyes, you are a grievous liar!

Upon this Parris grew a little warm. Now, John, said he, tell us what did this Cloyes do to you?

*A.*—She did pinch me and bite me till the blood came. She came and hurt me yesterday at meeting.

This was the woman whose only crime was leaving Mr. P.'s sermon. The malice of the master, the perjury of the slave, and the despotism of Danforth and his assistants were too hard for her. John too, seems to have had the spectral vision in a high degree, though he never even smelt of his wife's cake. He learnt it, no doubt, of the little girls her pupils, as did Ann Putnam and others.

Parris then called Mary Walcot, and asked who hurt her. *A.*—Goody Cloyes. *Q.*—What did she do? *A.*—She hurt me. *Q.*—Did she bring the book? *A.*—Yes. *Q.*—What was you to do with it? *A.*—Sign it, and be well. Then she fell into a fit, in affected horror at the devil's book.

Abigail Williams, who so successfully outwitted Tituba in the matter of the salted cake, was next called by her uncle Parris. Abigail, said he, did you, by your spectral vision, once see a company near this meeting house eat and drink?

*A.*—Yes sir;—it was their witch sacrament. It was on the day of the great fast. They had bread like raw flesh; and they had red drink, which they said was our blood; and they had it twice that day.

*Q.*—How many were there?

*A.*—About forty; they came together by the sound of a trumpet. They had a minister who preached, and Goody Cloyes and Goody Good were their deacons.

Mrs. Cloyes was of rather delicate health, and when she heard this strange tissue of falsehood, so great was her surprise and terror, that she sickened and asked for water, but as no one would assist her, she fainted and fell upon the floor. Upon which Abigail cried out, there, there, I see her spirit fly to her sister Nurse in prison for council; and she was believed; and as

soon as the woman revived, she was forthwith imprisoned.

Parris then asked Mary Walcot, if she had ever seen a white man. And she answered yes; often. *Q.*—What sort of a man is he? *A.*—A fine grave man, and when he comes he makes all the witches tremble, and he tells us when our fits will come on and when they will go off.

This was supposed to be Jesus Christ come down to pity and to talk with bewitched children and save the charter churches. A horrid blasphemous fiction but yet credited by the government of the colony, before whom it was uttered.

The justices then proceeded and said, Elizabeth Procter; you understand, that you are here charged with sundry acts of witchcraft, what say you to it? I take God in heaven to be my witness, that I know no more of witchcraft than a child unborn.

This woman was of excellent character, the mother of a fine family of children, all then dependent on her for nurture and protection. It is very difficult to account for her selection and accusation as a witch. Some accident, or that she was obnoxious to the Parris or Putnam family, who fabricated all the early accusations, must have been the cause. But when her unhappy husband saw his wife rudely seized like a felon in her once peaceful home, he resolved to accompany her to the examination; and his conjugal fidelity cost him his life.

Her examination began thus.

*Question.*—Mary Wolcot, doth this woman hurt you?

*Answer.*—I never saw her to be hurt by her.

*Q.*—Mary Lewis, does she hurt you?

No answer.

*Q.*—Ann Putnam, does she hurt you?

She could not speak; and Abigail Williams thrust her hand into her own mouth lest she



should speak. A pause, and almost a failure. John, said Mr. Parris, who hurts you? This is the woman, said the Indian who came to me in her shift and choked me. And now the girls were ready to say she hurt them, and brought the devil's book for them to sign, and the crafty Abigail with affected simplicity and sincerity, said to Mrs. Procter, did not you tell me that your maid had signed? Dear child, said Mrs. Procter, it is not so; remember dear child, that there is another judgment. Then Abigail and Ann seemed to have fits; by and by they cried out, look you, there is Procter on the beam; and her husband too; Procter is a wizard! Procter is a wizard! The man was confounded. There, said Ann, Procter is going to take up Mrs. Pope's feet; and her feet flew up; and now, said Abigail, he is going to Goody Bibber; and Bibber fell into a fit! The Deputy Governor and council seemed surprised, and said to Procter, you see the devil will deceive you, the poor children could see what you was about, before the women were hurt. "Repent for the devil is bringing you out."

The Hon. Court then suffered some experiments to be tried on Mrs. Procter. It was affirmed that the afflicted could not strike a witch; and Ann Putnam approached and attempted to strike Mrs. P. on the head with her fist, but as the blow descended, her fist opened, and her fingers ends but lightly tapped the woman's hood, and then Ann suddenly cried out with consummate art, they burn! they burn!—her fingers burned, and she fell upon the floor apparently overcome with the pain.

All were now strongly moved by this incident, so wonderful and yet so sudden. Some fancied they saw a blue flame play round Mrs. Procter; and others were quite sure they smelt brimstone.

The court then suddenly turned the experi-

ments upon Procter himself and ordered him forthwith to repeat the Lord's prayer, without slip or hesitation, to show his innocence. It was a hard case in his present dismay but he made the effort; and he did very well until he came to the petition "deliver us from evil," when he said, "deliver us from *all* evil;" and this was adjudged to be a perversion of the Lord's prayer; for to be delivered from *all* evil, was to be delivered from that under which he then suffered, and of course opposing the divine decrees.

But to be fair with him, they put him upon the prayer again; but he had no better luck than at first. For when he came to the words "hallowed be thy name," he said "*hollowed* be thy name." Here they again stopped him; and held that this was a depraving of the words. To make the name of the Deity *hollow* said they, is to make it vain, light and void, and is blasphemy and cursing, rather than a prayer. In fine it was decided that he could not say it, and that he was a guilty man.

And thus the unfortunate Procter, although he came before the magistrates a free and innocent citizen to console and sustain his afflicted and terrified wife, by a strange fatality was sent from their presence a prisoner charged with a capital offence, upon the exhibition of the foolery and malice I have named; and what is equally strange his wife in the end by a mere accident was saved, but poor Procter they hung. At this time by the advice of the Deputy Governor and council both were fully committed for trial.—And this examination is highly interesting being favored by the presence of those dignitaries; the people's chosen agents in the work of self-government. Some of them were afterwards put on the bench for final trial of witches.

I need hardly notice the fatal ignorance of human rights, and even of those judicial forms, in-

voted for the protection of innocence, which this examination evinces. No cross examination to test the consistency of the witnesses, and the Rev. Mr. Parris also indulged in leading questions to any extent. If a prisoner presumed to interrogate, a fit or some new uproar would be the response, and then the soul-sickening thought that the lives of the citizens were in the power of mere children, or clerical partizans like Noyes, Mather, Parris and others, all alike drunken with new power and absolutely incapable of just reasoning in this matter ! The worst days of the French Revolution, never produced a like season of terror. There seemed no refuge for the people. The government itself, public opinion, our common refuge, and even religion as then administered obeyed the fanaticism and its partizans.

## LETTER XVI.

On the 19th of April only eight days after, the imposing witch inquisition before Governor Danforth and the council, Hathorn and Curwin called up for examination Giles Corey, the husband of Martha Corey, already committed. And thus the wrong done to the wife was so soon visited upon the husband in wanton passion merely, and without shadow of truth or justice.

They thus began with him.

Giles Corey—you are now brought before authority upon high suspicion of witchcraft, now tell us the truth of the matter.

I hope, said Giles, by the blessing of God I shall, for I never had any hand in that matter in my life.

Parris, who was still clerk and chief manager now said to the afflicted girls, which of you have seen this man hurt you? I, said Abigail Williams;—I, said Ann Putnam;—I, I, I, said the whole band but one. Hasn't he hurt you too, said Parris coaxingly to Elizabeth Hubbard, but she attempting to answer seemed to be taken with a fit.

Have you never seen him hurt you, said the same to Benjamin Gould.

I have often seen Giles Corey and been hurt after it, but cannot say he did it.

All the girls also said that he brought the devil's book for them to subscribe.

The justices then said, Corey you hear what these testify; why do you hurt them.

I never did hurt them.

Then it is your spectre that hurts them, tell us what have you done?

I have done nothing to them.

Have you never, said Parris, entered into a compact with the devil?

No, I never did. (But he had then recently joined himself to the village church under Mr. Parris).

What temptation have you had?

I never had any.

What! have you done it (what?) without temptation? Said Goody Bibber, one of the bewitched, what frightened you in the cow house? and her own question seemed to frighten her into a fit. But Corey denied that he was frightened; but Goodman Bibber and his daughter both made oath that he told them he was frightened in the cow house, but did not tell the cause, and so said other witnesses.

The court said, Corey tell the truth, what frightened you in the cow house? What did you see there?

I saw nothing there but my cattle.

This was slow progress. And now the girls became suddenly tormented; they were pinched and pricked, had strong convulsions and cried out dismally; and Hathorn said sharply to the prisoner, what, is it not enough to act witchcraft at other times, but you must do it here in the face of authority! I am a poor old man, said Corey, and can't help it; and they ordered his hands to be tied so that he should not pinch the little girls by his witchcraft, in presence of authority. But this was not enough; he had been very obdurate and now if he moved his head, their little necks would be twisted almost round; or if he drew in his cheeks their little cheeks would be sucked in also.

They say, said Parris, that you once stopped in prayer, and could not go on, what did that?

My wife did that, said Corey. I said "die unto sin and live unto God," she suddenly stepped forward and found fault and said it should be "die unto sin and live unto righteousness," and she is an older church member than I am and learnt me to pray.

But what frightened you in the cow house Giles Corey, said the court, tell us that.

Nothing, nothing.

Why here are three witnesses, who have heard you to-day say, that you was frightened in the cow house.

I do not remember it.

Thomas Gould then came forward and swore that Corey told him that he knew that, about his wife which would do her business for her.

What do you know about your wife, said Hathorn, that would do her business?

Nothing, said Giles, but her stopping my prayer and finding fault. He seems to have thought that the inquisition would deem it an act of witchcraft in the woman, to start at the word God and stop his prayer.

By the court;—but what is it about your ox?

I thought he was hipped.

What ointment was that your wife had when she was seized for witchcraft? You said it was some she made by Major Gidney's directions. Giles denied it, and said it was made by Goodwife Bibber's directions; but Bibber said that was not at all like her ointment; and she then gave evidence of some temptations that Corey had, to make way with himself; upon this the court turned and said, but you affirmed you had no temptations, how is this?

I meant, said he, no temptations to witchcraft.

But if you can give way to self-murder that will make way to temptations to witchcraft.

Note,—by Mr. Parris;—"There was evidence

by several that Corey said, he would make way with himself and charge his death upon his son !” And Goody Bibber also testified that he called her husband, damn’d devilish rogue; and other vile expressions were sworn to in open court.

Upon the whole the Rev. Mr. Parris was desired to take down in writing Giles Corey’s examination and deliver it in, and upon hearing the same and seeing what they did see, the two justices committed him to their Majesty’s jail. And the warrant was signed Hathorn & Curwin, assistants. Thus acting in both legislative and judicial capacities.

The residue of Giles Corey’s fate was most hideous. From the date of this fraudulent, perjured and senseless inquest, he lay helpless and almost forgotten in prison, for five months.— There he was found on the ninth of the following September; and with many others brought before the court of trials. But the jury seemed entirely under the court, and as of course returned all guilty who put themselves on trial.— Corey noticed this, and when his turn came he refused to plead, saying it was useless, and that they might do as they pleased with him.

But the court seemed resolved to signalize his obstinacy, in terror to all others, and gave judgment against him of *pein forte et dure* for standing mute; by virtue of which he was taken to prison, placed on his back with his arms and legs extended and fastened in that position.— Heavy weights were placed upon him, and to be allowed a small quantity of poor bread and the nearest standing water that could be found to the prison door, and thus to remain until he died. His sufferings were horrible; and on the 17th of the month he was manifestly in death’s agonies, his eyes seemed bursting und his tongue swollen greatly out of his mouth. The marshall, the agent of the people’s government, stood over him,

and without compassion, thrust back the dying man's tongue with the point of his staff! And this is the only instance of that horrible judgment and its execution in our Massachusetts history.

In the mean time Martha Corey the wife of Giles, lay bound in the same prison, under sentence; and with eleven days only to prepare for death; but Parris was hardy enough to violate the sanctity of even these short hours. He called his church together, procured a vote of excommunication against her, and himself with two of his deacons were elected to see her in prison and there pronounce her doom; and this was done whilst her husband was suffering under the judgment against him, and herself at death's door; and this is Mr. Parris' account of the mission.

"We found her (Mrs. Corey) very obdurate, justifying herself and condemning all who had done any thing to her just discovery and condemnation. Whereupon after a little discourse, for her imperiousness would not suffer much, and *after prayer!* which she was willing to decline, the dreadful sentence of excommunication was pronounced against her." By which excommunication the woman was in form, consigned to the devil's use forever. How could the Rev. gentlemen pray to God for a blessing on such a work in her prison; and what more secular tyranny ever invented such exquisite cruelty towards a hapless female. It first compassed her death, and then by mere clerical necromancy sought to destroy her soul! But her courage arose above the necromancy. She was sustained. She made no terms with her destroyers, or with falsehood or meanness. Even on the gallows ladder she had strength to still proclaim her innocence in solemn prayer to God, and the gallows rope swung her into eternity as acceptable to Him, as if she had died in the bosom of her village church.



## LETTER XVII.

So wonderfully had witch accusations now multiplied, that Hathorn and Curwin held regular sittings; and the bewitched band of the Parris and Putnam family and others associated with them, were sure to find them subjects. For the convenience of the accusers these sessions were holden at Salem village, which had now become a point of great public observation and terror.— Thus on the 22d of April, they committed for further proceedings, William Hobbs and his wife; Mary Esty, and Sarah Wild, all of Topsfield;— also Edward Bishop and his wife, and Philip English and his wife, of Salem. And all these were taken on the complaint of Thomas Putnam, who thus hunted and secured the victims for his wife, and daughter Ann with the Parris family to destroy.

We know the charges of witchcraft against these persons were fictitious, and foul; and oft-times hidden causes led to their selection from the mass of the citizens. But yet not always hidden. Esty was the sister of Cloyes, who went out of Mr. Parris' meeting; Bishop was cried out upon, because he struck the Indian John, Mr. Parris' slave with his whip, when he was in a fit, and for declaring when he saw the blow revive him, that he could cure all the afflicted in the same way, if they would turn them over to him. The charge against Mrs. Bishop followed as of course, the more effectually to humble the husband. Both escaped death by flight out of the charter limits, and their goods were thereupon seized, by Sheriff Curwin, broth-

er to the committing magistrate, in the names of the king and queen, to pay charges. This was the fruit of his infidelity.

Philip English was a rich merchant of Salem; he and his wife also broke out of prison and fled and his goods were seized, to the value of fifteen hundred pounds.

At this session also there was an acquittal of Nehemiah Abbot of Ipswich. The afflicted girls could not agree as to his identity. They seemed on the occasion a little bewildered with the multiplicity of their labors.

Ann Putnam maintained, that this was the man who afflicted them, and whom they had seen at witch meetings. But Abbot stoutly withstood the accusation, and denied that he ever did hurt them, or that he knew any thing about witchcraft. Ann then resorted to her old artifice and cried out that she saw him on the meeting house beam, and the court urged him to confess.

Mary Walcot said, he is like the man, but could not say it was he. Mary Lewis said, it is not he. The court said, charge him not, unless he be the man; and they sent him out whilst they examined others.

At the second examination the crowd had darkened the windows; and Abbot and the girls were ordered into the street for light. Here they found they could look on him without fits (the question of identity obliged them to) and though they declared he was very like the man, yet they ceased to accuse him, and his life was saved by the nature of the question they had to settle.

We find this man afterwards used by the prosecutors as a witness against his neighbors.

The first accusation of the Salem girls out of their own county was that of Mrs. Cary of Charlestown. This, no doubt, like most others, emanated from the neighborhood of the woman,

the afflicted in Essex being used as mere instruments to destroy her. It was a startling movement, as the public recalled at once, the fatal case of Margaret Jones and the vessel rocked by horses. The account of Mr. Cary her husband, remains to this day, and being an eye witness his record is very interesting.

About the twentieth of May, the rumor reached him that his wife had been named as a witch, at Salem village, and by the advice of his friends he resolved to go down and present her, a stranger to the afflicted and see if they would recognize her. It was a dangerous experiment and cost him dear.

