

in those churches having had the like comfortable issue, by the blessed influences of the Prince of Peace upon the use of the same means.

#### CHAP. LXV.<sup>1</sup>

*The Plantations of New England troubled with the Quakers—Laws made against them by the General Court of the Massachusetts within the space of this lustre, from 1655 to 1660.*

ABOUT this time the people called Quakers had sent their emissaries to preach the Gospel (doubtless not the everlasting Gospel which the Apostle was sent to preach,) amongst the Colonies of New England. Those of the Massachusetts considering what the Apostle Paul speaking,\* of holding him accursed that preacheth any other Gospel, made very sharp laws against them, if it might have been to have prevented their troubling of the place with their strange and perverse doctrines. But the event succeeded not according to expectation, for divers of that sort repaired thither, as if they intended to have braved authority, which occasioned the apprehending of several of them, who were prosecuted according to the laws lately enacted; which, after such and such steps and degrees mentioned therein, doth proscribe them, upon pain of death. June the 1st, in the year 1660, Mary Dyer, rebelliously returning after that sentence passed upon her, was sentenced to suffer death at the place of execution, yet had liberty to pass for England at the next session of the Court; the which she (as was hoped and desired,) attended not, as Joseph Nicholson and Jane his wife did, that by returning after the like sentence passed upon them had brought themselves into the same premunire, which some that wished them well persuaded unto, or to remove elsewhere; by which means the execution of that fatal sentence was prevented on them. But Mary Dyer wilfully returning, the authority of the place knew not how to deliver her from the severity of the law, which was the portion of two others of that sort of people, much about that time, viz. William Robinson and Marmaduke Steven-

\* Speaketh. ED.

<sup>1</sup> LXIV in the MS.—R.

son, and soon after there was set out a declaration of the General Court, justifying their proceedings.

A Declaration of the General Court of the Massachusetts, holden at Boston, October 18, 1659, and printed by their order. Edward Rawson, Secretary.

Although the justice of our proceedings against William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson, and Mary Dyer, supported by the authority of this Court, the laws of the country, and the Law of God, may rather persuade us to expect encouragement and commendation from all prudent and pious men, than convince us of any necessity to apologize for the same, yet forasmuch as men of weaker parts, out of pity and commiseration, (a commendable and Christian virtue, yet easily abused, and susceptible of sinister and dangerous impressions,) for want of full information, may be less satisfied, and men of perverser principles may take occasion hereby to calumniate us and render us as bloody persecutors—to satisfy the one and stop the mouths of the other, we thought it requisite to declare:—That about three years since, divers<sup>1</sup> persons, professing themselves Quakers, (of whose pernicious opinions and practices we had received intelligence from good hands, both from Barbados and England,) arrived at Boston, whose persons were only secured to be sent away by the first opportunity, without censure or punishment, although their professed tenets, turbulent and contemptuous behavior to authority, would have justified a severer animadversion, yet the prudence of this Court was exercised only in making provision to secure the peace and order here established against their attempts, whose design (we were well assured of by our own experience, as well as by the example of their predecessors in Munster,) was to undermine and ruin the same. And accordingly a law<sup>2</sup> was made and published, prohibiting all masters of ships to bring any Quakers into this jurisdiction, and themselves from coming in, on penalty of the house of correction till they could be sent away. Notwithstanding which, by a back door, they found entrance, and the penalty inflicted upon themselves

<sup>1</sup> In July, 1656, two arrived from Barbadoes, and a few weeks after ten more made their appearance. See Hutchinson, i. 180-1; Hazard, ii. 347.—H.   <sup>2</sup> Passed Oct. 14, 1656. See it in Hazard, i. 630-2; Mass. Laws, (ed. 1672,) p. 60.—H.

