

PURITAN TOLERATION IN AMERICA.*

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We cannot but regard with pleasure this attempt to render acceptable to the general reader the most important and interesting criminal trials that have taken place in America, without enumerating them with abstract technicalities, or rendering them valueless by sacrificing truth to effect. The laborious volumes of Howell will ever be more valuable as a work of reference, containing, as they do, the actual proceedings, reported with painful accuracy and technicality, than this attempt of Mr. Chandler's; whilst, at the same time, the "Causes Célèbres" of the French will present more exciting narratives, as well from the absence of forms, as from the elaborate polish that has been given to its narratives. This work approaches more nearly to that of the French than to our State trials; it is, however, far superior in one point—the absence of romance.

There is a strange pleasure ever attendant on the judicial investigations of a nation. The best interests of society are involved; each man feels that his own life, or liberty, or property is staked on the one event—the acquittal or condemnation of the criminal. He, too, is but one of the nation by whom the culprit is being tried; the pomp, the ceremony, the abilities provided by the State for the due provision of justice, are provided as much for him, as for the person against whom the criminal, whose trial he witnesses, has raised his hand, or from whom he has stolen. Difficulty and danger surround the accused, develop his character, and task to the utmost the highest energies of the mind. Events more startling than fiction can form, are not unfrequently disclosed in the course of judicial proceedings. All this adds to the interest which we feel compelled to take in the proceedings of criminal courts. Nor does this interest entirely depend on our actual presence at the trial; doubtless, the interest is heightened by witnessing the case with our own eyes; still, the printed record retains an interest and a value, which increases as the scenes which it describes pass from the memory. "And being a record of facts, ascertained by a tribunal erected for the express purpose of eliciting truth, it becomes, in process of time, one of the best sources of personal and general history."

What strange illustrations of the religious and political history of the early colonists of America does this small volume afford us!—Religious persecution, as exemplified in the fates of the Antinomian Hutchinson, in 1637, and the fanatic Quakers of Massachusetts, hardly thirty years after. Another thirty years passes away, and the entire pleasure made afterwards;—evidence the most absurd, the most contradictory, visions, confessions, spectres, epileptic infants, allowed and encouraged to swear away the lives of the most worthy persons in the colony; every barrier erected by the wisdom of the law for the protection of innocence, broken down by a popular tribunal, in obedience to a popular ferment; those who confessed themselves the servants of the evil one, allowed to witness against their brethren; children bringing their parents to the gallows and the stake, parents bringing false witness against their own children. Again, a little more than thirty years, and the people of Boston are mad upon a Negro plot. Again all law and order are over-ruled, and men the most blameless and innocent arraigned and condemned without even a shadow of charge against them; whilst another lapse of the same number of years brings us to the first risings of the colonists against the power of the mother country, the first troubles between the people and the soldiery. With the last three cases we do not intend to delay our readers, desirous rather to exemplify, from the trials of the Antinomians and the Quakers, the unfortunate truth, that suffers for conscience sake are the bitterest persecutors. Every republic has proved, that the greatest sticklers for liberty are, when in authority, the greatest tyrants. The course of events in every branch of the great religious reformation, has proved how bitter a persecutor the successful reformer can be. The conduct of the Puritans of New England towards their dissenting brethren is another illustration of the truth of the philosopher's dictum, "Ἄρχὴ ἀνάγκη δέζειν."

Early in the year 1636, one Hutchinson and his wife, people of good estate and reputation, passed from England to Boston, in Massachusetts, and, in the words of the day, joined the Church in that city; received with much attention in the colony, Hutchinson soon became a person of importance, and several times represented his adopted city in the general court. Besides the meetings for worship at Boston, it was an established custom among the Puritans to hold private meetings of the brethren, to debate topics of religion, and to join in devotional exercises: to these meetings the sisters were admitted, but were debarred from the privilege of joining in the discussions. "The haughty and fierce carriage, nimble wit, and active spirit" of Mrs. Hutchinson, could ill brook this slight upon the sisterhood, and she originated an opposition meeting of the sisters, where she repeated the sermon of the last Lord's day, with additional comments and illustrations of her own. The novelty of the scheme, the subtlety and vivacity of her illustrations of Scripture, rendered her meetings the favourite resort of the females of the colony; whilst her knowledge of midwifery enabled her to insinuate herself into the affections of the matrons, and to attach many warm and sincere friends to herself and her doctrines. This approval extended to the other sex; and at first even the ministers, glad, perhaps, to have their wranglings to themselves, gave their entire approbation to the meetings. Soon, however, they discovered that a power which depends on preaching is more easily lost than maintained by preaching; and that the novelty of the sister Hutchinson's discourses was gradually sapping the influence of their exhortations; they were beginning to lose their hold on the religious feelings and views of the female portion of their flocks. They were too well aware of the instability of their own authority to permit so powerful a counter-attraction to progress unopposed; Mrs. Hutchinson, therefore, was now forth with a heretic.