On the 24th he arrived at the Inn, as Hathorn and Curwin with a great crowd were entering the meeting house for their daily work, and he and his wife took a convenient stand where they might note all that passed. A minister opened the business with prayer; and he saw that the afflicted then present were two girls of about ten or eleven years, and three others who appeared to be about eighteen. One of the younger girls could discern most spectres and talked most (this was the shrewd Abigail Williams no doubt). When a prisoner was brought in, he or she was placed at some distance from the justices' with the eyes fixed directly upon them and the officers held each hand lest they should pinch the afflicted. The girls were placed between the prisoner and the magistrates, and if at any time the accused looked on them they were sure to be struck down in fits, or they screamed out they were hurt. Sometimes when they came out of their fits and stared round in peoples' faces the court would say they were struck dumb and were then to go and touch the prisoner at the bar, to be restored to speech. This they would attempt with well dissembled hesitation, but would usually fall down in a fit. They would then be ta-

ken up and carried to the prisoner, that he might lay hands on them, and when this was done the justices would say that they were well, though, Cary observes, that he could see no alteration; though he plainly saw that the justices understood the matter and that the girls were well disciplined.

Whilst all this was passing, Cary and his wife stood in sight of the afflicted, unnoticed; except a person came in the crowd and asked her name, and it would seem that quite unguardedly she gave it. Soon after the examination broke up and Cary and his wife began to hope that their experiment was successful.

They then repaired to the tavern, where they found the Indian John. They gave him some cider and he showed them his witch scars; but to Cary they seemed to be of long standing, and were more probably the work of his former Spanish master. John was supposed to have been stolen and brought away by the bucaniers, who then infested the American coast.

Shortly the bewitched girls came in and began their fits and to tumble about the floor and the company looked on in amazement and terror no one knowing who might be cried out upon. As soon as they spoke they cried out Cary! Cary! and almost immediately, as if prepared, a warrant of arrest came from the justices then sitting in the house ready to try her.

Her accusers were two girls of whom she declared to the court, she had not the least knowledge before that day. She too now had to stand with her arms outstretched, like the others in the meeting house. Her husband begged that he might hold one of her hands, but it was denied him. And so Mrs. Cary thus stood condemned, her husband, at her request wiped the sweat from her face and the tears from her eyes. As the examination proceeded and the girls testified

as usual, she became faint and begged that she might lean on her husband, but Hathorn replied sharply, that so long as she had strength to torment those before them, she had strength enough to stand.

John now came in and he fell upon the floor also, and pretended to have a dumb fit. The justices then asked the girls, who afflicted him. They replied that it was she (the prisoner) and that they could see that she now lay heavily upon him, though to all other eyes she was standing up and her hands held out.

Upon this Cary in his distress said, that God would take vengeance on them for such conduct. But this seemed to prejudice the justices, for without more words her mittimus was written.— No bail could be taken and she was sent to Boston prison, from thence she was removed to Cambridge prison, where they put irons upon her of about eight pounds weight. And although her distress brought a severe sickness yet the irons were not taken off. When the final trials came on at Salem, Cary went down, but when he saw the childrens' spectre evidence admitted together with absurd and malicious stories against peoples' lives, he became satisfied that there was but little chance for his wife's life, and especially as all his efforts and those of his friends could not procure her a trial in Middlesex county. There was now only one remedy and he embraced it. With some secret assistance he rescued her from prison, and fled to Rhode Island, the common refuge of those persecuted in Massachusetts. But they were pursued and he passed on to New York. Here Gov. Fletcher received them kindly and sheltered them until the danger was passed.

A few days after this John Alden was brought before the Salem justices, upon accusation of witchcraft. He was a man of great considera-

tion in the colony, being employed by the government to supply the fortress on the coast with warlike stores and provisions. His own account of the transaction has been perpetuated in the form of a deposition.

He states that he was arrested in Boston and sent down to Salem village, and when all were in presence of the magistrates, the girls were asked who of all the people in the room afflicted them; and one of them pointed to another man then present, by the name of Hill; but she spake nothing. This girl had a man standing behind her to hold her up when necessary; and Alden saw him stoop down and place his mouth to her ear, and she cried out Alden! Alden! that it was Alden who afflicted her. Hathorn then asked her if she had ever seen Alden, and she said no, but that the man near her said it was he. All were then ordered into the street and a ring was formed, the children and the justices in the centre: his accuser then cried out, pointing to him, "there stands John Alden a bold fellow, with his hat on before the judges; he sells powder and shot to the French and Indians, lies with the squaws, and has Indian papooses."

The company then retired to the meeting house and there Alden was commanded to stand on a chair before all the people. The girls said he afflicted them with his sword, and it was taken from him. They said he pinched them. Alden asked the court why he should come down to Salem to pinch those poor deluded creatures, whom he never knew or saw before. But they gave him no answer, but bade him confess and give glory to God; but he would not gratify the devil with a lie.

They bid Alden to look at the bewitched; and when he did they seemed to be struck down.— He then asked the court, why they themselves were not struck down also by his eyes. But no reason was given.

Alden spoke of God's providence in suffering such creatures to accuse innocent persons; but the Rev. Mr. Noyes, minister of Salem answered him, that God's providence governed the world in peace, and with a long discourse prevented his further difficult questions. Alden was then committed to the prison in Boston where he lay over three months, and when the final trials came on and he saw how many were executed, he also made his escape and saved his life.

It tasked severely the power and credit of the Salem girls, and their partizans and abettors, to degrade and imprison a man like John Alden.— He was one of the best soldiers in the colony, and his public services then most necessary, as the French and Indians harrassed the frontiers; and the bucaniers, the most cruel and numerous race of pirates on record, infested the whole New England coast. Many doubted his guilt, and it soon became necessary to fortify the afflicted by confessions of the accused. This policy was adopted and gradually promulgated and confessions began to be made. Deliverance Hobbs of Topsfield having been cried out upon and imprisoned, seems to have framed her confession in the terms of the accusation. She said she had indeed signed the devil's book after many threatnings and great torment from him and his emissaries; and that so soon as she had done it, he used her spectre to afflict persons.— That whilst her spectre was so employed on a certain time, one of the bewitched maids cried out there stands Deliverance Hobbs strike her! Upon which the marshal, a man of courage, standing by, made a pass at the spot pointed out, with his rapier, and the girl said there! you have given her a small prick about the eye; and Deliverance shewed the wound to the justices, who seemed highly gratified to have the maid's outcry so well authenticated, and to learn that a wound given to the spectre of a witch, would reach the original, although at home and about her business.

After this, says Calef, it was quite common for the afflicted to tell of the black man, or a spectre being on the table before the magistrates; and then the by-standers would strike at the places with their sticks and swords. Justice Curwin once broke his cane at this exercise.

This penitent also confessed, that she was at



the great witch sacrament at Salem village. That George Burroughs was there, that he called all the witches together by the sound of a trumpet; that he preached to them and urged them to pull down Christ's kingdom and build up that of Satan in its stead, and that Salem village should be destroyed, beginning at Mr. Parris' house.

Among her confederates, Deliverance accused old Candy, a negress, and who was thereupon brought before justice Hathorn.

Candy, said he, are you a witch?

*Ans.*—Candy witch!—no, no—Candy no witch in her country;—Candy's mother no witch; Candy no witch Barbadoes—this country,—mistress Hawks give Candy witch;—(indeed!) yes, this country mistress give Candy witch.

Well Candy, said Hathorn, with unusual mildness, how do you hurt these young folks, show us the poppets you do it with, Candy. Candy was quite happy, and asked to go out of the room, and said she would show all. When she returned she held in her hand two rags, with knots tied in them. At sight of these Deliverance Hobbs, who had now joined the afflicted band went into a strong fit; and the other girls declared they could now plainly see Goody Hawks, Candy and the devil, standing together pinching the poppets, and then they, (the afflicted) were sorely pinched, though no one actually touched them; but it was done in spectre. The court then directed Candy to untie the knots, and when she did so, Deliverance came out of her fit; and all were well. A bit of rag was then put in the fire, and the girls cried out that they burned dreadfully. To quench it they dipped it in some water and Deliverance started like a deer for the river, but was caught by a swift youth before she plunged in.

The cunning Candy exulted in the efficacy of her charms, and all beholders thought her mis-

ress had practised upon her ignorance, and Goody Hawks had to confess to save her life.

About this time commenced the Andover tragedy; where, as Cotton Mather says, was discovered the most horrid crew of witches that ever disgraced a New England town.

The wife of Joseph Ballard of Andover fell sick, and the town doctor finding her disease too stubborn for his art, advised her husband that she was bewitched. This practice was too common among the early Massachusetts physicians. The hint took with Ballard; and he forthwith sent men and horses to Salem village, and to the house of Mr. Parris, and brought to Andover old Tituba's pupils Abigail Williams and Mary Walcott.

When these came into the sick woman's room, they said they could well enough see witch spectres hovering round her bed and person, but not being acquainted with any Andover people, they could not name the originals. Describe them, said the husband; and they did so in language sufficiently vague to embrace half the women in the town;—and still fancy or malignity might select at pleasure; and fancy or malignity did select at pleasure and that most fatally, as the event will show.

Dudley Bradstreet, son of the old patentee, was then the acting magistrate in Andover, and he granted a warrant against a number of women on this occasion and held the examination in the meeting house. After prayers by the Rev. Mr. Barnard, minister of the town, the women were brought in, and Abigail and Mary fell down in fits at the sight, as in time past at Salem; and when the prisoners laid hands on them, they rose up and said they were well. All the old experiments were tried with the old success; and Bradstreet committed a number of his towns-women to Salem prison, to answer there, and Abigail

and Mary returned home with increased credit. Yet Goody Ballard died soon after of a fever; and Dudley Bradstreet repented of the step he had taken. Some of these in their weakness were made to confess the wildest witch pranks on record, and to implicate others as associates, by which more than *forty* Andover women were ensnared by witch prosecutions and some lost their lives.

Bradstreet at last became disgusted with commitments. The distress they brought on once peaceful families, was more than he could bear, and he refused to act. Immediately the Salem girls at the instigation as was supposed of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, cried out upon his wife; and accused himself also of having killed nine persons by witchcraft. Whereupon Bradstreet took his wife and fled with her over the river, without the charter limits and there remained to his death.—His carnal humanity was odious to those who then cultivated law-made religion in Massachusetts.

Here follow some of the recorded confessions of these Andover witches, long after drawn up, with death's terror's before them. Ann Foster was one of these. She had been brought to acknowledge, in Salem prison, that she was a witch and had attended a great witch sacrament at Salem village; that she rode thither on a pole, behind Martha Carrier, high through the air; that on their way the pole broke, and that she holding fast by Martha came to the ground and was sorely bruised by the fall, but they mounted again and went on. Being asked what they eat, she said they carried their bread and cheese in their pockets, and eat it before the meeting began, sitting under a large tree, with the Andover company; and they drank water from a brook near by.

On the 21st of July, Hathorn, Curwin, Gid-

ney, and Higginson, assistants, sat upon her confession in public, and they began thus. Goody Foster;—you know we have spoken with you before;—you have committed great wickedness; but it seems God will give you more favor than others, since you relent; but you did not tell us all; your daughter has confessed that she sat with you and Goody Carrier *when you did ride upon the pole!*

F.—I did not know it.

How long has your daughter been a witch?

F.—I have no knowledge of it,—I cannot tell.

Did you not see her at the witch meeting?

F.—No.

But your daughter said she was there, and that you stood off and did not partake:—give us a full account.

F.—I know none who were there but Goody Carrier.

Were there not two companies in the field?

F.—I know no more.

Here Mary Warren one of the afflicted interposed with a new lie, and said that Carrier's spectre told her, that Foster had made her daughter a witch! and the court then said to F., will you now confess you did so, about three years ago?

F.—I know no more about my daughter being a witch, than upon what day I shall die.

Are you willing she should make a free confession?

F.—Yes.

Will you confess?

F.—Yes;—if I knew any thing more I would speak.

The magistrates now directed to have Goody Lacy, the daughter called in, and as she entered she began,—O mother how do you do? O, mother we have left Christ and the devil hath got hold of us; O, how shall I get rid of this evil one! I

pray God to break my rocky heart that I may get the victory this time.

This witchcraft of the daughter was a surprise upon Goody Foster, she came to the confession prepared to accuse herself and Goody Carrier, but the danger of her child distressed and confounded her, and when urged to speak she answered incoherently. I did not see the devil, I was praying to the Lord. To what Lord, said the court.

*F.*—To God.

To what God do witches pray?

*F.*—I cannot tell. The Lord help me! and she sat down overpowered, as the justices concluded with guilty of witchcraft, but in truth with her own fictions.

The court then questioned Goody Lacy, as to who rode foremost on the pole to Salem village witch sacrament. She supposed it was her mother. But her mother insisted it was Carrier.

How long since you were baptised?

*Lacy.*—About four years, I suppose.

Who did it?

*L.*—The old serpent.

How did he do it?

*L.*—He dipped our heads into the Falls river and said that we were his forever;—amen: and that he had power over us.

How many were baptized that day?

*L.*—Six; and they were some of the chief.—Name them said the court resolutely, and yet as if afraid to learn what colonial dignitaries the devil might have baptized on that occasion.

*L.*—They were some of the higher powers; they were— Goody Lacy, said the court, let your daughter come in; we will examine her a little, and when Mary Lacy the younger, and granddaughter of Foster entered, she stood before the magistrates with downcast looks, an interesting girl of seventeen; yet at sight of her

Mary Warren fell down in a violent fit. Whereupon Hathorn said to Mary sternly, how dare you come here, and bring in the devil with you, to afflict these poor creatures; now look upon these maids in a mild and friendly way, said he, and then she turned upon the afflicted a look so kind and gentle, that the by-standers smiled in sympathy, and yet the bewitched band were struck down,—pity thought the beholders, that eyes so mild and blue should bear the devil's spite in them.

And now said Hathorn, do you confess yourself a witch,—she hung her head—tears flowed down and she sobbed out,—ye—a sir.

Well maiden, said the justice, you are accused of tormenting Goody Ballard, how do you do it? I don't know. How long have you been a witch? Not above a week.

Have you ever seen the devil? Yes sir.

Did he bid you worship him? Yes sir.

And to afflict people? Yes sir.

I see, said Major Gidney, one of the magistrates, that you are in a fair way to obtain mercy. Do you desire to be saved by Christ? Yes sir, I do.

Then said he, you must tell all you know.—The Lord help me so to do, said Mary.

I was in bed when the devil came to me; *in bed!* said the Major—the devil came to your bed! how did he look? Like a great black dog, O, very well, you may go on,—what did he say? He bade me, said Mary, obey him and that I should want for nothing, and he promised he would not betray me, but he's an old liar.

How long ago was this, said Hathorn.

About a year. Richard Carrier now comes often a'nights, and has me to afflict people.—He's a rogue, cried the Major, and is making a very bad use of you! but where do you go? To Goody Ballard's sometimes, and my mother and

grandmother and Richard Carrier and his mother go there too.

Did you attend the great witch meeting at Salem village? Yes.

Who went with you? My mother, and grandmother and Goody Carrier rode upon a long pole through the air; and I rode behind Richard Carrier upon another pole!

Did you see any men at the meeting?

None but the devil. How did he appear?—Like a black man with a high crowned hat on.—But did you see no other man? Your mother and grandmother say they saw a minister there.

I believe I did see a minister.

Was not Mr. Burroughs there? Yes he was.

Thus was she made, by leading questions to accuse an absent and innocent minister of the gospel. These confessions in the end produced a sentence of death against Goody Foster and the elder Mary Lacy; but they were reprieved by Sir William Phips and finally pardoned.

Mary Osgood, was one of the Andover witches accused by Abigail Williams of afflicting Goody Ballard, and after long imprisonment, she was induced to give her confession in the form of a deposition; and she stated 'that about eleven years before as she one day walked in an orchard near her house in great distress of mind, she attempted to pray; at this moment what seemed a cat crossed her path, and by its strange movements so fixed her attention that she ceased to pray. Soon a strange influence came over her and she prayed again and as she presumed to the devil for presently a black man appeared, and offered her a large book to sign; she wrote her name in it and where her finger touched the paper, it left a red spot. The apparition told her that she was his, and that he was her God, and she must worship him! and she believed she consented so to do.

