

all things which the major part by much of the whole people, would pray for, but dare not, for fear of the oppression and affront of the Quakers party making a noise of their Charter.

My Lords, I am your Lordships' most obedient and most faithfull humble servant,

J. DUDLEY.

1702. Cotton Mather.

The reputation of Cotton Mather (1662–1728) as a repository of erudition is well known. He was a Harvard graduate of the class of 1678, studied for the ministry, and at the age of seventeen preached his first sermon. In 1685 he was ordained as his father's colleague in the pastorate of the North Church in Boston, and his connection with this church only ceased with his death. His writings were extremely numerous. The best known is probably that from which this extract is taken,—*Magnalia Christi Americana: Or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620, unto the year of our Lord, 1698.* London, 1702. Book VII. pp. 20, 21.

I believe there never was held such a variety of religions together on so small a spot of ground as have been in that colony. It has been a colluvies of Antinomians, Familists, Anabaptists, Antisabbatarians, Arminians, Socinians, Quakers, Ranters, every thing in

the world but *Roman Catholics*, and *real Christians*, tho' of the *latter*, I hope, there have been more than of the *former* among them ; so that if a man had lost his religion, he might find it at the general muster of *opinionists* !

I may venture to say, that *Rhode Island* has usually been the *Gerizzim* of *New-England*. The Island is indeed, for the fertility of the soil, the temperatures of the air, the commodiousness of situation, the best garden of all the colonies ; and were it free from serpents, I would have called it the *paradise* of *New-England* : but the number of sensible and ingenious gentlemen, whereof there are some upon the Island, will find it hard enough to rescue it from an extream danger of that character, *Bona Terra, Mala Gens*. The condition of the *rising generation* upon that Island, is indeed exceedingly lamentable !

The *former generation* of *Rhode Islanders* is now generally gone off the stage ; and all the messengers which the churches of *Massachuset* colony, whereto any of them did belong, sent with admonitions after them, could reclaim very few of them : the *rising generation*, confounded by the *contradictions* in religion among their parents, and under many horrible temptations, and under some unhappy tendencies, to be of *no religion at all* : and when the ministers of this province have several times, at their own united expences, employ'd certain ministers of the gospel, to make a *chargeless* tender of preaching the word among them, this *charitable offer* of ministers has been refused : tho' it seems they are now beginning to embrace it ; the indefatigable, and evangelical, and very laudable industry of Mr. *John Danforth*, the minister of *Dorchester*, has, with the blessing of our Lord thereupon, overcome a number of them, not only to hear the gospel from a worthy young preacher, Mr. *Nathanael Clap*, sent thither, but also to build a meeting-house for that purpose : yea, and the liberal

merchants of *Boston* have in this present year 1695, been exemplary, by their bearing the expences of the *ministers* which we have sent forth to make tenders of the gospel unto other *Paganizing plantations* on the *Main* belonging to that colony; albeit some of those tenders also have been scandalously rejected by the inhabitants. If I should now launch forth into a narrative of the marvellous *lewd things* which have been said and done by the giddy sectaries of this *Island*, I confess the *matter* would be agreeable enough to the nature and the design of a *church history*, and for a warning unto all to take heed, how they forsake the *word* of God and his ordinances in the societies of the faithful, and follow the conduct of the *new lights*, that are no more than so many *fools-fires* in the issue; but the *merriment* arising from the ridiculous and extravagant occurrences therein, would not be agreeable to the *gravity* of such a history.

1704. Sarah Kemble Knight.

Madam Knight (1666–1727) was the daughter of Thomas Kemble, a merchant of Charlestown and of Boston. She married Richard Knight of Boston.

Madam Knight's later years were passed in Norwich, and she figures with considerable effect in the title-deeds of the real estate transactions of that town, and of New London. "She stood high in the social rank, and was respected both in the church and in mercantile affairs."

In the year 1704 she journeyed alone from Boston to New York, on horseback, apparently for the purpose