"At first," said one of the ministers, "all this was well, and suited with the public ministry, which went along in the same way; and all the faithful embraced it, and blessed God for the good success that appeared from this discovery. But when she had thus prepared the way by such wholesome truths, then she begins to set forth her own stuff, and taught that no sanctification was any evidence of good estate, except their justification were first cleared up to them by the immediate witness of the Spirit, and that to see any work of grace (either faith or repentance, &c.) before this immediate witness, was a covenant of works; whereupon many good souls that had been of long approved godliness were brought to renounce all work of grace in them, and to wait for this immediate revelation: then sprung up also that opinion of the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost, and of union with Christ, and justification before faith, and a denying of any gifts or graces, or inherent qualifications, and that Christ was all, did all, and that the soul remained always a dead organ; but the main and bottom of all, which tended to quench all endeavours, and to bring to a dependence upon an immediate witness of the Spirit, without right of any gift or grace, this stuck fast, and prevailed so as it began to be opposed, and she being questioned by

some, who marvelled that such opinions should spread fast, she made answer, that wherever she came, they must and they should spread."—*American Trials*, p. 5-6.

One more delusion must be added to this succinct account of the faith of the antinomian followers of Mrs. Hutchinson,—that doctrine of the Quakers, afterwards so vigorously condemned and persecuted by the colonists—the belief in communications direct from God, independently of the Scriptures, and to be regarded as equally infallible as the written word. Against these wild views, (for such we believe to have been the leading principles of the new sect, so far as contemporary passion and prejudice will allow us to discover them), the first Puritan Synod was summoned at Newtown, and after three weeks of the most bitter discussion, no less than eighty-two errors were discovered, enumerated and condemned. To Mrs. Hutchinson, the synod was but the meeting of Heretics; and both parties used the harshest terms in arraigning those who disagreed with them. At length, in 1637, the dispute assumed a political aspect. The general elections were coming on, and each party boasted that the arm of the civil power would be used against the defeated sect. The ministers led the attack, and their success was complete. Pane, the admirer and supporter of the Hutchinsons, was left out of office, and Winthrop, the father of the colony and leader of the ministers, chosen governor.

The party of the ministers lost no time in turning their newly acquired power against their opponents: an act was passed, forbidding any one to enter the colony without the approval of the magistrate; one of the ministers, who had seemed to have supported Mrs. Hutchinson's views in a late sermon, was arraigned as a disturber of the public peace, and disfranchised and banished from the colony. It was in vain that he appealed to the King. "There is no appeal," said the court; and he was compelled to go into exile, with many of those who were of his opinions. "All these, however, were but young branches," to use the words of a cotemporary, "sprung out of an old root; the court had now to do with the head of this faction, *dux femina facti*: a woman had been the breeder and nourisher of all these distempers, one Mistress Hutchinson." She was now summoned to her trial, or rather to receive judgment; for no one can read the proceedings of the tribunal that met for her trial in November, 1637, without perceiving, from the arbitrariness of its character, and its utter disregard of the fundamental principles of law, that, composed as it was of the prisoner's bitterest opponents, men to whom religious toleration was hateful, the court had long before determined to convict her, and made use of the form of a trial as the most specious means of compassing their designs.