Nine years after, the same personage appeared and carried her with others, upon a pole through the air to Five-mile-pond, and there making her renounce her former baptism, baptized her, amen, since which she afflicted people, and frolicked with the devil upon Sabbath days, and other holy festivals.

Hathorn, before whom this was also taken, always ready to hunt witches, no sooner heard that Mrs. Osgood and the devil had company upon the pole; than he asked her who they were. She replied they were Goody Tyler, Mistress Baker, and Dea. Fry's wife. These were then arrested, and constrained to make further witch fictions to save their lives. And thus was the business driven on.

There were sceptics even at this season of the delusion, who denied the validity of spectral evidence. It appears, said they, that the devil can use the spectre of one person to afflict another; why may he not take the spectre of an innocent person in that business, and then as things now are, every man's life is at the mercy of the devil; for between him and the afflicted he is sure to suffer.

Hathorn on this occasion asked Mrs. Osgood whether the devil, or his witches could use the shape of an innocent person to afflict people.— She replied that it could not be; for said she, last Monday night we witches had a meeting to afflict people, and Goody Dean and myself tried to carry the shape of the Rev. Mr. Dean of Andover between us to make it believed that he afflicted persons; but we could not. And why could you not do it, said the justice. Because, said Mrs. O., the Lord would not suffer so good a man, to be so used! This answer saved the worthy minister, who had often been hinted at by the bewitched. He was not a sound convert to witchcraft



## LETTER XVIII.

Freemen—I assure you that I am still reciting veritable history; and I have now detailed a sufficient number of confessions and examinations to convey an adequate idea of the doctrines of witchcraft thus embraced by those assuming authority; and also of the various modes by which the inquisitors, with the invention of the afflicted, detected and secured for trial and punishment, the supposed culprits; until about one hundred women, and some men of the county of Essex were imprisoned, and in despair of their lives.

Yet, this high-handed exercise of power, which even settled despotism would dread, was usurpation. It is manifest from history, that Massachusetts was then under no compact of civil government whatever.

From the time that the first charter was cancelled, in chancery in 1684, there had been two commission governments under James II. That of Mr. Dudley, which was for a few months only; and that of Sir Edmund Andros, which was overthrown by the people in 1689 as before stated; and from that period to the season of witchcraft, William and Mary had done nothing towards the settlement of the province.

But on the 14th of May 1692, Sir William Phipps arrived with the Provincial Charter, and immediately took upon himself the government.

All the old writers agree that this, was a man of dull intellect, and rude behaviour. But he was placed in power because he was thought controllable and available for the special interests

which he served, and that other men more cunning than himself and more obnoxious to suspicion also, might rule the people through him. A very common, but a very baneful artifice in a people's government. He was born somewhere on the banks of the Kennebeck in 1650; and was the twenty-second son of his mother, and had also four sisters.

He came to distinction among men, solely by the discovery of a Spanish treasure, buried in the ocean, about the time of the settlement of Boston, and in a Spanish frigate near the coast of Hispaniola. He had sought it for many years under a patent from ~~the~~ British crown, and in a British frigate, and when at last that royal simpleton, king, James II. saw him bring home to London more than forty tons of Spanish silver, in bars and pigs of solid metal, for every joy he commanded Capt. Phipps of the Algier Rose frigate to kneel before him, and then commanded him to rise up Sir William Phipps. This was in the vice reign of Sir Edmund Andros and made as much talk here, as did his tyrannies.

In Massachusetts the knighthood, and the silver were irresistible; and Sir William became, under the auspices of the Rev. Increase Mather, our first crown governor. Yet, with his specie he was the first to introduce the paper money credit system among us.

In his administration, Gov. Phipps, as was expected, fell in with the old colonial policy, and maintained the old influences, so far as the rights of the people were concerned; and one of his first labors was to give aid to the witch prosecutions. The ruling clergy and the magistrates, were already committed on the subject, and it required more mind, and democratic views of human rights, than Sir William or his advisers possessed, to overthrow that horrid fanaticism. With a hundred now committed for trial, his Ex-

cellency could find no court of competent jurisdiction, in his province, to try a single witch.

And by the charter, the general court alone could establish judicial tribunals, yet on this occasion, Sir William could not be allowed to wait the dull process of lawful legislation, but within two weeks after his arrival, by a rank usurpation of power, issued a special commission of Oyer and Terminer to five magistrates, to go down to Salem and try witches, and some of these five had sat and adjudged the accused guilty on primary examination.

This measure filled the hearts of the accused, and their numerous friends with dismay; but there was no remedy.

On the second day of June a quorum of these sat, and selected for trial Bridget Bishop, the wife of Edward Bishop of Salem. This poor woman had for many years been reputed a witch; and this by the accusations of one Samuel Gray, and although on his death-bed he confessed his sorrow for the wrong he had done her, yet the imputation still rested upon her, and now enabled the afflicted, with their managers, to destroy her. And above all, as an excrescence supposed to be a witch teat was found on her body. To give currency and popularity to her execution a story was fabricated, and most industriously circulated by the witchcraft party, that as Bishop was led out to execution under a strong guard, she gave a look at the then newly erected meeting house in Salem, so blasting and spiteful, that an invisible demon forthwith entered in and tore down a portion of the holy edifice. And this is from Cotton Mather's account of the Salem witch trials, drawn up for inspection, and by the request of Sir William, himself. The commissioners then adjourned to the 30th of June following.

Aside from the manifest fallacy of her supposed

crime, and the illegality of Sir William's commission to try witches, this woman had violated no existing law-statute or common. On the eighth of June, and two or three days after her trial and condemnation, the General court of the province was convened, and their only act was to revive the whole colonial code of laws including the old Cottonian law against witchcraft; and this upon the ground that the authority of these laws, ceased with the first charter.—The law then upon which Mrs. Bishop was tried was a dead letter; it was revived, and in two days after she was hung. A strange and startling mistake by men who had charge of the lives and fortunes of the people. So difficult is the art of just government.

No wonder then that Sir William, five days after this witch execution asked council of the leading ministers of the colony in form. And the response drawn up by Cotton Mather is as follows.

“The afflicted state of our poor neighbors, now suffering by molestations from the invisible world, we apprehend, is so deplorable that we think their condition calls for the utmost help of all persons in their several capacities. Yet we acknowledge with thankfulness, the success, which the merciful God has given to the sedulous endeavors of our honorable rulers, to defeat the abominable witchcrafts which have been committed in the country.”

“We judge, that in the prosecution of these, and all such witchcrafts, there is need of exquisite caution, lest too much credulity for things resting only on the devil's authority, should enable him to get an advantage over us; for we should not be ignorant of his devices.”

“All things should be managed with exceeding tenderness towards those complained of, especially if they be persons heretofore of unblem-

ished reputation. Nor is the circumstance of the accused being represented by spectre to the afflicted a sufficient ground for conviction; for it is an undoubted thing, that a demon may, *by God's permission*, appear for ill purposes in the shape of an innocent, yea and a virtuous man."

This does not accord with Mrs. Osgood's confession, that she and another witch tried to carry the Rev. Mr. Deans' shape between them, but were not suffered by the Lord so to use a good man. But the doctrines of witchcraft were then as subject to change as those of religion; Both seem to have been fanciful and arbitrary.

"We know not however, but some remarkable affronts given to devils, by our disbelieving their testimonies, may not put a period to the progress of the dreadful calamity now among us in the accusation of so many persons for witchcraft."

Here indeed is a glimmering of sense. That the only way to overthrow the devil was to give him no credit. But as his credit in matters of witchcraft had now been of fifty years standing, this was no easy matter.

But lastly say the ministers, to Sir William: "We cannot but humbly recommend unto the government the speedy and vigorous prosecutions of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious to the laws of God and the wholesome statutes of the English nation in the detection of witchcrafts."

This document was dated, Boston June 16th 1692, and signed by the principal ministers of the province, and unfortunately for the country the government seemed to heed only the last clause of the advice, as will be seen hereafter.

## LETTER XIX.

A quorum of Sir William's commissioners again sat at Salem on the 30th of June, for the trial of witches; Lieut. Gov. Stoughton, and Messrs. Winthrop, Sewall, and Gidney being present, and on that day they commenced the trial of Susanna Martin of Amesbury.

She was a woman of uncommon ingenuity and enterprise; and was now a widow, with the care of a considerable estate, and a large family thrown upon her. She, like Bishop, had long been reputed a witch, and an unsuccessful attempt had once been made to convict her.

Mather in his account of her case, drawn up by order of the government, declares, "that she was one of the most impudent, scurrilous, wicked creatures in the world," and the court treated her with great severity. But she repelled all false charges with invincible spirit; as will be seen by the following dialogue which took place at her primary examination, and which was now detailed in evidence against her.

*Justice.*—Pray Goody Martin! what ails these young people? *Martin.*—I don't know. *J.*—But what do you think ails them? *M.*—I do not desire to think upon the subject. *J.*—Do you not think they are bewitched? *M.*—No, I do not think they are. *J.*—Tell us your thoughts about them then. *M.*—My thoughts are my own when they are in; but when they are out they are another's,—their master! *J.*—Their master! who do you think is their master? *M.*—If they be dealing in withcraft, Sir, you may know as well as I. *J.*—Well, mistress

Martin, what have you done towards these girls?

*M.*—I have done nothing at all.

*J.*—Why it is either you or your spectre.

*M.*—I cannot help what my spectre does.

*L.*—It is either you or your master. How comes it, that your spectre should hurt these people?

*M.*—How do I know how it comes. Samuel was a glorified saint; but he that appeared to Saul, in Samuel's shape may now appear in any one's shape.

A very pertinent reply and puzzled the justice.

Martin was indicted for witchcraft and sorceries upon the body of Mary Walcott on the second day of May, 1692, and also for divers other acts of witchcraft before and after that time, without specification of time or place.

John Allen testified, that the widow Martin once requested him to cart some staves for her, but he refused because his cattle were weak and poor; at which she was displeased and said he would be sorry for it; and before he could reach home his oxen tired and fell down. This was supposed to be by witchcraft, though Allen said the oxen were too weak to draw staves.

After this he turned them upon Salisbury beach to fatten, but they became so wild that no one could approach them, and when it was attempted to drive them home they ran furiously into the sea and were drowned.

Another witness purchased a cow of Martin's son; she opposed the bargain, and soon the animal became furious and unmanageable. And these were considered cases of witchcraft.

Bernard Peach testified, that once being in bed on a Sabbath night, the widow Martin came into his room through the window, and seizing him, drew up his body into a heap and she then lay upon him about two hours, but at last after a

severe struggle he got two of her fingers between his teeth and bit them until she cried out with the pain and vanished. At another time when she was after him, he struck her or her spectre with his quarter-staff and it was reported that she was wounded on the head. So it was sworn that she once travelled from Amesbury to Newbury on a rainy day without wetting even the soles of her feet, and boasted that she scorned to be drabbled. It was concluded in court, that the devil helped her on.

But the most wonderful story told on this occasion was that of Joseph Ring; this man seems to have been a good fiddler, whom the old charter witches and demons selected for their peculiar use and amusement. He testified that for two years past he had been strangely carried about through the air to witch revels and dances; that for a long time they had kept him dumb, but since they began to be prosecuted he had in a measure recovered his speech. His knowledge of them and their power over him, began thus.

As he sat in his house one day, a stranger of suspicious mien applied to him to give music to a company of dancers on a certain evening; and whilst the timid and distrustful fiddler hesitated, the proffer of a large sum of money by the stranger, and which he too readily accepted, induced him to make the desired promise and immediately the man vanished so suddenly that Ring was exceedingly startled and repented of what he had done; but it was too late.

At the appointed hour he found a horse well caparisoned standing at his door; he took the hint but no sooner had he mounted into the saddle, than the animal leaped into the air and pushed forward with a velocity which deprived him of all consciousness of time or distance and almost of existence itself. He next found himself in



front of a splendid building, with lights from every part, streaming out upon night's darkness, but from whence issued no sound of mirth or festivity. Presently Goodman Ring was introduced into a spacious hall, he screwed up his fiddle, began to play, and then the dancing began in good earnest. At once a preternatural influence came over him, and he was amazed at the power of his own instrument, which seemed to fill that ample hall to its very roof, and to inspire dancing which he now plainly saw was superhuman. It was here that he saw the widow Martin, the prisoner at the bar swinging and dancing among the revellers, like a nimble maiden of eighteen; and he was willing to swear to her identity.

When the dancing ceased, the personage who first engaged him came with a book for him to sign, and an ink horn containing something like blood. But the fiddler refused his name, and casting his eyes downward he saw that cloven foot which had been the terror of all New England for half a century, and in his distress he called upon God for help. At once a horrid hysteric laugh burst upon his ears, and then suddenly all was darkness, and he found himself in the crotch of a great pine tree, cold and comfortless, in a lonely plain and the stars of midnight winking down upon him. He descended as well as he could, wandered about in the woods until morning light, and then found his way home; but he could never again find that pine tree that made the witch palace.

From that time forth the witches and demons had power over him and used him as they pleased. And Mather says "that whenever he was brought unto their hellish meetings, and showed any disobedience one of the first things they did unto him was, to give him a knock on the back, whereupon he was ever as if bound with chains, incapable of stirring out of the place till they should release him.

After this strange testimony was in, the court asked Martin what she had to say for herself.—She replied that she had always led a virtuous and holy life, that she knew nothing of the crime whereof she was accused, and she solemnly protested against the proceedings and the evidence against her. Yet the jury soon returned a verdict of guilty, and the court pronounced sentence of death.

On the following day Elizabeth Howe was tried. The evidence against her was very similar to that against Martin. She was of Ipswich, and first became noted as a witch by an abortive attempt to join the church in that place, which led to an investigation of her character, and brought out her witchcrafts.

This woman it was thought had a burning witch bridie which tortured any horse that wore it to efforts beyond its strength, it would also turn to a horse any man or beast on whom it was was placed. Isaac Cammins swore, that he had a very spirited mare, which he believed Howe used freely in her witch frolics. The mare grew sick and weak without apparent cause, and upon examination she seemed bruised and lamed as if rapidly ridden over rocks and rough places, and the marks of the burning witch bridle were visible upon her; nay, she was found so sulphurous, that the owner passing near her one night in the stable with his lantern she took fire, and emitted a blue brimstone blaze, fine as a knitting needle, and which singed her own hair and endangered the barn. The beast died soon after in strange spasms.

It further appeared by the confessing witches that Goody Howe was one of those who had been baptized by the devil at Newbury Falls, and before which baptism he made them all kneel down by the river's brink and worship him.

Elizabeth Howe was indicted for witchcraft upon Mary Walcott and Mary Lewis; the jury returned her guilty and the court sentenced her to death.

At this same session were also tried, Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, and Sarah Wilde.

The case of Nurse excited a strong public sensation at her trial;—the testimonials of her Christian behaviour and extraordinary care in educating her children, and her excellent example before them, were so numerous and conclusive that the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. Upon which the afflicted girls raised an outcry so hideous, as amazed both court and spectators.

The chief commissioner, Stoughton, said he would not control the jury, but observed that they had not well considered an expression of Nurse, when Hobbs, a confessing witch, was produced as a witness; which was, "what, do you bring her; she is one of us." Again the jury went out, and returned, "not guilty." Nurse was then at the bar, and was asked to explain, but as she said nothing, the jury went out the third time and brought her in guilty.

When Nurse was afterwards told of the use made of her words, she wrote to the court an explanation, that she did not hear that she was requested to explain at the bar, she being somewhat deaf, but she only meant that Hobbs was her fellow prisoner.

Upon this Sir William Phipps reprieved her, and again the afflicted, instigated by others, no doubt, raised a new outcry and the Salem society for the detection of witches also interfered, and the reprieve was withdrawn and thereupon the Rev. Mr. Noyes of Salem, whose church member she was, excommunicated her in form.