proving insufficient to restrain their impudent and insolent obtrusions, was increased<sup>1</sup> by the loss of the ears of those that offended the second time; which also being too weak a defence against their impetuous [and<sup>7</sup>] fanatic fury, necessitated us to endeavor our security, and upon serious consideration, after the former experiment, by their incessant assaults, a law was made,<sup>2</sup> that such persons should be banished on pain of death, according to the example of England in their provision against Jesuits; which sentence being regularly pronounced at the last Court of Assistants against the parties above named, and they either returning or continuing presumptuously in this jurisdiction after the time limited, were apprehended,<sup>3</sup> and owning themselves to be the persons banished, were sentenced by the Court to death, according to the law aforesaid, which hath been executed upon two of them.<sup>4</sup> Mary Dyer, upon the petition of her son,<sup>5</sup> and the mercy and clemency of this Court, had liberty to depart within two days, which she hath accepted of. The consideration of our gradual proceedings will vindicate us from the clamorous accusations of severity, our own just and necessary defence calling upon us (other means failing,) to offer the point which these persons have violently and wilfully rushed upon, and thereby [are<sup>7</sup>] become *felons de se*, which might it have been prevented, and the sovereign law, *salus populi*, been preserved, our former proceedings, (as well as the sparing of Mary Dyer upon an inconsiderable intercession,) will manifestly evince we desired<sup>6</sup> their lives, absent, rather than their death, present.<sup>7</sup>

The executing of the said sentence was and is accounted by sundry that heard thereof very harsh. All that can be said in the defence thereof amounts to thus much: That the inhabitants of the place having purchased the country for themselves, they accounted it an unreasonable injury for any to come presumptuously, without license or allowance, to live amongst them, and to sow the seeds of their dangerous and perverse principles amongst the inhabitants, tending to the subversion of all that was good, whether sacred or civil; and therefore thought themselves bound to

<sup>1</sup> By an order passed Oct. 14, 1657. See it in Hazard, ii. 554.—H.

<sup>2</sup> In 1658. Ibid. 399-400, 562; Mass. Laws, pp. 61-2.—H.

<sup>3</sup> In October, 1659. Hazard, ii. 565.—H.      <sup>4</sup> Oct. 27th. Ibid. 566.—H.

<sup>5</sup> William Dyer.—H.

<sup>6</sup> *Desire* in the MS.—H.

<sup>7</sup> See Hazard, ii. 567-72.—H.

hold out the sharp [sword] against any that should attempt, without leave, to thrust themselves amongst them; which renders them that obstinately and wilfully would so do *felons de se*, like them that will break into a man's dwelling-house, whether he will or no.

That Law seems to have been made only as a provision to have diverted any such from settling amongst them, which, when it was discerned it would not prove a meet expedient for the end, would have been waived without doubt by the power of the Court that made it, had not the King's most excellent Majesty, according to his princely clemency, written to the country to forbear all corporal punishment of the Quakers not long after, in the year 1661,<sup>1</sup> from which time the execution of the former laws was forthwith suspended.<sup>2</sup>

One Mrs. Hibbins, in the year 1656, was arraigned for a witch after her husband's death.<sup>3</sup> The [jury<sup>4</sup>] found her guilty, but the magistrates consented not, so the matter came to the General Court, where she was condemned by the deputies, (the first example in that kind,) and executed. *Vox populi* went sore against her, and was the chiefest part of the evidence against her, as some thought. It fared with her in some sense as it did with Joan of Arc, in France, executed by the Duke of Bedford in Henry the Fifth's time; the which some counted a saint and some a witch. Many times persons of hard favor and turbulent passions are apt to be condemned by the common people for witches, upon very slight grounds. Some observed solemn remarks of Providence set upon those who were very forward to condemn her, and brand others with the like infamous reproach on such grounds, about that time. Others have said that Mr. Hibbins losing £500 at once, by the carelessness of Mr. Trerice the shipmaster, it so discomposed his wife's spirit that she scarce ever was well settled in her mind afterward, but grew very turbulent in her passion, and discontented, on which occasions she was cast out of the church, and then charged to be a witch, giving too much occasion by her strange carriage to common people so to judge.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The King's order is dated Sept. 9, 1661, and is in Hazard, ii. 595.—H.

<sup>2</sup> By an order of Court, Nov. 27, 1661. Ibid. 596.—H. <sup>3</sup> William Hibbins died July 23, 1654.—H.

<sup>4</sup> Supplied from Hutchinson, i. 173.—H.

<sup>5</sup> See Sav. Win. i. 321. Hutchinson says that she was executed in June, 1656.—H.