"You are called here," said the governor, at the commencement of these extraordinary proceedings, "as one of those that have troubled the peace of the commonwealth and the churches here; you are known to be a woman that had a great share in the promoting and divulging of those opinions that are causes of this trouble, and to be nearly joined, not only in affinity and affection, with some of those that hath taken notice of, and passed sentence upon, but you have spoken divers things, as we have been informed, very prejudicial to the honour of the churches and ministers thereof, and you have maintained a meeting and an assembly in your house that hath been condemned by the general assembly as a thing not tolerable or comely in the sight of God, nor fitting for your sex; and notwithstanding that was cried down, you have continued the same. Therefore we have thought good to send for you to understand how things are, that if you be in an erroneous way, we may reduce you, that so you may be a profitable member here among us; otherwise, if you be obstinate in your course, that then the court may take such course that you may trouble us no further. Therefore I would entreat you to express, whether you do not hold and assent in practice to the opinions and fancies that have been handled in court already; that is to say, whether you do not justify Mr. Wheelwright's sermon and petition?—I am called here," was the appropriate answer of Mrs. Hutchinson, embodying the great principle of the common law, which requires every offence to be set forth with clearness and certainty; "I am called here to answer before you; but I hear no things laid to my charge."—*American Trials*, p. 11.

Mrs. Hutchinson and the judge now got into a hot argument on the liberty of conscience, and the duty to the commonwealth, regarded in the light of a parent. The governor, however, soon found that he was no match for the lady preacher, and brought that part of the discussion to a close, by refusing "to discourse with those of her sex about it," and assuming that she did "adhere to and set forward the faction." This point assumed, to the satisfaction of the court—a pleasant way, truly, of trying people, by assumptions!—the judge proceeded to attack her weekly public preachings. "The elder women," said St. Paul to Titus, were to teach the younger," replied Mrs. Hutchinson. "But, privately," replied the governor, "not in set public meetings; and you are to teach them to 'keep at home,' not wander abroad. But how say you as to teaching of the men?" continued the governor. "Aquila and Priscilla took upon them to instruct Apollos more perfectly; they being better instructed, might teach him." Her last text was unfortunally for the arraigned; the governor saw his advantage. "See how your argument stands," he replied; "Priscilla with her husband took Apollos home to instruct him privately; there Mistress Hutchinson, without her husband, might teach sixty or eighty." Distasteful as the accused's conduct might have been to the colonials, there was nothing as yet brought against her which could give the Court an appearance of reason for that decision to which they had long before made up their minds. The real point was yet to be opened. She had spoken against the preachings of the ministers. "One alone of them," she was reported to have said, "preached a covenant of faith, the other ministers were under a covenant of works; they had not the seal of the Spirit, so were not able ministers of the New Testament." This was now brought against her by the ministers with no little zeal and animation. She denied the expressions, and required the witnesses to prove her words on their oaths. At this her accusers hesitated; they were afraid of an oath. "Admit they be mistaken," said one of the ministers, "you would make them sin if you urged them to swear."—"They are witnesses in their own cause," was the accused's reply; "if they do accuse me, I desire it may be upon oath." This demand increased the commotion; some drew back, others "were animated on." At last the court called on three of the ministers to swear to their testimony. One or two of the preachers returned to speak in favour of the accused, and to deny that her words were to be understood as alleged against her: they were silenced directly; the accused was not to be excused. "How dare you look into the court to say such a word?" said the notorious Hugh Peters to one of the honest men. Even Cotton ran some risk when he returned to raise his voice in favour of Mrs. Hutchinson, so predetermined were her judges against her. Dudley, the deputy-governor, took him up continually, and plied him with severe hints, whilst Hugh Peters, with his accustomed violence, talked of bringing him to immediate trial. Mrs. Hutchinson soon gave the court all the evidence they required for their decision. She spoke in her defence, justified her opinions, and once, on points of abstruse doctrine, ran on wildly into views for which the judges had no mercy. The immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, and the interpretation of Antichrist, such as bore heavily on her accusers and judges, were openly avowed by her. She was a special providence of God; their eyes were opened, they could now see clearly to condemn her. One alone spoke openly in her favour, "Here is no law of God or of the country that she hath broken; therefore she deserves no censure." The impatience with which this appeal was listened to, showed the unanimity of the court; he was hardly silent before it was voted that she be banished out of

the liberties of the colony, as not fit for their society, and be imprisoned until the court could send her away. "I desire to know why I am banished," demanded the condemned. "Say no more," was the reply; "the court knows wherefore, and is satisfied."