On the 19th of July these five were executed. At the gallows, Noyes urged Sarah Good to confess, and told her she was a witch and she knew

it; to which she replied, Sir you are a liar; I am no more a witch then you are a wizard, and if you take my life, God will give you blood to drink.

## LETTER XX.

Stoughton and his associates were now the terror and scourge of the country. On the fifth of August they sat at Salem. Six unresisting and helpless females they had already hung without law or crime; and whose terror-stricken kindred dare not raise even a murmur of discontent. Indeed so subdued appeared the public mind, that they now ventured upon the trial of the Rev. George Burroughs, the only gospel teacher ever hung for witchcraft in this or any other Christian country. He had formerly been the settled minister of Salem village, and now an avowed infidel in the current notions of witchcraft. The Rev. Mr. Lawson also once a teacher in the same place, was more pliant, and wrote a book flattering to the afflicted and their managers; had Burroughs followed his example he might have escaped hanging.

Warily indeed did the prosecutors cast their entanglements about this devoted man. We first see a fictitious witch sacrament, with appropriate deacons;—next a clergyman, black-haired, short and thick set, with the devil to administer. All knew that this aimed at Burroughs. Then eight confessing witches affirmed that so great was his fidelity and zeal, that he was to be a king in Satan's kingdom about to be established in Massachusetts. They multiplied his indictments to four for afflicting those four bloody impostors, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hobart, Mary Lewis and Ann Putnam. And he stood before a prejudiced court and jury without hope of justice, or even of compassion.

The afflicted began their evidence with fits and outcries. They said Burroughs bit them, and showed what they alleged were the prints of his teeth on their flesh; and Ann Putnam said that even now his spectre presented her the devil's book, boasting that he was above the ordinary rank of witches. Again they were cast into convulsions and could not proceed. Stoughton asked Burroughs, who he thought hindered those witnesses from testifying. He replied, perhaps it was the devil. "How comes the devil," said his Honor, "so loth to have any testimony borne against you?" A foul response but in keeping with his general conduct.

One of the afflicted declared that she was once in a trance, and that Burroughs carried her into a very high mountain and showed her all the kingdoms of the earth, and said that he would give her all these, if she would write her name in his book. She did not bid him get behind her, but told him that the kingdoms were not his to give, and refused to sign. This was a girl of eleven years, how could she distinguish between a trance and a dream? Yet her story went as evidence into the case.

Burroughs had been twice married, and it was reported that he had ill-treated his wives. But he asked the court very pertinently how this could go to sustain an indictment for afflicting Mary Walcott and for which he was then on trial. But the witnesses were not checked, and they testified that they had seen the apparition of two women, who said they were Burrough's wives; and that he had caused their deaths; and that the Judges must be told of it; and that *they did not know* (strange language for ghosts) but they should appear in court at the trial.

Presently Abigail Williams cried out in great apparent horror that the ghosts of those two wives had just now come in and were standing before

Burroughs and crying for vengeance upon him. Yet Burroughs declared he saw them not, nor were the sound of their voices heard by the court or jury. At this the prisoner was said to be much appalled. No doubt he was so, at the depravity of the witnesses and their evidence.

But the girls went yet further, and affirmed that the spectre of Burroughs had often threatened to kill them, as he had many others who refused to obey him; and he named among his murdered victims, Mrs. Lawson, and her daughter Ann. The story was credited, as they presumed he might well entertain hatred towards the virtuous wife and daughter of a man like Deodat Lawson, his predecessor at Salem village. And it was now called to mind, says Mather, that the peculiar circumstances of their deaths, excited suspicion of witchcraft; yet no one then suspected from whence it came.

It was further testified that Burroughs, notwithstanding his holy orders, hated prayer and the ordinances of religion. His zeal only burned in the devil's cause. The confessing witches also attributed their seduction to his wiles; he led them on to witch meetings, or to sorceries, by the promise of fine clothes and other unhallowed pleasures; he brought the poppets, or rag babies to them for afflicting people, and taught them where to stick the pins the most effectually; he even exhorted them to bewitch all Salem village, but with caution to prevent discovery; and now, they affirmed, for their penitence and confessions, Burroughs and the devils tortured them continually.

After Burroughs was hung, these confessors recanted, and confessed again the utter falsehood of all they had said respecting him. But they could not quicken the dead, or heal the wounds of bereaved friends, nor soften the hearts of such men as Stoughton, Mather, Parris, and the like.

The evidence was then turned to show that Burroughs was endowed with preternatural strength. He had been known to hold out in one hand, by the breech, a gun of seven feet barrel as if it had been a pocket pistol, and then to reverse it, and sticking his forefinger in the muzzle, to hold it out at arm's length that way. So he would carry a full barrel of cider or molasses without staggering. But he offered to show that whatever he did in this way was to try his strength with an Indian who did the like, and even more than he could. But they who gave the testimony, says Mather, saw no Indian and it was at once concluded it must have been the devil, as Ann Putnam said he often appeared like an Indian ! How did this testimony refute Burroughs ? Did the witnesses see the devil in the shape of an Indian at the time ?

One Ruck, a brother-in-law to Burroughs testified to his preternatural walking. On a certain occasion a party in his company, went to a distant field to gather strawberries. When they returned, a thunder shower was advancing, and all but the prisoner rode upon horses and at a quick pace; yet he suddenly slipped out of sight, and to their astonishment was at the house, with his basket of strawberries before them. But here he offered to show that another man was with him and walked as fast as he did, but Stoughton and his associates concluded that this pretended companion must have been the devil also and would not hear the evidence.

After this manner was the unfortunate man overwhelmed with false and absurd testimony, and the prejudices of those who held his life at will; and it was sneeringly said that he used many twistings and evasions to get off, but without effect; for the jury without hesitation returned a verdict of guilty, and the court pronounced his death sentence.



At his execution Mather and other ministers took care to be present. Burroughs with the rest, was carted through the streets of Salem, on his way to the gallows. Being on the ladder and the rope about his neck, in solemn and decided tones he proclaimed his innocence before the multitude. He then made his dying prayer, with a deliberation and fervency, that won the admiration of all present, and drew tears from many eyes. In conclusion he pronounced the Lord's prayer, without hesitancy; and the "amen" served the hangman for his death signal, and he was swung off.

After it was over a strong murmur of discontent ran through the crowd, a popular uproar was feared, and a rescue of the other prisoners; but Mather, as he sat on his horse in the midst, addressed the people to dissuade them from violence. Burroughs, he said should not be regarded as a minister after his league with the devil; and both his prayers and address, however earnest, were still deceptive, for the devil himself, he continued, when he will, can assume the guise of an angel of light.

At the same time, and to assist Mather, a story was circulated in the assembly, that the bewitched girls could plainly see the black man standing near Burroughs, and assisting him in this his last effort. After this the executions went on in peace.

At this session also was tried and condemned old Martha Carrier. She was regarded as one of the most decided and active witches in the country. This was the woman, of whom it was repeatedly testified, that the devil had promised her that she should be Queen of Hell; an elevation to which her enemies readily awarded her a title. Her true character was untiring industry, ceaseless vigilance, and extraordinary exactitude in the discharge of all duties; and as she

never sought excuses for remissness or neglect she would grant none to others, and as a majority of the world are ever on the other side, she first became the terror and then the hatred of her delinquent neighbors. In spite to her family, it was said, that she ruled her husband, and that Goodman Carrier would never stick to any bargain of goods or chattels, lands or tenements, unsanctioned by her. Her children too she kept in strange obedience to her will; but her's was a well ordered and a thrifty household. Yet they called her a witch until the foul stain became deep and fixed.

It is true her appearance might indicate a sorceress. Her form was light—her hands and feet small and when in motion she was so rapid and perpendicular, that she seemed to glide rather than to walk, and as she would steal upon people unawares she excited suspicions much to her discredit as a Christian woman. Then her face was almost preternaturally large, though comely and shewed too much knowledge for so small a woman. Even when ensnared by a witch prosecution all the public inquisitors seemed to dread her mettle. Mather declares that when the poor tortured witnesses were brought forward against her in court every one expected their death on the very spot. Her malignant look would strike them down, and then her touch, her eyes being averted, would raise them up; and when they could speak and testified that her shape had twisted their necks almost round; she said that they were miserable wretches and no matter if their necks had been quite twisted off.

She was indicted for afflicting Mary Watcott and Elizabeth Hubbard; and to make sure of her they terrified and tortured two of her own sons into confession, by tying them neck and heels together, until they said she was a witch, and had also given them over to the devil, and they particularized the time and place.

So old Goody Foster, and her daughter and granddaughter, the two Lacys, were brought up again to renew the old story of the witch sacrament, and riding on a pole; a recital of which wonderful adventure deeply interested Stoughton and his associates. Even in open court during the trial Susanna Sheldon's hands were tied so inexplicably with a wheel band, which they were obliged to cut, like the Gordian knot.

Most of the testimony on her trial, was similar to that given in against Bishop, How, and Martin; being of various injuries to the cattle and health of the people of Andover. But to every accusation she opposed a decided denial; threats could not weaken her, nor promises seduce her resolution to abide by the truth. Invitations to repent, confess and be saved and which others accepted so readily, she treated with contempt; her conscience was too sensitive for such falsehood and her courage remained unshaken through all the terrors of a public prosecution, trial and execution.

And who will deny to Martha Carrier's name a place among those of recorded martyrs for the love of truth.

Whilst Martha Carrier lay in prison under sentence of death, four days before her execution, her little daughter Sarah was examined and brought to confession by the witch inquisition.—The process was as follows.

Q.—Sarah Carrier how long have you been a witch?

A.—Ever since I was six years old.

Q.—How old are you now?

A.—Nearly eight years; brother Richard says I shall be eight years old next November.

Q.—Who made you a witch?

A.—My mother, and she baptized me, and put water on me and said "thou art mine forever and ever, amen;" and she made me set my hand

to the book; it was a red book but the paper was white.

*Q.*—Where was this?

*A.*—In Andrew Foster's pasture.

*Q.*—Who was present with you and your mother at that time?

*A.*—Elizabeth Johnson, aunt Toothaker, and my cousin Toothaker.

*Q.*—Was the black man there?

*A.*—No sir.

*Q.*—What did they promise to give you, when you was baptized?

*A.*—A pretty black dog!

*Q.*—And did the dog ever come to you?

*A.*—No sir.

*Q.*—But you said you saw a cat; what did that say to you?

*A.*—It said it would tear me in pieces if I did not write my name in the book.

*Q.*—How did you afflict people?

*A.*—I pinched them.

*Q.*—What, havn't you any poppets?

*A.*—No sir. (She was but a decent sized poppet herself.)

*Q.*—Then you go to people, when you pinch and torment them?

*A.*—Yes sir.

*Q.*—Do you go in your body or in your spirit?

*A.*—I go in my spirit. Goody Johnson had me last Saturday to go and bite and pinch Goody Phep's child.

*Q.*—How did you go? (Sarah was at Salem and Phep's child was in Andover.)

*A.*—My mother carried me.

*Q.*—But your mother was then, and is now in prison; how did she carry you?

The child could not tell; she did not think of riding on a pole in her spirit, as others had done, but answered that her mother came to her like a black cat.

**Q.**—How did you know that black cat to be your mother? She again hesitated. Perhaps, said one of the justices, she told you so. Yes, the cat told me, she was my mother. These questions were too luminous and rational, and the inquisitor changed the subject.

**Q.**—Have you ever been to any witch meetings? **A.**—No sir.

**Q.**—What is that in your hand? She showed it to the court. It was a wooden spear, about two inches long; she said she had it of E. Johnson, who had it of the devil!

This Elizabeth Johnson named by Sarah Carrier, was tried for witchcraft, at the first Superior Court holden under the second charter, at Salem on the third of January, 1693. Its records are now extant, and from which I copy her indictment as follows: "For that the said Elizabeth Johnson, of Andover in the County of Essex, on or about,——— and divers other times, as well before as after; in the township of Andover aforesaid, wickedly, maliciously and feloniously, *a covenant with the devil did make, by which diabolical covenant she gave herself both body and soul to the devil; and signed the devil's book; and by him was baptize and unto him, renounced her Christian baptism, and God and Christ, and owned the devil for her God, and promised to serve and obey him forever; by which wicked covenant she the said E. J. is become a detestable witch; contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord and Lady, the King and Queen, their crown and dignity, and the laws in that case made and provided.*"

There is a second count for afflicting Sarah Phelps of Andover, the child spoken of by Sarah Carrier. Upon this indictment the jury found her "not guilty," and she was discharged by order of the court, upon paying her prison fees!

Mary Toothaker also named by little Sarah

Carrier, as being present at her consecration to the devil, was the sister of Martha Carrier, and belonged to Billerica. She was tried at the Superior Court, holden at Charlestown on the last Tuesday of January, 1693, and acquitted by the jury. Her extraordinary indictment I copy also from the records as follows: "For that the said **Mary Toothaker**, of Billerica in the County of Middlesex, widow, on or about,——at and in the town of B. in the county of M. aforesaid wickedly, feloniously, and maliciously *a covenant with the devil did make* and for confirmation of the said covenant, *made a mark upon a piece of birch rind, (bark)* which the devil brought to her, (for want of paper, ) \* \* \* \* and promised to serve the devil, and to praise him with her whole heart; by which diabolical covenant, with the devil made, in manner and form as aforesaid, the said Mary Toothaker has become a detestable witch against the peace, &c."

There is no second count in this indictment, and no specification of the time when the covenant upon birch bark, with the devil, was signed by Goody Toothaker. If it was executed before October, 1692; it was then not an indictable offence. But the record leaves it in doubt, whether the fact was before or after the law.

The boldness and even ultraism of the Andover witches in covenanting with the devil, and renouncing infant baptism, and receiving an adult baptism at his hands by plunging in rivers and ponds, (a hit by the standing order, at the Anabaptists,) and in riding on poles with him, startled and terrified the country. Some of these practices were peculiar to that company, and brought out by the spectral discoveries, of Abigail Williams and other pupils of old Tituba.—Under this excitement the General Court met at Boston in October, 1692, and then passed a law of death against those who should feed,

consult, employ or covenant with any evil or wicked spirit.

Goody Toothaker on trial, was acquitted by the jury; her being the sister of Martha Carrier no doubt led to her prosecution.

George Jacobs of Salem, was tried this term. He was nearly eighty years of age; and by what malice he was selected as a victim, does not now appear. After he was imprisoned they cried out against his son, his son's wife and daughter. The son left all, and fled for his life out of the charter limits; the wife, who was at times deranged, the marshall decoyed to prison, under promise that she should soon return, leaving a family of weeping little ones to the charity of neighbors.

Margaret, the daughter, was also arrested and terrified into confession of witchcraft, and then used as a witness to destroy her own grandfather and the Rev. George Burroughs, for which she was liberated. But when she found they were sentenced to death, she became conscience-stricken, and sent to Stoughton and his associates, a recantation, and was thereupon again committed to prison. There on her knees and with many tears, she begged pardon of those whom she had so deeply injured; they kindly strove to console her, prayed with her, and forgave her.

In the midst of surrounding violence and moral desolation, such virtue is refreshing. Her letters to the court and her father show an excellent understanding, and an exquisite conscience, the choicest of all blessings.

To the court she wrote thus: "May it please your Honors,—I was cried out upon by some of the possessed persons as afflicting them; upon which I was brought to examination, then those persons fell down at the sight of me. They told me that I did it, though I could not tell how, and that if I would not confess I should be put down into the dungeon and would be hanged; but if I

would confess I should have my life the which did so affright me, with my own vile wicked heart, to save my life, that I made the confession I did; which they say I swore to, but I was ignorant of it, not knowing what an oath did mean. But may it please the honored court, my confession is wholly false. What I said against my grandfather and Mr. Burroughs was altogether untrue. I did it to save my life. But the Lord in whom I trust, charging it to my conscience made me in so much horror that I could not contain myself until I had denied my confession; though in doing it I saw nothing but death before me, choosing rather to die with a quiet conscience than live in such horror. Upon denying my confession I was committed to prison, where I enjoy more felicity in spirit, a thousand times, than I did in my enlargement. And now I leave it to your Honors' pious discretion, to take pity on my tender years, and to do with me as the Lord above, and your Honors shall see good, having now no friend but the Lord to plead my cause. MARGARET JACOBS."