The ministers had not done yet; from her temporary confinement, Mrs. Hutchinson was summoned before the Court, as it was called, in Boston, and called upon, in the face of a large assembly of the interested and the curious, to abjure no less than twenty-nine errors of doctrine, which were specifically set forth, and read to her. Some she admitted, others she combated, and defended with pertinacity and ability. The continued attacks of the ministers, under the name of admissions, coupled with the desertion of her old friend, Cotton, at length broke the spirit of the poor fanatic. She acknowledged she had greatly erred, had slighted the magistrates of the court and the elders of the church, and when on her trial, had looked on the errors and failings of the magistrates, without regard to their office and the place they were in: the speeches she then used she confessed were without ground, and rash, and she desired the prayers of the church.

The ministers had not even yet satiated their revenge; her excommunication was demanded, and every means were sought for raising a plausible excuse for such an act. Her opinions, wild as they were, having been generally renounced by her, would not justify this proceeding; so they had recourse to inferences. Certain legitimate inferences were made from her wild fancies, and she was then called upon to renounce "these legitimate results of her opinions." She denied that she held such doctrines. Her opponents had decided that she did hold them, and therefore earnestly pressed her "not to stand so obstinately to maintain so manifest an untruth." Still she refused to renounce what she had never held, and was excommunicated as a liar. Mrs. Hutchinson, and those who still adhered to her opinions, proceeded to depart from Massachusetts. The influence of Roger Williams and Harry Pane obtained from the Narragansett chief, Miantinoh, the gift of the beautiful spot of Rhode Island. Years passed away, her opinions spread from their new abiding-place, and the sons of the widowed fanatic dared to expostulate with the people of Boston on the wrongs of their mother. The Puritan magistrates were not prepared to censure their own proceedings, and severe imprisonment was the reward of the young men's boldness. Rhode Island became but a doubtful refuge; and the whole family retired to the Dutch settlements in East Chester. Seven years after her trial, the house of Anne Hutchinson was attacked by the insurgent Indians; and, amid the flames, or beneath the tomahawk of the savages, herself and her whole family perished.

Difficult, as it doubtless is, rightly and clearly to understand all the bearings of this case, there cannot be a doubt that the pretence of its having been a mere civil proceeding for the preservation of the authority of the State rulers, and the suppression of sedition, is utterly groundless. It was an act of religious intolerance, in which personal ill-will and professional jealousy bore an active part. Religious toleration was unknown to the colonists of Massachusetts Bay, and was preached against as a sin in the rulers of the land, save and except where the rulers happened not to be Puritans. "The government," says Mr. Chandler, "was founded in certain religious doctrines, a denial of which was an offence against the State, of the nature of treason." That a part of their number had a right to change their views of religious doctrine, or civil government, never entered into the apprehension of the majority. Wheelwright entered on extremes, and was convicted of sedition; he appealed to the king, and was banished. Roger Williams met the same fate. Anne Hutchinson ventured to doubt, and was thrust out of the jurisdiction as unfit for their society. It was this feeling which enabled the ministers to carry with them not only the civil power, but also the popular voice, in their prosecution of Mrs. Hutchinson, and which again, nearly thirty years afterwards, encouraged the cruel persecution to which the Quakers were subjected in the colony. Branded in England as "an abominable sect," and "their principles inconsistent with any kind of government," whipped and imprisoned as felons; fined, exiled, and sold into colonial bondage, they found an equally cruel reception in New England, in no respect varying from that of the Mother country in cruelty; whilst, at the same time, it deprived them of the meagre consolation of knowing that their sufferings were in accordance with the statute law of the realm in which they suffered.

When in the summer of 1656, the first Quakers arrived at Boston, from Barbadoes, there was no law whatever respecting that sect. It mattered not, the ministers could not brook a rival race; their goods were searched, their books destroyed, themselves cast in strict imprisonment for five weeks, and then thrust out of the colony. Again eight more came, were seized, imprisoned, and banished: still there was no law in the colony against the sect. At last a law was passed against "the accused sect of heretics lately risen in the world;" the account of this law is worthy of extract, as a specimen of Puritan legislative toleration.