A few days after her grandfather and Mr. Burroughs were hung, she wrote thus to her father, who was then out of the jurisdiction, in Rhode Island or New York.

"From my dungeon in Salem prison, August 20th, 1692.

Honored Father:

After my humble duty remembered to you hoping in your good health, as blessed be God I enjoy, though in affliction, being closely confined here in a loathsome dungeon; the Lord look down in mercy upon me not knowing how soon I shall be put to death, by means of the afflicted persons, my grandfather having already suffered, *and all his estate seized for the king.*

The reason of my imprisonment again, is this; I having through the threatenings of the magis-



trates, and my own vile and wretched heart, confessed several things contrary to my conscience and knowledge, and to the wounding of my soul, (the Lord pardon me for it;) but oh! the terrors of a wounded conscience who can bear! But blessed be the Lord, he would not let me go on in my sins, and in mercy to my soul, I hope, would not suffer me to keep it any longer; I was forced to confess the truth of all before the magistrates, who would not believe me; and they have put me here and God knows how soon I shall be put to death. Dear father, let me beg your prayers to the Lord on my behalf and send us a joyful and happy meeting in heaven. My mother (then in prison with Margaret) poor woman, is very crazy at times, and remembers her kind love to you. So leaving you to the protection of the Lord, I rest your dutiful daughter,

MARGARET JACOBS.

This young woman was the first, who had the courage to deny her confession, under the frowns of the court and magistrates; and although she expected death for it, yet she was saved by a mere accident.

The time set for her trial was the 17th of September, and being then sick in prison she passed by the last session of Stoughton's bloody witch court. On the third of January 1693, her case came before the Superior Court, then newly organized by the General Court, where she was tried and found not guilty by the jury. Had she been brought before Stoughton in September she would have been lost. Margaret's indictment and that found against her mother, stand the first upon the records of the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth.

They were tried for afflicting some of the bewitched band at Salem, as were all those who were executed. None of the Salem witches were ever indicted for covenanting with the dev-

il and being baptized by him. This, as I have said, was peculiar to the witches of the northern towns of Massachusetts, who were thought by the government to be more spirited and rebellious than their southern sisters.

But so ill understood at that season was the filial piety of Margaret Jacobs and which should always stand in contrast with the then current of thought and conduct, that it excited no compassion, in the rulers towards her afflicted house.

In seizing the estate of her grandfather after his condemnation in the name of the king and queen, but for the charter rulers, the marshal took his old wife's wedding ring, and all the household provisions, so that she like her little grand-children were cast upon charity for even the preservation of life.

## LETTER XXI.

John Proctor and his wife with John Willard were also tried at the August session of the commissioners.

Willard, had for some time been used by the persecutors, as a witch hunter, and to bring in the victims for examination; a most odious and unpopular office. But the many cases of individual and family distress and despair, which he daily witnessed in this employment, at last so excited his compassion, that he refused to act. Immediately upon which, and to punish signally the supposed affront and rebellion, he was cried out upon as being himself in league and covenant with the devil, and well knowing his danger, he at once turned and fled northwardly, into the wilderness towards Canada. But swift runners were sent on foot in the same direction who soon came up with him. And it was given out by his enemies, that the bewitched girls at Salem were conscious of the exact moment of his arrest, though many miles distant; and that one of them cried out in open court, "now Willard is taken!" which proved to be correct. He was brought back, and hung in terror to all offenders against the then dominant bloody influences.

Proctor and his wife were those whose primary examination of the 11th of April has been already detailed. Some of the same magistrates who then advised their commitment, now sat on their final trial, and they found no favor. Both were returned guilty by the jury and both received sentence of death from the commissioners, and with only ten days space to prepare for eternity.

Goody Proctor turned out to be in delicate health and circumstances, and her execution was deferred until the fury of persecution was past, and she was saved.

But for Proctor himself, although he became ensnared by his conjugal fidelity, there was no commiseration or hope ; and as death nearly approached, he showed more fear than any of his suffering companions. Indeed, in all these terrors, it was notorious that females suffered with the most patience and fortitude.

His letter to five of the principal clergymen in and about Boston shows their supposed influence with the government, and in the witch prosecutions.

It was written in prison a little before his trial, and is addressed—Messrs. Mather, Allen, Moody, Willard and Bailey, thus :—

“REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

“The innocency of our case, with the enmity of our accusers, judges and jury, whom nothing but our innocent blood can satisfy, makes us bold to beg and implore your favorable assistance of this our humble petition to His Excellency, that if possible our innocent blood may be spared. All the *magistrates, ministers,* jurors and people in general, are greatly incensed against us, by the delusion of the devil, and yet we know in our own consciences that we are all innocent persons.

“Here are five who have lately confessed themselves to be witches, and do accuse some of us of being with them at a witch sacrament at Salem village and that, even since we have been here committed into close prison !

“This we know to be a lie.

“Two of the five are young men, (they were Richard Carrier and his brother ; Martha Carrier’s two sons) who would not confess until they were tied neck and heels together and the blood was

ready to start out of their noses; and then one said he had been a wizard about a month, and the other for five weeks; and that their mother made them so; and yet their mother has been here in close prison for more than nine weeks." Perhaps she did it in the shape of a black cat as she appeared to her little daughter Sarah, after she was in prison.

"My son William Proctor when he was examined because he would not confess that he was guilty, when he knew that he was innocent, was tied neck and heels together until the blood started from his nose. And they would have kept him in this posture twenty-four hours, if one more merciful than the rest, had not released him.

"These actions are very like the Popish cruelties. We are undone in our estates already; and that will not suffice without our innocent blood also."

After Proctor and his wife were committed to prison, the sheriff seized all his goods, cattle, and provisions, in the name of the king and queen.—Some of the property was sacrificed by a forced sale; the cattle were killed and barrelled up for the West India market; and the oppressive ministers of justice, or of witchcraft, cast the beer out of the barrel and the broth out of the pot, that the value of the empty vessels might not be lost to their Majesties; so that nothing was left in the house for a family of young children, deprived of both father and mother. Neither the property or its value was ever returned to Proctor's widow and heirs.

Proctor concluded his letter to the ministers with an earnest request that his own, and the other witch trials might be had at Boston, where he hoped there was more virtue and liberality; and if this could not be, that the present commissioners might be removed and others more impartial put in their places: and finally, that if their trials

should finally come on in Salem, that some or all of the ministers whom he addressed, would come down and be present, hoping thereby they might prevent the shedding of innocent blood ; and he concludes by beseeching their prayers in his behalf.

This man's appeal, for its good sense and humility, might have well moved the heart of a pagan. Even the neighboring Indians at that time, and they were many, marvelled at the fanaticism and inhumanity of the white men towards each other.

But its effect on the hearts of those to whom it was addressed, was manifest at the gallows tree, when Proctor and his companions were hung ;—Mather, Parris, Noyes and many other ministers did appear there, not indeed to save innocent blood, but to check the risings of popular compassion ; and thereby to secure the execution of five innocent citizens of the republic.

Up to his last moments, Proctor begged hard for his life, or for only a little space to prepare, or for repentance, often saying he was not fit to die ; but all to no purpose.

After he went up the ladder, he begged Mr. Noyes, his own pastor, to pray with him ; but he refused, because Proctor would not confess himself guilty of witchcraft, and thus give the strongest possible sanction to the bloody measures then in progress. And he was at last forcibly pushed off, begging for his life and protesting that he was an innocent man.

On the 9th and 17th of September the witch commissioners sat and sentenced to death fifteen more ; and on the 22nd of the same month, eight of these, viz: Martha Corey already mentioned, Mary Easty of Topsfield, Alice Parker, and Ann Pudater of Salem, Margaret Scott of Rowley, Mary Parker and Samuel Wardwell of Andover, and William Reed of Marblehead, were

hung; and as the cart with these ascended witch hill to the place of execution, it proceeded with difficulty, and at last came to a stand; whereupon the afflicted declared that the devil himself blocked the wheels. Why should he hinder a witch execution? It was doctrine then, that at their death, he had the immediate possession of their souls.

It was on this occasion that the Rev. Mr. Noyes, turning to the eight bodies hanging on the tree, said aloud to the by-standers, "how sad it is to see those eight fire brands of hell, hanging there!"

Wardwell, was one of those who had confessed himself guilty of witchcraft; but afterwards denied his confession. When he was on trial his former confession, and the spectre evidence of the afflicted, were given in against him, and this was all the evidence.

Calef says that at his execution, whilst addressing the people and protesting his innocence, the hangman smoked tobacco, and the smoke blowing in his face interrupted his discourse; but the accusers said that it was the devil who smoked him.

Here it seems according to the afflicted, the devil did not wish his man to escape; contrary to his alleged conduct in the cases of Burroughs and Proctor.

Mrs. Mary Easty, hung on this occasion was also the sister of Rebecca Nurse, and no doubt but that her connection with that ill-fated woman who was herself a victim to sisterly love, was the cause of her persecution and death. The three sisters were noted for their mutual love.—Her's was a hard case and excited great public commiseration. It was hoped that her spotless character and example would prove too strong on her trial, for the fictions and fits of the afflicted and their partizans. But they employed a ju-

ry of eight women, and a doctor to search her body for the devil's marks, and an excrescence was found which was pronounced to be a witch teat; and it turned the case against her.

Shortly before her execution, she called her husband, children and friends about her in prison, and gave them her last farewell, with such affectionate and pious exhortation, as drew tears from the eyes of all present. She also sent to the court the following petition, which presents a vivid picture of her case, and of the unhallowed times on which she had fallen.

"To the Honorable Judge and Bench, now sitting in Salem, and the *Rev. Ministers*; This petition humbly sheweth; That whereas your poor petitioner being condemned to die, doth humbly beg of you to take into your judicious and pious consideration, that your poor and humble petitioner knowing my own innocency (blessed be the Lord for it) and seeing plainly the subtilty and wiles of my accusers towards myself, cannot but judge charitably of others, who are going the same way to death with me, if the Lord step not mightily in.

"I was confined a whole month, on accusation of witchcraft, and then cleared by the afflicted persons, as some of your Honors know, and in two days time I was cried out upon by them again, and have been since confined, and now am condemned to die. The Lord above knows my innocence, and it will be known at the great day by men and angels. I petition to your Honors, not for my own life, for I know I must die, and my appointed time is set. I question not but your Honors do to the utmost of your powers in the discovery and detecting of witches, and would not for the world be guilty of innocent blood; but by my own innocency I know you are in the wrong way. May the Lord in mercy, direct you in this great work.



"I would humbly beg that your Honors would be pleased to examine some of those confessing witches; I being confident that there are some of them who have belied themselves and others, as will appear, if not in this world, I am sure it will in the world to come, whither I am going.

"They say that myself and others have made a league with the devil; we cannot confess. 'The Lord knows they belie me, as I question not they do others; the Lord alone who is the searcher of all hearts knows, as I shall answer at his judgment seat, that I know not the least thing of witchcraft, therefore I cannot, I durst not, belie my own soul.

"I beg your Honors not to deny this my humble petition. from a poor dying innocent person, and I question not but the Lord will give a blessing to your endeavors. MARY EASTY."

This touching and modest declaration Mary Easty sealed with her blood. Her husband, Captain Isaac Easty, was a soldier, and then stood in arms against the French and Indians, and to defend the country and the same power which forced away his wife from her once happy home and family, and without regard to her known piety and virtue, carted her up witch hill and hung her on the limb of a tree.

Of the other persons hung on the 22d of September 1692, few particulars have come down to us, either in history or by tradition. It was the last execution and its atrocity manifestly weakened the authority of Phipps' bloody witch court, and the credit of the Parris afflicted band. It swelled the number of victims to twenty, nineteen of whom had now been hung on that fatal gallows-tree, in after-ages an object of peculiar superstitious dread; and their bodies, unhonored even by funeral decencies, though not unwept by private affection, were cast with public ignominy into untimely graves about its roots. But the tree withered, as was supposed, thunder-smitten,

and stood for years with leafless, outstretched branches and sapless trunk, until burned to the ground by the descendants in the third and fourth generation of those who suffered on it. In superstitious minds tempests and torrents could not wash away the blood from the unhallowed hill whereon it grew, and the soil was cursed and barren of all wholesome vegetation.

But all were not executed who were tried and sentenced. Besides Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Falkner of Andover was saved by her delicate family condition. At her trial the court took the confession of her little daughter, ten years old, against her. But Dorcas Hoar of Beverly, Rebecca Eams of Boxford, Abigail Hobbs of Topsfield, Mary Bradbury of Salisbury, and Ann Foster and Mary Lacy of Andover, all flattered their persecutors by a confession of the charges against them, and thus escaped death.

~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> whole slaughter of the innocent under the similitude of legal forms, was the work of little more than three short months. A sudden bereavement, indeed, of near and loved friends. When, however, a lawful court was established, this sham tribunal, happily for the country, came to an end. And it is some consolation to know that it was entirely discontinued with the regular jurisprudence of the country.

It was the only palpably illegitimate court which ever sat in Massachusetts; and as treasonable a usurpation of power as that which hung the Quakers in king Charles' reign. Both Sir William and his advisers should have been held responsible to their Majesties for the blood of the people. The knight was, indeed, soon after called home to London and disgraced; his crime was, kicking the captain of a man-of-war publicly on Boston long wharf. Whilst his despotie witch commission, and partial death-warrants and pardons, were passed without notice.

How strangely fall upon men the honors and the ignominy of this world !

But no men of legal attainments sat on that commission, nor did any lawyers appear before it, unless in behalf of the prosecutors. Cotton Mather's reports give no arguments of counsel. The rulers then carefully prejudiced the people against the profession—and Mather himself, at the same time he urged forward bloody witch executions, was very busy in getting up a society for the suppression of petty lawsuits.

Stoughton, the chief commissioner, was educated for the ministry, and was entirely in the interests of the church. His conduct proved that those who procured his appointment, well understood their man. He was very artful, and had a hard heart. His father was Israel Stoughton, a miller in Dorchester.

Sewall, though a military man, was much more sensitive and scrupulous. But he was young in office, and seems actually to have been taken by surprise.

Richards from a poor servant became a rich merchant ; but he was a mere man of pelf, like Sir William, and favored what was called the country interest, or the old church and state aristocracy, against which Boston generally took the democratic side—much as the city of London used to oppose the crown, and the country aristocracy of landed wealth. John Proctor knew this well when he urged to be tried by a Boston jury, and was refused, as an acquittal might have broken the spell.

Saltonstall, Gidney, and Sergeant, were very little known in our history except in connection with this commission, and Wait Winthrop was the grandson of the first governor of Massachusetts.

Of these seven, four only were the efficient agents, Stoughton, Sewall, Winthrop and Gidney.

## LETTER XXII.

The General Court met on the second Wednesday of October 1692. It then passed an act establishing a Superior Court of Judicature over the whole province, with full jurisdiction in all matters civil and criminal.

Under the act, and by virtue of his charter powers, Sir William Phipps appointed for judges, Stoughton, Winthrop, Sewall, Richards, and Danforth.

At the same session was passed a law entitled, "An act against conjuration, witchcraft, and dealing with wicked and evil spirits." I give it in its terms, as pertinent history of the public mind at that season, and far better than I can write.

"Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the governor, council, and representatives, in general court assembled, and by authority of the same, that if any person or persons shall use, practise, or exercise, any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit, or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward, any evil and wicked spirit to or for any intent or purpose, or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth, or the skin, bone or any other part of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment, or shall use, practise, or exercise, any witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or maimed, in his or her body, or any part thereof, that,

then every such offender or offenders, their aiders, abettors, and counsellors, being of any of the said offences duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer the pains of death as a felon or felons."

"And, further, to the intent that all manner of practice, use or exercise, of witchcraft, enchantment, charm or sorcery, should be henceforth utterly avoided, abolished and taken away,"

"**Sec. 2.** ~~Be it enacted~~, by authority as aforesaid, that if any person or persons shall take upon him or them by witchcraft, enchantment, charm or sorcery, to tell or declare in what place any treasure of gold or silver should or might be found or hid in the earth or other secret places, or where goods or things lost or stolen should be found, or become, or to the intent to provoke any person to unlawful love, or whereby any cattle or goods of any person shall be destroyed, wasted or pined, or to hurt or destroy any person in his or her body, although the same be not effected and done, that then all and every such person and persons so offending, and being thereof lawfully convicted, shall, for the said offence, suffer imprisonment by the space of one whole year, without bail or mainprize, and once in every quarter of the said year shall, in some shire town, stand openly upon the pillory by the space of six hours, and there shall openly confess his or her error and offence, which said offence shall be written in capital letters and placed upon the breast of said offender."

"And if any person or persons, being once convicted of the same offence, and shall again commit the like offence, and being of any of the said offences the second time lawfully and duly convicted and attainted as is aforesaid, shall suffer pains of death as a felon or felons."

It is by no means novel in our history, to find

the religious dogmas of the church, as settled at synods, spread also upon the statute book, and we have seen the disastrous consequences. But it was a novelty to embody in legal form the grossest of all popular superstitions—to legislate upon a fancied intercourse between men and the spirits of the invisible world, and to regulate that intercourse by wholesome enactments.

This law was a copy of the English statute of James the first against witchcraft.

By the terms of the provincial charter, all laws passed by the government under it, were to be sent over to England for the king's approbation or disapproval, at any time within three years. King William upon inspection rejected this law, and from that period it became a dead letter; and no malice or ambition could revive it here.

But the king's negative came late, and after all the mischief which public sentiment would allow was accomplished. At the time of its enactment, nothing could exceed the terror and dismay of the country, especially in the county of Essex and about Boston.

All felt conscious that their lives were at the will of some wayward and interested power. They saw that whosoever by flattery, falsehood, and confession of an alleged capital offence, did homage to that power, were never punished; whilst those who held to the truth and obeyed their own consciences, were invariably doomed to die.

Hence we find all those who pleaded for mercy, like Proctor and Mary Easty, seemed not to consider their lives in the keeping of the law, but at the pleasure of the rulers, and a heart sickening despair runs through all their language.

What tyranny of Nero, Caligula, or Robespierre, could exceed this?

It was now the latter part of October, and

examinations and commitments for supposed witchcrafts were of almost daily occurrence. Calef assures us that in addition to those executed, above a hundred and fifty were in prison, and two hundred more accused, or under such suspicion as rendered their lives unsafe. These being mostly in Essex, then thinly peopled, there could hardly be a family in it free from the calamity, immediately or in a remote degree.

The law establishing the new court fixed its first session at Salem, on the third of January following. During the intervening months the public mind was deeply agitated, and the opening events supplied ample materials for reflection.

All knew that Sir William, in matters of witchcraft, was but an instrument in the hands of others. We see that Proctor addressed the leading ministers of the gospel when he begged to be tried in Boston. Ordinarily the application would have been made to the governor and council. Others, also, of the accused and condemned regarded that order as the arbiters of their destiny. But when men saw the lieutenant governor, Stoughton, the chief witch commissioner, destitute of legal attainments, and yet made chief justice of the superior court—and thus in place to procure bloody witch laws and to see to their execution—they turned in despair from such an administration, and rested for relief, upon tardy public justice and sympathy. This sympathy and justice could only reach the oppressed through the juries, and we shall see that there, in truth, began the redeeming power; for jurors in the end began to acquit, notwithstanding the frowns of the court and of the ruling influences.

For a long time the public mind had been confounded and over-awed, by the apparent blood-thirstiness and pertinacity of the original

afflicted band at Salem village. These had, indeed, some faint imitators in Andover, Lynn, Reading and Malden, yet they still remained the prime source of evil as at first; and upon their testimony and spectral vision, all the blood had been shed; for, as yet, no conviction by jury had been procured without it.

Then it surprised the most incredulous and philosophic, to see the slender frames of the children sustain an almost perpetual excitement of strong convulsions, and outcries, under affectation of the endurance of pain approaching to hell torments, for the term of almost one whole year. Up to this period in our witch history, no afflicted children had held out long. The Godwins, and others before them, could not continue the deception but a few weeks. But now Tituba's pupils exceeded all others, as much in perseverance as in other respects.

Abigail Williams, Elizabeth Hubbard, Mary Warren, Mary Walcott and Ann Putnam, acquired spectral vision by the salted cake in February, and the records of the Superior Court show, that at the following January term at Salem, their spasms and witch sight were there used against five of the accused then on trial—but without success. In the interim their direct agency, by these arts, had compassed the death of twenty innocent persons, and caused the imprisonment of over one hundred and fifty more. From all which some estimate may be formed of the magnitude of their labors, at primary examinations and on final trials.

Another startling fact was, the motive and method apparent in the madness of these children. They selected victims upon a regular and fixed policy, and which betokened the schemes of much older heads than their own.

Through fear of them, or the power behind, and operating through them, their accusations



were echoed back by confessions of witchcraft, against all truth and soberness ; and then the fate of Wardwell was a terrible warning to all confessors never to recant.

They subdued to base servitude the law ministers of their will. Willard, a sheriff, was cried out upon only when he refused to harrass innocent people upon their accusations. It was not his witchcrafts, but his heresy and disobedience, which were offensive ; and they punished him even to blood, and that without remorse. Even Dudley Bradstreet's character and public services could not save him, and his brother John was equally obnoxious. Even the dog of the latter was accused of striking the afflicted down with his eyes, like an ordinary witch, and he was hung for the offence. Another dog was said to be bewitched and was killed, being, as Calef relates, the only one of the afflicted ever punished.

When Mrs. Nurse was acquitted, the afflicted girls, by their dismal outcries, terrified both court and jury into her conviction—and when she was reprieved by the Governor, he, too, was made sensible of their power, and gave up the innocent woman to her fate.

One cried out against the Secretary of Connecticut colony, whom she had never seen or known ; and another against Mrs. Hale, wife of the minister of Beverly, who had once been a great witch hunter, but from some cause now unknown had fallen under the displeasure of the afflicted, or those who influenced their movements.

The Rev. Mr. Willard of Boston was a mild and wise man, and strove, by writing and discourse, to discourage prosecutions, he too was cried out upon ; but the court would not heed it.

The very terms of the outcry against Captain

John Alden, before the multitude, thus:—"there stands John Alden, a bold fellow; he sells powder and shot to the Indians, goes with the squaws and has papposes"! shows that it was not the little girl's invention who uttered it.

Even Lady Phipps, Sir William's wife, was more than once hinted at, and was thought to be in some danger. She was known to be much her husband's superior in sagacity and benevolence, and she was also sceptical in matters of witchcraft. Many of his reprieves and pardons were attributed to her influence.

The following incident gave her no credit with the witch prosecutors, although it will embalm her memory in the minds of all benevolent and liberal people. A young woman of good character had been accused, and was in prison for witchcraft, and in daily expectation of trial and condemnation. In despair of all other help, her friends resolved to apply to the governor; but he being absent the petition was presented to his lady. She could not resist her inclination to deliver the oppressed, and to save life—and sat down and wrote a warrant of discharge to the prison-keeper, and subscribed it with her husband's name, and that so well imitated as to escape immediate detection. Upon the receipt of it, the prison-keeper, concluding that all was right, promptly delivered the young woman to her friends, who took her, and before the deception could be detected fled to a place of safety. By this the lady hazarded her own life and the jailor lost his place, and Sir William himself was significantly reminded, "that before he could govern the state with success, he must learn to take care of his own family."

Such accusations would necessarily recoil on those who made them. The instinct of self-preservation would, in such a case, be sure to work out the ends of justice. A writer of that

age remarks, quaintly but with force, that "out of the eater came forth meat ; those very accusers who had been improved as witnesses against so many, by the providence of the Most High, and perhaps blinded by malice, were left to accuse those in most high esteem, both magistrates and ministers, as guilty of witchcraft ; which showed our rulers that a necessity lay upon them, to confound that which had so long confounded the country ; themselves being unwilling to run the same risks." "This, in the end, was as life from the dead, and a signal deliverance to the whole country." Yet this writer did not totally reject witchcraft.

But we of this age have greater light. We know the whole witch panic was artificial. It was against common sense and equal justice, and required great efforts to sustain it.

We may say, however, with truth, that history presents the public judgment and conscience of our nation, in the main, as wonderfully sensitive and sound. And thus far it has been found adequate to reform the abuses of special interests, and to master the most intricate questions of our self-governing policy. The public mind has ever been here the governing power ; it has been disciplined and consulted from the beginning upon all questions of common interest, and has improved by practice.

There is, therefore, a rare consistency and philosophy in our history worthy of profound attention. It is the history of the Common Mind in the exercise of the sovereign power, and of a much higher order than that of princes and conquerors. As it sits upon no visible throne its power is often usurped unseen ; oft-times it is betrayed by false and interested counsellors, and by frauds and combinations innumerable ; and perhaps never more than on the occasion under review. This treacherous witch

error was peculiarly disastrous and hard to heal. But as the common mind is the wisest of all potentates, it retraced its false movement, slowly, indeed, but with great circumspection, and in the end restored itself to serenity and equal justice.

We have seen that the public credence given to the pretended spectral vision of the Salem afflicted girls, was one great cause of the public distress. Without this there would not, probably have been a single conviction. Indeed, from the time that this preternatural vision was boldly questioned convictions ceased.

The topic was argued and considered by the people thus. Admitting, it was said, that the afflicted spoke the truth, and believed they saw the ghosts or spectres of persons, hovering round them, yet it was all the devil's magic, who did in this but mock their vision.

But then the children were in substantial torment by these spectres ; and this was no mockery or deception.

But it was replied that these torments were the devil's work, also ; and that the persons whose spectres he surreptitiously and fraudulently used in it, ought not to be prejudiced thereby. He might use the spectres of the most pious, in malice, to destroy them by the hands of the executioner, as twenty people had already been ; and it was hard to say whose case was the most deplorable, the afflicted themselves or those whose shape the devil used ; for whom the devil spared the rulers and the law destroyed.

Upon this arose the great controversy, whether the devil could, of his mere will and motion, afflict any human being, or appear in any innocent person's shape. Goody Martin, on her trial, hinted that he could ; as in the case of his appearing to Saul in the shape of St. Samuel ; and, therefore, she well inferred that he might tor-

ment the afflicted in her shape. And many others were of the same opinion. But the more orthodox said, No ; he cannot appear or afflict by his own power, but it is by covenant and compact with the witch who serves him ; she alone can loose him from hell, and commission him for mischief to the human race, and by her permission only he becomes the true prince of the power of the air, bringing down storms and tempests on land or ocean, and can inflict plagues, wars, diseases, and render solid substances invisible ; and do other things contrary to the course of nature.

It was in vain to reply to these, that God alone had chained the devil to the bottomless pit, and restrained his wrath and malice towards the children of men ; and that, upon their theory any old woman can let him out, and qualify herself to work miracles in conjunction with him. But they were effectually answered when the afflicted declared that they began to see the spectres of some of the most pious and honored in the land, hovering about them for mischief. Then they paused in terror, but without acknowledging their error, they fell at once to discrediting the children's stories.

The witch commissioners at Salem had, also, often allowed the bewitched children to testify in those capital trials to what the spectres told them about the prisoners at the bar, and this hearsay went as competent evidence into the cases against their lives. But it was said, that by this practice the devil himself was allowed to turn informer ; then how were the workers of righteousness like to fare in court, and against whom he had a peculiar malice ? For after all, this was but the devil's testimony through the mouths of the children ; they were indeed under oath and detailed what they heard ; but who would vouch for the truth of the spec-

tral or devil's story to them, being, as he was, the father of liars ?

Arguments like these were well suited to the times, and to a people who yet believed that witchcraft was a scripture doctrine. A review of the whole voluminous controversy would be interesting. But it is out my limits.

## LETTER XXIII.

The power and credit of the prosecutors was much shaken at this period by the public recantation of divers confessing witches—and it was the more weighty, because made under the impression that a measure of so great offence to the rulers, would lead them to the gallows. It did bring them to trial for their lives, but they were, in the end, saved by the intelligence of the jury.

I shall present the document verbatim as an interesting portion of this “strange eventful history.”

“We whose names are underwritten, inhabitants of Andover, declare, that whereas that horrible and tremendous judgment, beginning at Salem village, in the year 1692, by some called witchcraft, first breaking forth at Mr. Parris’s house, several young persons being seemingly afflicted did accuse several persons of afflicting them, and many there believing it so to be, we being informed that if a person was sick, the afflicted person could tell what or who was the cause of that sickness. Joseph Ballard of Andover, his wife being sick, at the same time he, either of himself, or by the advice of others, fetched two of the persons called the afflicted persons, from Salem village to Andover, which was the beginning of that dreadful calamity that befel us in Andover; for the authority in Andover, believing their accusations to be true,

sent for the accused to come together at the meeting-house in that place, (the afflicted persons being there also.)

After Mr. Barnard had been at prayer we were blindfolded, they being in their fits, and having fallen into their fits, as they said, at our coming into their presence, some led us and laid our hands upon them, and then they said they were well and that we were guilty of afflicting them. Whereupon we were all seized as prisoners by a warrant from a justice of the peace and forthwith carried to Salem. And by reason of that sudden surprisal, we knowing ourselves altogether innocent of that crime, were all exceedingly astonished even out of our reason; and our nearest and dearest relations seeing us in that dreadful condition and knowing our great danger, and apprehending that there was no other way to save our lives but by confessing ourselves to be such persons as the afflicted represented us to be, they out of tender love and pity, persuaded us to confess what we did confess. And indeed that confession that it is said we made, was no other than what was suggested to us by some gentleman; they telling us that we were witches, and they knew it, and we knew it, and they knew that we knew it, which made us think that it was so, and our reason and our faculties almost gone we were not capable of judging our condition; as, also, the hard measures they used with us rendered us incapable of making our defence, but said any thing and every thing they desired—but most of what we said was, in effect, consenting to what they said. Some time after when we were better composed, they telling us what we had confessed, we did profess that we were innocent and ignorant of such things. And we hearing that Samuel Wardwell had renounced his confession and quickly after was condemned and ex-



ecuted, some of us were told that we were going after Wardwell. Signed,

MARY OSGOOD.

ABAGAIL BARKER.

MARY TYLER.

SARAH WILSON.

DELIVERANCE DANE. HANNAH TYLER.

This recantation was prepared for the Superior Court, then next to be holden at Salem on the 3rd of January 1692. It was accompanied by a memorial addressed to the same Court, and in substance as follows :—

“ We, the subscribers, being very sensible of the great sufferings our neighbors have been long under in prison, and charitably judging that many of them are clear of that great transgression which hath been laid to their charge, have thought it our duty to endeavor their vindication as far as our testimony will avail. The persons in whose behalf we desire to speak are, Mary Osgood, Eunice Frye, Deliverance Dane, Sarah Wilson and Abigail Barker—who are women of whom we can give this character and commendation, that they have not only lived among us so inoffensively as not to give the least occasion to suspect them of witchcraft, but by their sober, godly, and exemplary conversation have obtained a good report in the place, and in the church of which they are members.”

“ When these women were accused by some afflicted persons of the neighborhood, their relations and others, though they had so good grounds of charity that they should not have thought any evil of them, yet, through a misrepresentation of the truth of that evidence that was so much credited and improved against people, took great pains to make them own what they were charged with by the afflicted, as some of us who were then present can testify. But these good women did very much assert their innocency, yet some of them said they were not without fear lest Satan had some way ensnared them,

which was then thought by many to be a certain indication and discovery of witchcraft ; yet they seriously professed they knew nothing by themselves of that. Nevertheless, by the unwearied solicitations of those that privately discoursed them, both at home and at Salem, they were at length persuaded publicly to own what they were charged with, and submit to that guilt which we still hope to believe they are clear of. And it is probable the fear of what the event might be, and the encouragement that it is said was suggested to them, that confessing was the only way to obtain favor, might be too powerful a temptation for timorous woman to withstand in the hurry and distraction we have heard they were then in."

"Had what they said proceeded from conviction of guilt, we should have had nothing to say for them ; but we are induced to think that it *did* not, because they did so soon retract privately what they had said against themselves, and owned that what they had thus confessed was the greatest grief and burden they labored under. In charity therefore we cannot but judge them innocent of the great transgression which hath been imputed to them."