"Whereas," says this act, "there is an accused sect of heretics lately risen up in the world, which are commonly called Quakers, who take upon them to be immediately sent of God, and infallibly assisted by the Spirit, to speak and write blasphemous opinions, despising government, and the order of the church, and commonly speaking evil of dignities, reproaching and reviling magistrates and ministers, and then goes on to provide, 'that any master of a ship bringing any known Quaker within the jurisdiction, shall forfeit one hundred pounds; and shall give security to carry such Quakers back to the place whence he brought them; and on the arrival of such Quakers they were to be severely whipped and confined at hard labour in the house of correction. By a subsequent law, persons who should entertain Quakers were liable to a fine of forty shillings for every hour's entertainment. Any persons defending their pernicious ways, or attending their meetings, were also liable to a fine. Every Quaker, after the first conviction, if a man, was to lose one ear, and the second time the other; if a woman, she was each time to be severely whipped; and the third offence, both men and women were to have their tongues bored through with a red-hot iron."—*American Trials*, pp. 35, 36.

Such was the first enactment against the Quakers; it was no dead letter; nearly every punishment provided therein was inflicted; and the more the Puritans fined, whipped, and branded, the more the Quakers preached and braved the punishment. Unlike the present representatives, the conduct of the sect seems to have been perfectly outrageous. They denounced the ministers as priests of Baal, the magistrates as traitors, and civil government as an invention of the devil. They scribbled not to interrupt public worship with indecent fanaticism, and excited by their frenzy and folly the disgust of the colonists. The Boston Puritans determined on resorting to the policy of Draco, and to defeat their own objects by their severity. Not so the more prudent inhabitants of Rhode Island. Much as they feared and hated the sect, they declined to pass laws against its professors.

"For we find," they said, in a letter to the general court, "that in those places where these people are found, in this colony, are most of all suffered to declare themselves freely, and are only opposed by arguments in discourse, there they least of all desire to come, and we are informed, that they begin to loathe this place, for that they are not opposed by the civil authority, but with all patience and meekness are suffered to say over their pretended revelations and admonitions, nor are they like or able to gain many here to their way; and surely we find they delight to be persecuted by civil powers, and when they are so, they are like to gain more adherents by the converse of their patient sufferings, than by consent to their pernicious sayings."—*American Trials*, p. 38.

The Bostonians, however, were not to be persuaded that toleration was the most prudent course; despite the resistance offered by the few sensible men in the colony, including the governor of Connecticut, the majority passed a law, providing for the immediate trial of any member of the "cursed sect," by a special jury, and if convicted of the crime of being a Quaker, he was to suffer death. The sickness of one of the court enabled a bare majority of one to carry this iniquitous law, by which so many innocent fanatics suffered death. No sooner was the edict passed than three victims voluntarily offered themselves. Previously banished from the colony, they again returned, purposing to offer up their lives, and determined not to depart. Two of the sufferers, Robinson and Stephenson, declared that they were specially called by the Spirit to go to Boston to die, and that they had obeyed the command not of their own will, but of the will of God. Confessing their crime, they were condemned to death, with their female associate, Mary Dyer. Seven days after, they were led out to death. Nothing could exceed the joy and gladness with which they went out to die. Mary Dyer saw both her companions slain before her eyes: she ascended the ladder to meet her own fate, the rope was fixed, her face covered, when a faint cry was heard at the edge of the crowd. By degrees it grew louder and louder; a hundred willing hearts echoed the words, "A relieve! a relieve!" she was released; the intercession of her son had saved her for the time, on the condition of her standing on the gallows with the noose round her neck, and then retiring from the colony. She retired to Rhode Island. In two years she was moved to return to the "bloody town of Boston." Nothing could shake her resolution; she would return and die, as her fellow-prisoners had before her. The magistrates were astonished at the determination of this feeble and aged fanatic to brave all the terrors of their laws. The pride of consistency forbade them to recede. Even if the former executions were cruel, this, it whispered, is called for by a stern necessity. One among the rulers, the governor Endicott, sought to save Mary Dyer, but she would not; he had come to die, unless her preaching could obtain from them the repeal of their laws against her sect. Persuaded of the reality of the inspiration to which she laid claim, and firmly believing that God had called her to witness, by her life and death, to the truth, she went to her death with pleasure, and died, as she lived, unmoved by threats or solicitations.

Early in the next year another Quaker, one William Leddra, was brought to trial, after a long imprisonment during the winter months, in which cold and chains added greatly to his sufferings. He had returned after previous banishment; when he heard the charge, he demanded what evil he had done. He had abused the authority of the state, was the reply of the court, "refused to take off his hat in court, and would say 'thee' and 'thou.'" "Will you slay me because I speak English?" rejoined Leddra, "and refuse to put off my clothes?"—"Treason may be spoken in good English," was the reply. "Is it treason to say thee and thou to a single person?" They asked him if he would return to England; he refused and appealed against their law to the king. It was refused with a sneer, that Charles remembered against them.—"This year," said the court, "you appeal to England; and the third year the government of England will be changed." At this juncture the court was thrown into confusion by the sudden appearance of another banished Quaker, Wenlock Christian, who placed himself beside the prisoner. "Art thou not he who was banished on pain of death?" he was asked. "Yes," replied Christian. "What dost thou here then?"—"To warn you to shed no more innocent blood; that ye have already shed cries aloud to the Lord against you." He was instantly committed to prison. Leddra, having refused to leave the colony, received sentence of death, and was executed within a few days of his condemnation.

"When Wenlock Christian was brought to trial," says Mr. Chandler, "he addressed the court with undaunted courage. 'By what law will you put me to death?'—'We have a law; and by that law you are to die.'—'Who authorized you to make that law?'—'We have a patent which gives us the power.'—'Have you authority to make laws repugnant to the laws of England?'—'No.'—'Then you are gone beyond your bounds. If the king did but know your hearts as God knows them, he would see they are as rotten towards him as they are towards God. You and I are subjects of the king, and I demand to be tried by the laws of my country. There is no law in England to hang Quakers.'—'But there is a law of England to hang Jesuits.'—'If you put me to death, it is not because I go under the name of Jesuit, but of a Quaker. I appeal to my own nation.'—'You have broken our law,' was the reply, 'and we shall try you.' The jury immediately returned a verdict of guilty; but the magistrates were divided in passing sentence. The governor was irritated at their wavering; and on a second vote there appeared a majority for the doom of death. 'What do you gain by it?' said the prisoner; 'do not think to weary the living God by taking away the lives of his servants. For the last man you have put to death, here are five come in his room.'—'If you have power to take my life, God can raise up the same principles of life in ten of his servants, and send them among you in my room, that you may have torment on torment, which is your portion, there is no peace to the wicked, said my God.'—*American Trials*, pp. 49, 50.

Whether the bold appeal of Christian frightened the magistrates of the Colony, or they had some hint that the king was on the point of interfering with their illegal murders, or a sense of justice was beginning to return to the minds of the descendants of the fugitives for conscience sake—the sons of the pilgrim fathers, Christian was not executed. Sentence of death was recorded against him indeed, in open court, but on his promising to depart from the jurisdiction he was released from confinement.

The cruelties exercised against the Quakers had at last raised them to that height of popularity, from attaining to which these punishments were intended to prevent them. Crowds gathered round the prisons, and attended the sufferers to their execution. The town itself was deserted on those days when the people hastened to witness the death of any of the Quakers. Charles, too, had been made aware of the conduct of the colonists. He hastened to interfere; granting a mandamus to every governor in New England, requiring them to proceed no further as to corporal punishment against the Quakers, but to remit them, with their respective crimes set forth at length, to England. One of the Quakers, who had been banished on pain of death, hastened to the colony with the mandamus; coming into the presence of the governor, he presented the letters. He was commanded to take off his hat; on his refusal it was removed by force, but instantly replaced when the governor had perused the letters. A consultation took place with his deputy, when the messenger was informed that the king's commands would be obeyed. At the next general court, the laws against the sect were repealed. Soon after, a partial revival took place against "vagabond Quakers;" they were subject to be seized by any person, carried before the next magistrate, and then stripped to the middle, tied to a cart, and whipped from the town of their capture to the limit of the colony, so that no more than three towns were to be whipped through, or more than a certain number of stripes inflicted. This law, abused by the irresponsible persons in whom the execution was vested, increased the fanaticism of the party on whom its cruelties were inflicted. Numbers of women were scourged with the most unheard-of cruelties, cruelties difficult of credit. The Quakers seemed driven to madness; fanaticism was the excuse for indecency.