"As for the rest of our neighbors who are under the like circumstances with these that have been named, we can truly say of them, that while they lived among us we had no cause to judge them such persons as of late they have been represented and reported to be, nor do we know that any of their neighbors had any just grounds to suspect them of that evil they are charged with."

This memorial was signed by Dudley Bradstreet and thirty-nine men, and by Ann Bradstreet, his wife, and thirteen women, all of character and figure in the country.

## LETTER XXIV.

In the mean time the afflicted and their abettors were willing to lend themselves to the credulity of any one, and to improve their remaining credit to work further mischief to peaceful and innocent families.

In the month of October a young woman in Gloucester by the name of Stephens was sick, and her friends, believing it a case of witchcraft, sent her brother to Salem village for Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Hubbard ; and their first visit to the town caused the arrest and imprisonment of four women for witchcraft. Yet the damsel was no better but rather grew worse. Again in November the same were sent for. They then accused three others, boldly affirming that they saw them, or their spectres, sitting on the sick person until she died.

Here was a fair chance to repeat the Andover tragedy ; these women had only to confess and accuse others ; but the temptation did not take effect. The women were arrested, but kept silence, and escaped even imprisonment, for a bond was taken by the magistrates for their appearance to answer at court.

As Tituba's pupils returned with diminished consequence, they met an old woman upon a bridge and pretended, to be struck down by her eyes ; but so little note was taken of this that no one would molest the old woman on their account.

It was not far from this time, that a gentleman of Boston being cried out upon by one of the afflicted in Andover, that gentleman sued

his accusers in an action of slander in a thousand pounds damages, and sent down to the sheriff orders to arrest the body. This silenced the accusation.

But although from this time forth few, if any, new charges were made, yet great numbers were in prison upon the old ones ; and as the government had manifested no tokens of change of policy, the uncertainty of their fate was distressing and alarming to their friends and the country.

It was known that many now left the State in despair at the despotism of the government ; some to abide until the storm was past—and others never to return ; and Massachusetts thus lost many of her most valued citizens.

Some broke out of prison, which, in those primitive times of prison building, they being of wood, was no difficult matter. Of these were Edward Bishop and his wife, and they made good their escape into Rhode Island. Soon after, Curwin the sheriff, and brother to the famed witch inquisitor, seized all Bishop's personal property as forfeit to the crown. His son Samuel, however, borrowed a sum of money sufficient to satisfy the officer, and procured a release of the property.

Mr. Philip English, the Salem merchant before named, escaped from prison also with his wife, and fled to New York. He being a man of wealth the sheriff seized his goods to the value of fifteen hundred pounds ; the greater part of which was totally lost to him. It was a large sum of money for those times. He owned many vessels and much merchandize. Some years after, the General Court granted him three hundred pounds for his losses, and this was all he ever obtained.

Dorcas Hoar was a widow, and very aged ; she had a small estate, enough only for a bare

subsistence ; after she was sentenced to death her estate was seized, but it was bought in by her friends for eight pounds.

On the 3rd day of January 1693, the Superior Court held its first session at Salem. Present Stoughton, chief justice, and Danforth, Winthrop, Richards and Scwall justices.

The grand jury being sworn, fifty-six persons were accused of witchcraft before them. Against twenty-six only they found bills of indictment ; and to the other thirty they gave a happy deliverance. This was a measured, but unequivocal rebuke to the bewitched, and in proportion the oppressed took courage. The trial of twenty one of these, employed the court for the whole term, and the remaining five were disposed of at the following May session in Ipswich.

The indictments found, alleged two distinct classes of witch crime : afflicting or tormenting people, and making a covenant with the devil and being baptized by him. The witch covenant was generally to worship and obey him with the whole heart.

It does not appear that any of the Salem witches ever entered into this covenant ; if they did they were never indicted for the offence.

The following abstract of the record will serve as important history. It commences with the Salem witches tried at this term, and is the first record of the court.

Rebecca Jacobs, whom I have already named, is the first. I copy her indictment as a specimen of the others of that class.

“ For that the said Rebecca Jacobs upon the 18th day of May 1692, and on divers other days and times, as well before as after, certain detestable arts, called witchcraft and sorceries, wickedly, maliciously and feloniously, hath used, practised and exercised, at and in Salem village, in and upon and against one Elizabeth

Hubbard of Salem, single woman, by which said wicked arts, the said Elizabeth Hubbard, the day and year aforesaid, and divers other days and times, as well before as after, was and is tortured, afflicted, consumed, pined, wasted and tormented, against the peace of our sovereign Lord and Lady, their crown and dignity, and the form of the statute in that case made and provided."

We see by this conclusion, that this indictment was framed upon the law against witchcraft passed the preceding October. The offence charged was on the 18th of the May before. The law then was *ex post facto*. But confusion and error were no novelties at that day. Now such laws are forbidden by the constitution.

Margaret Jacobs, the daughter of Rebecca, who confessed and accused Burroughs and her grandfather and then recanted. Two indictments were found against her. The first for afflicting Mary Walcott, and the second for tormenting Elizabeth Hubbard; and both on the 11th of May, 1692.

Sarah Buckley, wife of William Buckley, two indictments, for afflicting Mary Walcott and Ann Putnam on the 18th of May.

Mary Witheredge, two indictments, for tormenting Elizabeth Hubbard and Sarah Vibber, wife of John Vibber, May 18.

Candy, whose examination has been given, slave of Mrs. Hawks of Salem, two indictments, for tormenting Ann Putnam and Mary Walcott, both July 2, 1692.

Job Tookey of Beverly, one indictment, for tormenting Mary Warren, June 7, 1692.

The next were the Andover witches. Their indictments are for covenanting with the devil, as well as for the work of affliction. That of Hannah Tyler for her witch covenant, will serve

as a specimen of the others, and is thus:—  
“For that Hannah Tyler of Andover, in the county of Essex, single woman, some time in the month of April 1692, and in the town of Andover aforesaid, wickedly, maliciously and feloniously, a covenant with the devil did make, whereby she gave both her soul and body to the devil, and signed his book, and by him was baptized, and owned the devil to be her God, and promised to honor and serve him forever; and unto the devil did renounce her christian baptism, and God and Christ; by which diabolical and wicked covenanting with the devil aforesaid, the said Hannah Tyler is become a detestable witch, contrary to the peace of our sovereign lord and lady, the king and queen, their crown and dignity, and the law in that case made and provided.”

Here also the offence alleged was before the law in October 1692, which alone made it punishable. Her second indictment was for afflicting Rose Foster, of Andover, single woman, on the 7th of September, 1692.

Mary Marsdon; two indictments—covenanting with the devil about three years before, by signing his book; and afflicting Abigail Martin of Andover on the 28th day of August, 1692.

Elizabeth Johnson, a copy of whose indictment has been already given.

Abigail Barker, wife of Ebenezer Barker, two indictments; one, covenanting with the devil two years before, and afflicting Rose Foster on the 8th of September, '92.

Mary Tyler, wife of Hopestil Tyler, covenanting with the devil seven years before! and afflicting Ralph Farnum or Varnum. Ralph had quarrelled with Hopestil who was a blacksmith, and took this wicked measure of revenge.

Sarah Wardwell, the wife of the Samuel Wardwell whom they had already hung. They

had made her a widow, and now aimed at her life, also. She was indicted for covenanting with the devil six years before, and for afflicting Martha Sprague, Sept. 1, 1692.

There seems to us nothing peculiar in her case, and yet the jury brought her in guilty—contrary to their verdict in all the other cases. The court ordered the jailer to take care of her according to law.

Sarah Hawks, whom Candy said made her a witch, two indictments; covenanting with the devil, and afflicting Martha Sprague.

Mary Wardwell daughter of Sarah and Samuel Wardwell, and the young woman who was frightened into confession against her own father. Her indictments were for making a covenant with the devil and afflicting Timothy Swan.

Elizabeth Johnson, Jr.; indicted for covenanting with the devil about three years before, and for afflicting Ann Putnam on the 11th of August, 1692.

Mary Bridges, wife of John Bridges of Andover, a blacksmith. She was indicted for covenanting with the devil and afflicting Timothy Swan.

Mary Post, of Rowley; indicted for covenanting with the devil and being baptized by him three years before, and for afflicting Timothy Swan. Returned guilty by the jury, but the special reason does not appear.

Hannah Post, of Boxford; indicted for covenanting with the devil, and signing the devil's book with her blood! and was baptized by him; and also for afflicting Martha Sprague.

Sarah Bridges, of Andover; her two indictments were for covenanting with the devil by making a red mark in his book, and for afflicting Martha Sprague. This Martha Sprague was of Andover, and strove to imitate Abigail Williams.



Mary Osgood, wife of Captain John Osgood of Andover. She was indicted upon her confession, which has been detailed at length, and which she also renounced. Indicted for covenanting with the devil about eleven years before, and for afflicting Martha Sprague.

Mary Lay, Jr., of Andover, whose examination and exploits have been given. She was indicted for covenanting with the devil, and for tormenting Timothy Swan.

This Timothy Swan is the only man who, professing affliction by the witcheries of young women, allowed himself to be used for their ruin. As long as the records of these prosecutions endure, his name will stand in a very dishonorable position.

Susanna Post, of Andover ; covenanting with the devil three years before, and afflicting Rose Foster.

Eunice Frie, wife of John Frie of Andover. Indicted for covenanting with the devil, and afflicting Martha Sprague.

Mary Bridges, Jr., of Andover ; covenanting with the devil, and afflicting Rose Foster.

Mary Barker, of Andover ; indicted for a similar offence.

William Barker, Jr., of Andover ; indicted for covenanting with the devil, and for afflicting Martha Sprague.

These last five were tried as late as May, 1693, at the Superior court at Ipswich ; and of the twenty-six, twenty-four were found not guilty by the jury, and were discharged. The other two were reprieved for the king's mercy, and were finally pardoned.

It was at these trials, as Calef states, that the jury asked the court, what account they should make of the spectre evidence, and received for answer from one of the judges, "as much as chips in wort."

Thus were fifty-four innocent persons saved by the courage and independence of jurors, coming from the body of the people, and expressing by their verdicts the public sentiment.

## LETTER XXV.

According to the law establishing the Superior Court, it sat at Charlestown for Middlesex, on the 31st of January, 1693. Present, as appears by the record, all the justices. The grand jury being sworn refused bills upon several presentments for witchcraft, and returned indictments against five only ; and these were called up and tried in the following order :—

Mary Toothaker, whose indictment has already been transcribed into these letters.

Mary Taylor, wife of Seabred Taylor of Reading. She was indicted for covenanting with the devil, and by writing her name upon a piece of birch bark in confirmation of said covenant.

Sarah Cole, wife of John Cole of Lynn ; indicted for afflicting one Mary Brown of Reading, on the 6th of September, 1692.

Lydia Dastin, of Reading. Indicted for afflicting Mary Marshall of Malden, in May, the same year.

Sarah Dastin, of Reading ; indicted for tormenting Elizabeth Weston, a young woman of the same town.

This woman was nearly eighty years of age, and special efforts were made to convict her by those partizans who wished to continue the excitement. Advantage was taken of her long established witch reputation ; there were many witnesses produced against her, but the facts they detailed were of many years standing, and were much of the character of those produced so fatally at Salem against Bridget Bishop, Martha Carrier, and Elizabeth Howe.

The jury had now learned to consider such evidence as foreign from the issue, and could no longer be mislead ; and when the spectre evidence came to be rejected, as it was on this occasion, there remained nothing in the case, and a verdict of not guilty was promptly returned.

From this we may learn the immense power of the courts in the admission or rejection of evidence, as competent or incompetent for the jury. Six months before this, the allowing of the spectre evidence to go to the jury, took away people's lives ; now, when the court rejected it, it saved life. After Mrs. Daston was acquitted, Danforth admonished her in these words :—' woman, woman, repent ; there are shrewd things come in against you ! ' This poor woman was kept in prison for her fees until she died.

Her case excited great interest, and many went over from Boston to hear this great witch trial ; but all were satisfied that the jury were correct in her acquittal ; although one of the judges was heard to declare in company the evening after, that there was more evidence against old Sarah Daston, than against any of those who were hung at Salem.

Stoughton was not present at this trial. Soon after the commencement of the session, news was brought that a reprieve had been sent down to Salem by the governor, which had prevented the execution of seven of those who were condemned. At this Stoughton, C. J., was exceedingly moved ; " we were in a fair way," said he, " to have cleared the land of satan's subjects ; who thus obstructs the course of justice I know not ; the Lord be merciful to the country." And upon this declaration he went off from the bench in a huff, and sat no more during that session.

It was a sign of relief to the people when their oppressors could no longer act in concert. Stoughton, even now, aspired to stand at the head of the province, and had taken his measures accordingly. By his position and influence he swayed the legislative and judicial departments of the government, and this measure of executive clemency and justice, without his knowledge and consent, gave him high offence. And it is plain that the old church and state, the now witchcraft party, of which he was an active member, already began to regard even Sir William with jealousy. He did not turn out so pliant a man as those who procured his appointment expected. He belonged to the order of wealth; and that order, all-powerful as it is now, in those times yielded to the priesthood; or became democratic and opposed its influence.

On the 25th of April, 1693, the Superior Court sat in Suffolk for the first time. Present, as appears by the records, Stoughton, C. J., Danforth, Richards, and Sewall, justices.

Captain John Alden, after his examination at Salem for witchcraft upon Abigail Williams and others, was recognized to appear at this court; and being called he did appear, and was then discharged by proclamation.

A female slave by the name of Mary Watkins, was brought before the court at this session, upon charge of making false and scandalous reports against her dame, a Mrs. Swift; which were, that she, said Swift, was a witch and had murdered a child. But, upon examination, the negress acknowledged her charges were false; and she was thereupon ordered to find sureties for her appearance at the next court in Boston, and to stand committed until compliance with the order. Candy had much more encouragement than this, when she brought her mistress to confession of witchcraft by her accusations.

But this poor slave could not find the required sureties, and was thereupon kept in close prison. In despair, and to end her miseries, she attempted suicide, but without success. She then accused herself of witchcraft, hoping they would hang her ; but at the court the grand jury would not indict her upon her own confession ; and she was at last sold at Virginia to pay her prison fees.

And this is the nearest approach to a witch trial which could be got up in Boston, since the times of the widow Hibbins.

The last witch trials ever holden in Massachusetts, were those five at Ipswich about the middle of May, 1693, and to which I have already referred.

Sloughton did not appear at these trials. Danforth, Richards and Sewall only were present. By this time the spectre evidence, or the devil's testimony through the mouths of the afflicted, had become so unpopular that none of the judges dared to sustain it, and the juries also disregarded it ; and from this time forth it was manifest that there could be no more convictions for alleged witchcrafts.

And thus public opinion, operating through the jury and the only part of the government at that time through which it could operate, in effect annulled the bloody witch law, passed by false agents of the people, against common justice and in favor of the then ruling political interests and influences ; or the old charter church and state aristocracy. And history rarely reveals to us a more bloody despotism, as these letters will show. And shall it not stand forever as a warning against any interference by a people's self-government with the religion or business of the community ?

The acquittals at Ipswich, showed plainly the voice of the people ; and after which no one

could hope for further convictions. Sir William Phips, therefore, soon after, with their majesties approbation, made a general discharge out of prison, of all who were in any mode accused of witchcraft.

Of the fate of the instruments used in this bloody tragedy very little is known. Ann Putnam is the only one of the afflicted who ever made any public demonstration of remorse or sensibility. Many years after the bloody scenes in which she figured so largely, she spread upon the Salem village church records a declaration of deep contrition. But whether it were a contrite act or to appease public odium we cannot now determine.

Nor was the impostor Parris forgotten or forgiven. Before the last witch trials at Ipswich, a large portion of his church withdrew from his meetings and communion. Some of their published reasons are extraordinary, yet quite conclusive.

They set forth, 'that the noise and disturbance made in his congregation during the hours of divine service, by those under diabolical power and delusions, was so great as to prevent their hearing the word with profit; and having, as they affirm, often asked for a reform in vain, it was necessary that they should go where they could worship quietly.' The behavior of the bewitched when Deodat Lawson preached has been noted; this refers to similar scenes.

And, further, they declare, "that Mr. Parris preached offensive doctrines upon the subject of witchcraft, encouraged the malevolence of the pretended afflicted by consulting and crediting their stories, and thus endangering the lives of all his congregation."

They also objected to the positive oath he gave in court against the accused, that their look at the pretended sufferers would strike them

down : when, indeed, no man could be certain that it was so.

It was in vain that Parris answered by equivocal explanations, and pious exclamations, and exhortations to peace and forgetfulness of the past, to appease his injured people. They resolutely maintained that they could not respect or support the author of their miseries ; and in the end he was, by the advice of former friends, and who had once encouraged him on, and the merited disgust of his people, constrained to leave his village parish, and there history leaves him. And Cates assures us that, generally, the afflicted took to vicious courses and shamed their employers.

Justice Sewall, also, on a general fast day, at the Old South church in Boston, stood up before all the congregation, whilst a declaration of repentance for his conduct at the witch trials, penned by himself, was read from the pulpit.

I will give the publication of the first jury that ever tried witches at Salem in their own words, that all may judge of its sincerity and motive.

“ We, whose names are underwritten, being called to serve in court at Salem, on trial of many who were, by some, suspected of doing acts of witchcraft on the bodies of divers persons ;—do confess, that we ourselves were not capable to understand, nor able to withstand, the mysterious delusions of the powers of darkness and the prince of the air ; but were, for want of knowledge in ourselves, and better information from others, prevailed with to take up with such evidence against the accused, as on further consideration and better information we justly fear was insufficient for the touching the lives of any.” “ We do, therefore, hereby signify to all in general, and the surviving sufferers in special, our deep sorrow for our errors in acting on such evidence to the condemning of any person.



" We do hereby ask forgiveness of you all whom we have justly offended, praying you to accept of this in way of satisfaction for our offence, and that the Lord may be entreated for this land ;" signed Thomas Fisk foreman, and eleven others.

This is the jury which, on the 4th of July, 1692, on trial of Nurse twice refused to convict her ; but being assailed by the hideous outcries of the afflicted, and grossly imposed upon by Stoughton and his associates, at last gave in a reluctant verdict of guilty. And yet this same Stoughton when informed of these acts of contrition by Sewall and the jury, said, that " when he administered justice he did it in the fear of God, and with the best lights he had ; and if errors were committed, he saw no advantage in a public avowal of them." And thus he still hardened his heart ; and to this day stands in the estimation of many, as one of the founders of the republic.

Although it was now manifest that the people would no longer tolerate witch persecution to bloodshed, yet the old-church and state influences nourished and encouraged its pernicious fictions. The Mathers, father and son, with Stoughton, and others of that class, seemed to regard it as an instrument of influence ; and within four months from the last witch trials at Ipswich, there was published a narrative of the sufferings of Margaret Rule, by Cotton Mather.

To us it would be surprising that they should hazard a repetition of past horrors, did we not know that men will dare any thing for the love of power.

The narrative set forth, that on the 10th of September, 1693, she was first assaulted by spectres with veiled faces,—and it took place in the meeting-house and during divine service. Who will believe that Miss Rule fabricated these

veils for the spectres. It was time, indeed, for the safety of men as great as Mather himself, that the spectres should veil their faces from the afflicted. It was a very pertinent and seasonable invention, but much beyond the wit of a young girl.

From the meeting-house she was carried home, and for nine days her tormentors kept her in bed, with her mouth so closed up that she could take nothing but a little *rum*; and then, as if for contrast, they opened it wide, and poured down her throat what scalded her like burning sulphur, the fumes of which filled the room and almost suffocated the by-standers.

They next brought the devil's book for her to subscribe. Mather describes it as being about a cubit in length, red and thick, but not very broad; and when she refused her name fresh tortures followed.

The demons would not allow her to hear or pronounce holy words, yet those who communed with her, could spell those words in her presence without pronunciation, and get along very well. But how the tormentors should quietly suffer this imposition does not appear. Once a visitant fancied he saw the movement of an imp in the bed-clothes near her, and placing his hand on the spot, he, with horror, seemed to feel something like a rat nimbly escape him!

Moreover there were times when the demons would pull her up to the ceiling of the chamber, and hold her there before a numerous company of spectators, who, with much difficulty, pulled her down again.

In this distress Mather resolved to exorcise. He states that he applied to the Lord by suit and prayer for her deliverance; and he urged "that this young woman belonged to his flock and charge; and that, as a gospel-minister, he had a better title unto her to bring her home to

God, than the devil had to carry her away ;— and he applied unto God, who alone could right this matter.”

Soon after this a White Spirit (an impious fiction of the Savior) whose face was invisible, but with glorious and shining garments, appeared to Miss Rule, standing by her bedside comforting and strengthening her ; and he bade her now take notice that God had given her to Mr. Mather ; and that she must look upon him as her father and obey his injunctions. And the narrative affirmed, that without knowing of Mather’s prayer and suit to the Lord, she from that time forth called him her father ; though he was then a very young man.

In the mean time Mather again besought the Lord thrice in three different days, with fasting, for the afflicted. And the White Spirit again said to Margaret, now be of good cheer, for your deliverance is near ; and it was so.

This was on the last day of the week, and when the demons approached to torment her she observed them to recoil as unable to approach. They took their poppets and retired to the fire-side, but they could not make the pins enter, nor could their greatest efforts produce any effect upon her ; and she now, in her turn, insulted over them, and dared them to do their worst. Nay, says Mather, “ she had the satisfaction to see their black master, the devil, strike and kick them as an overseer would his negroes to make them work.”

At last, mortified and beaten, they turned to her with a fiendish grin, and furiously said, “ WELL, YOU SHAN’T BE THE LAST ; GO, AND THE DEVIL GO WITH YOU ; WE CAN DO NO MORE.” Upon this they flew out of the room, and Margaret returned thanks for her deliverance.

Cotton Mather, the author of this story, was a

fellow of Harvard College, and considered a prodigy of learning ; he was a Boston minister, and a leading politician of the province ; and himself and father were supposed to have more influence with the British crown than any other two men in New England ; so that even those who wished to be made viceroys here sought his favor.

When, therefore, this vain and impious fiction of Margaret Rule came forth upon his credit, as well as those with whom it was known he associated and coincided, all honest and sober citizens trembled for the event. His account of the Godwins had been the forerunner of the Essex tragedy ; and now, in contempt of the public distress and terror, came forth his "*More Wonders of the Invisible World*," or "*Another Brand plucked from the Burning*."

It was at this juncture that Robert Calef, a Boston merchant, trembling and alive to the safety of his countrymen, interposed, and came before the public as a reformer, and a writer of no ordinary power, and of the purest patriotism. In varied learning Mather was his master ; but in piercing argument and satire he had no equal on this side of the water ; and he pushed the double mode of attack with exquisite relish, until he effectually demolished the great witchcraft champion.

He also visited Margaret Rule whilst under the pretended power of demons ; and his own account of what he heard and saw, is his best commendation.

"It was on the 13th Sept. 1693, when the sun had withdrawn that darkness might succeed, that I, with others, visited Margaret Rule. We went the more readily as it was reported she would see company that evening, and many were expected. Being come into her chamber we found her in bed, a healthy looking girl of

about seventeen. She spoke and acted like one a little light-headed. Soon the Mathers, Increase and Cotton, came in, with a company of people with them." Cotton Mather was then a young man of about five and twenty; and he took his seat near the afflicted girl on the bed side, and his father sat on a stool at some distance, and the son thus began:—

Margaret Rule, how do you do? A languid motion of the head, but no answer.

What, do there a great many witches sit on you?

Yes; and then she seemed to be in a fit. Whereupon the young Mather brushed her face with his glove, and rubbed her stomach with his hand, the bed clothes not being over it; and he said it eased her.

Again he inquired of Margaret, don't you know that there is a hard master? Yes. Don't serve that hard master—you know who I mean.

The Rev. Exorcist here seems not to have been willing to call the devil by name in his presence, lest he should take offence.

Do you believe? she was again in a fit, and he rubbed her breast as before; but when Margaret Perd, an attendant, came to help him, the afflicted spoke sharply, and bade her begone and not meddle, and she hastily pushed away her hand. He then moved his fingers before her eyes, and asked if she saw the witches, and she said, no.

Q. Do you believe? A. Yes. Q. Do you believe in you know whom? A. Yes. Q. Who afflicts you? A. I know not, they are many.

The father then asked her if she knew any of the apectres; an attendant replied that if she did she would not tell.

It appears, however, that his son had found out privately; and he published in his narrative

that they were as impious and suspicious wretches as could be well conceived.

Young Mather then continued,—

Q. You have seen the black man, have you not? A. No. I hope you never will. Amen, said a by stander.

Q. You have had a book offered you, have you not? A. No. Does brushing and rubbing you give you ease? A. Yes. She turned and groaned a little, and Mather said, now the witches bite, scratch, and pinch you, don't they? Yes. I thought so, said he, with a significant nod at some of his admirers then present. And he put his hand upon her breast and down towards her middle, and said he felt something alive there. The father felt, also. Don't you feel the living thing? said Cotton. No; it's only your fancy. Fudge!—Margaret don't the company of people increase your torment? Yes. The people were then requested to withdraw. But one woman said, I am sure I am no witch; I will not go; and then others took courage and staid also, and all staid.

Q. Shall we go to prayers?—spelling the word to cheat the demons. A. Yes.

Mr. Increase Mather then prayed at some length against the power of the devil and witchcraft; and that God would bring out all the tormentors. During which the son brushed and rubbed Margaret as before. After prayers he said to her, did you hear the prayer? Yes. But you have not heard prayer for some time past, have you? No. Then turning him round to some of the spectators, this is just another Mary Short, said he. “Not at all like her in her fits,” said Miss Perd, a little piqued at being pushed away by Margaret. “This Rule eats but little and drinks *rum*.” But Mather referred to his success, by prayer and fasting, in both cases, in casting out the devils; and he then admon-

ished all young people to take warning, for it was a sad thing to be tormented by the devil and his instruments. Upon this a young seaman, who had been present, turned about, and as he withdrew said, aloud, "this is the devil all over," and soon the ministers withdrew. Margarat then roused up and told the women present that they could do her no good ; but as a young man of her acquaintance was about to depart, she pulled him back and said he should not go that night. And Calef then departed.

This was a remarkable parochial visit on more than one account ; and, without doubt, is the only one of equal antiquity of which the particulars remain.

Six days after Calef again visited Miss Rule. There were about eight persons present in her chamber, and she appeared to be in a fit. They rubbed her until she could breathe freely, and then she sat up and began to talk merrily. A young man came in, and his company pleased her well ; and she asked him to remain with her, for said she, "when you are gone away I shall die." "Do put me on a clean cap, said she to the woman about her, and not let me lie here so like a beast ; I shall lose all my sparks." "How can people about town be so wicked as to say that I dissemble." "If they should see you in this merry mood, said a modest young woman, they would think you dissembled indeed." "But, said Rule, Mr. Mather has been here a half an hour this evening, and said that he has prayed for me nine times to-day ; that it is now my laughing time, and that I must laugh now ; and he told me that some people came here as spies, and to report that I am not afflicted. Think how wicked." And then she seemed to have a fit. "I wonder they should say so, said an attendant, when now I cannot lift her head from the pillow ; it seems as if

grew to it." Upon this Calef took hold of her head, and moved it without difficulty, although they angrily told him that he would break her neck if he was not more careful. He then left the house, and soon after Rule got well.

The narrative of these curious interviews by Calef, effectually disarmed Margaret Rule of all credit, brought ridicule on herself and shamed her insidious advisers and encouragers. Could the intercourses between Parris and the afflicted band at Salem have been as faithfully delineated, how much blood might have been saved.

After this Mather turned upon Calef with great acrimony. He procured and published the affidavits of three citizens, stating that they had seen Margaret Rule, in her afflictions from the invisible world, pulled up to the ceiling of her chamber by an invisible force, and that it tasked their whole strength to pull her down again.

An affidavit of two others, by the names of Thornton and Hudson, was still more minute. These testified that they had seen Margaret Rule lifted up from the bed whereon she lay, by an invisible force, so as to touch the garret floor; nor did her body rest on the bed, or on any other support, and it was kept in that position some minutes.

In reply Calef said the force which drew Margaret upwards, must be the devil's strength, and he called upon Mather to find out and publish how many men it took to match him, and pull her down. And, besides, he maintained if all this be true, why do protestants say that miracles have ceased; this lifting up of Rule by an invisible power is as much a miracle as for iron to swim; and thus the devil can work miracles.

Stung by Calef's satire, and smarting under merited chastisement, Mather dropped his pen and thrust at his opponent a prosecution for a



libel. But he never had the courage to appear in court against him. And thus was the dangerous narrative of Margaret Rule rendered powerless, and the tranquility of the country preserved.

How much better oftentimes is a satire than a sermon, and how reckless is all inordinate ambition of consequences, if its private ends can be served.

But still the old charter church and state party strove to keep withered witchcraft in some credit. In March 1694, the President and fellows of Harvard college issued a circular to all true ministers of the gospel in New England; calling on them to manifest their pious regards unto the works of the Lord, by recording and sending in the most remarkable discoveries as to his mode of governing the world; promising college honors to such as should obey.

Then followed a specification of what things were to be deemed worthy of record, which showed the design of the contrivers. They were accidents in the heavens, earth, or water. Mercies to the godly, and judgments on the wicked—with *apparitions, possessions, enchantments*, and all those things which show the existence and agency of the invisible world.

Again Calef opposed this dangerous circular and turned away, in a measure, its pernicious influence from the community. He sent in and published his remarkables also, with the requisite proof, and, as he said, without hope of reward.

The first, was the sudden death of one of the late witch justices; as, also, a sudden mortality which fell upon two sons of another of those justices.

Again, he said that furious Marshall who hung so many, and who pressed Giles Corey to death and thrust back his tongue with his staff; and

who had despoiled the widow and the helpless of their substance, was instantly rent in pieces with his father, by the providential bursting of a cannon in Salem.

And over all, that remarkable providence in the late amazing witch prosecutions here, wherein the afflicted were left, in their malice, to accuse those in power and of high degree; when, indeed, it was thought necessary to discredit the devil's testimony through the mouths of those bewitched girls at Salem, and a full and sudden stop was put to the slaughter of the innocent and the public terror.

"God shames the professor that the religion professed may not be shamed."

And the last remarkable thing Calef stated, was what an Indian said to Capt. Hill at Saco Fort. He affirmed that the French ministers were better men than the English ministers; for before the French came the Indians had a great many witches among them, but now they had no witches. The English ministers, he said, had witches among themselves; for Burroughs was a minister and was hung for a witch.

Calef could hardly expect college honors after this, and the only one to which he attained was the collecting and burning his books on Cambridge common. But the honors of his countrymen, through all coming time, will surely reach him, wherever his timely and patriotic labors shall be known. Those satirists who ridicule and disarm the oppressor, and sustain common right, deserve the gratitude of mankind.

But for a long period, the witchcraft persecution was regarded as an epoch in our history. After generations looked back upon it with horror. In distant retrospect its bloody scenes seemed to mingle with, and to form a part of, the other First Charter persecutions—when the church usurped and used the people's govern-

ment to protect and promote its secular interests.

No wonder then, after this sad experience, that our fathers should ever struggle against the unholy alliance.

Yet the old charter influences, although they warned, were gradually extended far into the administration of the second. Stoughton, the famed witch commissioner, after Sir William Phipps, swayed the vice-regal sceptre, as Lieut. Governor, four years, and he soon after died in his house in Dorchester.

To him succeeded the Earl of Beilamont, in whom the people here first saw a British nobleman at the head of the government, and all strove to do him honor.

But his rule was short, and Dudley came in. He, though a Yankee born, pushed the royal prerogative here with great spirit, if not with absolute insolence; and he commenced, and governor Shute, his successor, continued that system of bills of credit and British taxation, so odious to our ancestors—changing entirely the public policy—obliterating old charter influences, and leading directly to the revolution and our national independence.