In July, 1695, four women and one man were arrested in Boston, for creating a horrible disturbance, and, as the

warrant set forth, "affrighting people in the south church at the time of the public dispensing of the Word on the Lord's day, whereby several women are in danger of misarrying." Margaret Brewster, the leader of the band, appears to have arrived in the town, from Barbadoes, on the Lord's day, and, leaving her riding clothes and shoes at the door of the south church, she rushed into the house with her female companions, creating an alarm in the astonished assembly that baffles description. She was clothed in sackcloth, with ashes upon her head, and her hair streaming over her shoulders. Her feet were bare, and her face was begrimed with black dust. She announced herself as an illustration of the east pious, which she predicted as an approaching judgment on the people. Upon her examination by the magistrates, she said that God had three years since called her to service, and that she had three years since laid up her husband, and her in Barbadoes, and she had her husband's consent to come and perform it. She and her female companions were sentenced to be stripped from the middle upwards, and tied to a cart's tail at the south meeting-house and drawn through the town, receiving twenty lashes on their naked backs. —*American Trials*, pp. 55, 56.

These offences of the Quakers have been often put forward as a defence of the cruelty of the Puritans towards that sect, as an extenuation of that law by which so many had, years before, suffered death. That these excesses were the result of this cruelty, may reasonably be believed. Until driven to madness by persecution, the Quakers, however troublesome and annoying to the civil authority, had not resorted to these insane enormities, which would have been better cured by the madhouse than the prison. Neither did those parties by whom these punishments were inflicted, deem these after-actions any such defence of their judicial acts. Soon after the execution of the two first who suffered, the court thought it advisable to make some public justification of their proceedings. Several papers were prepared, two only adopted, and entered on their court records; the one to prove how desirous they were to save the lives of the misguided heretics, had they but consented to leave the colony; the other justifying, on six grounds, the laws enacted against the sect. This declaration, which was sent to all the towns, is too curious an illustration of the temper and doctrines of the Puritan colonists to be omitted:

"First it asserted, that the doctrines of the Quakers were destructive of the fundamental truths of religion and the sacred Trinity, the person of Christ, and the Holy Scriptures as a perfect rule of faith and life; and the commandment of God was plain that he who professes to speak in the name of the Lord, and turn people out of the way which the Lord hath commanded to walk in, such an one shall be put to death, according to *Zachariah xlii. 3.* and *Deuteronomy xlii. 6.* and *xviii. 2.* Secondly, it commanded of God that Christians should be of one mind and heart, and it was well known that the Quakers were far from giving that honour and reverence to magistrates which the Lord required of them, and which good men had given them; but, on the contrary, they showed contempt against them in their very outward gestures, who had the question, come in that at least spared not to belch out railing and cursing speeches. Third, their case was compared to that of Shimei, whom Solomon commanded not to leave Jerusalem, and whom he put to death because he violated the command. 'And therefore,' was the fourth ground, 'that the Quakers should be justly afflicted for breach of confinement, much more for return from banishment, which is these Quakers' case.' Fourth, there was no man that was possessed of house or land, wherein he had just title and property of his own, but would account it unjustly injurious that another, who had no such title therein, should intrude and enter into his house, without his owner's consent; yea, and whom the owner doth expressly prohibit and forbid the same; and if a person insist upon coming in, the owner might, as *defendants*, say him, and his blood would be upon his own head. Had not the keeper and guardians of the commonwealth much power to take away the lives of such, as, contrary to their prohibition, should invade or intrude into their public possessions and territories? If, then, in such violent and bold attempts, the Quakers had lost their lives, they might thank themselves as the blameless cause and authors of their own death. Fifth, it was the question, that a man that hath children and family, both justly may and in duty ought to preserve them of his charge, as far as he is able, from the dangerous company of persons infected with the plague and pestilence, or other contagious noisoms, or mortal diseases; and if a person should invade or intrude into the man's house, amongst his children and family, could any one doubt but that the father might withstand such intrusion?—'Therefore might not magistrates do the like for their subjects, to keep out moral infection? 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