

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

George Lincoln Burr

Table of Contents

<u>Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706</u>	1
<u>George Lincoln Burr</u>	2
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	5
<u>Notes</u>	8
<u>A BRIEF AND TRUE NARRATIVE: titlepage</u>	10
<u>“The Bookseller to the Reader.”</u>	11
<u>Narrative</u>	12
<u>Notes</u>	16
<u>Remarks of things more than ordinary about the Afflicted Persons</u>	19
<u>Notes</u>	20
<u>Remarks concerning the Accused</u>	21
<u>Notes</u>	22
<u>LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692</u>	23
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	24
<u>Notes</u>	25
<u>LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692</u>	26
<u>Notes</u>	35
<u>LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS TO THE HOME GOVERNMENT, 1692–1693</u>	39
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	40
<u>Notes</u>	41
<u>LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS</u>	43
<u>Letter</u>	44
<u>Letter</u>	45
<u>Notes</u>	47
<u>FROM “THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD,” BY COTTON MATHER, 1693</u>	49
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	50
<u>Notes</u>	52
<u>THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD</u>	53
<u>Notes</u>	54
<u>The Author's Defence</u>	55
<u>Letter</u>	56
<u>Notes</u>	58
<u>I. The Tryal of G. B. 116 At a Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held in Salem, 1692</u>	60
<u>Notes</u>	63
<u>II. The Tryal of Bridget Bishop, 127 alias Oliver, At the Court of Oyer and Terminer Held at Salem, June, 2, 1692</u>	65
<u>Notes</u>	68
<u>III. The Tryal of Susanna Martin, 130 At the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 29, 1692</u>	69
<u>Notes</u>	73
<u>IV. The Trial of Elizabeth How, 134 at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 30, 1692</u>	74
<u>Notes</u>	76
<u>V. The Trial of Martha Carrier, 136 at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, August 2, 1692</u>	77
<u>Notes</u>	79
<u>The First Curiositie</u>	80
<u>Notes</u>	81

Table of Contents

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

<u>A Second Curiosity</u>	82
Notes.....	83
<u>A Third Curiosity</u>	84
Notes.....	85
<u>A Fourth Curiosity</u>	86
Notes.....	87
<u>FROM “MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD.” BY ROBERT CALEF, 1700</u>	88
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	89
Notes.....	91
<u>MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD</u>	93
Notes.....	94
<u>The Epistle to the Reader, And more especially to the Noble Bereans 159 of this Age, wherever Residing</u>	95
Letter.....	99
Notes.....	100
<u>ANOTHER BRAND PLUCKT OUT OF THE BURNING, OR, MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD PART I</u>	103
<u>Section I. The Afflictions of Margaret Rule</u>	104
Notes.....	111
<u>PART II. A Letter to Mr. C. M.</u>	114
Letter.....	115
Letter.....	118
Letter.....	119
Letter.....	121
Letter.....	124
Notes.....	126
<u>PART V</u>	128
<u>To their Majesties Goal-keeper 237 in Salem</u>	131
<u>To Marshal George Herrick of Salem Essex</u>	132
<u>An Account how John Aldin, Senior, was dealt with at Salem-Village</u>	135
Letter.....	136
<u>July 4, 1692</u>	138
Letter.....	140
Letter.....	141
<u>By the Honourable the Lieutenant Governour, Council and Assembly of his Majesties Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in General Court Assembled</u>	149
<u>Some that had been of several Jewries, have given forth a Paper, Sign'd with their own hands in these words</u>	150
Notes.....	153
<u>A MODEST INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT, BY JOHN HALE, 1702</u>	168
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	169
Notes.....	170
<u>HALE'S A MODEST INQUIRY</u>	171
Notes.....	172
<u>An Epistle to the Reader</u>	173
Notes.....	175
<u>The Preface to the Christian Reader</u>	176

Table of Contents

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

<u>Notes</u>	178
<u>A MODEST ENQUIRY, INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT Chapter I</u>	179
<u>Notes</u>	182
<u>Chapter II</u>	184
<u>Notes</u>	187
<u>Chapter III</u>	189
<u>Notes</u>	191
<u>Chapter IV</u>	193
<u>Notes</u>	195
<u>Chapter XVIII</u>	197
<u>Notes</u>	201

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

George Lincoln Burr

This page copyright © 2003 Blackmask Online.
<http://www.blackmask.com>

- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- A BRIEF AND TRUE NARRATIVE: titlepage
- “The Bookseller to the Reader.”
- Narrative
- Notes
- Remarks of things more than ordinary about the Afflicted Persons.
- Notes
- Remarks concerning the Accused.
- Notes
- LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692
- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692
- Notes
- LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS TO THE HOME GOVERNMENT, 1692–1693
- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS
- Letter
- Letter
- Notes
- FROM “THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD,” BY COTTON MATHER, 1693
- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD
- Notes
- The Author's Defence.
- Letter
- Notes
- I. The Tryal of G. B. 116 At a Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held in Salem, 1692.
- Notes
- II. The Tryal of Bridget Bishop, 127 alias Oliver, At the Court of Oyer and Terminer Held at Salem, June, 2, 1692.
- Notes
- III. The Tryal of Susanna Martin, 130 At the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 29, 1692.
- Notes
- IV. The Trial of Elizabeth How, 134 at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 30, 1692.
- Notes
- V. The Trial of Martha Carrier, 136 at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, August 2, 1692.
- Notes

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

- The First Curiosity.
- Notes
- A Second Curiosity.
- Notes
- A Third Curiosity.
- Notes
- A Fourth Curiosity.
- Notes
- FROM “MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD.” BY ROBERT CALEF, 1700
- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD
- Notes
- The Epistle to the Reader, And more especially to the Noble Bereans 159 of this Age, wherever Residing.
- Letter
- Notes
- ANOTHER BRAND PLUCKT OUT OF THE BURNING, OR, MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD PART I.
- Section I. The Afflictions of Margaret Rule.
- Notes
- PART II. A Letter to Mr. C. M.
- Letter
- Letter
- Letter
- Letter
- Letter
- Notes
- PART V.
- To their Majesties Goal-keeper 237 in Salem .
- To Marshal George Herrick of Salem Essex.
- An Account how John Aldin, Senior, was dealt with at Salem-Village.
- Letter
- July 4, 1692.
- Letter
- Letter
- By the Honourable the Lieutenant Governour, Council and Assembly of his Majesties Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in General Court Assembled.
- Some that had been of several Jewries, have given forth a Paper, Sign'd with their own hands in these words.
- Notes
- A MODEST INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT, BY JOHN HALE, 1702
- INTRODUCTION
- Notes
- HALE'S A MODEST INQUIRY
- Notes
- An Epistle to the Reader.
- Notes
- The Preface to the Christian Reader.
- Notes
- A MODEST ENQUIRY, INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT Chapter I.
- Notes
- Chapter II.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

- Notes
- Chapter III.
- Notes
- Chapter IV.
- Notes
- Chapter XVIII.
- Notes

INTRODUCTION

The earliest account of the remarkable happenings at Salem, in the spring of 1692, which were to bring to a climax and then to a conclusion the quest of witches in New England, was that which here follows. The Rev. Deodat Lawson was singularly qualified to write it. He had himself, only a little earlier (1684–1688), served as pastor to Salem Village, the rural community in which these happenings took their rise; and, though dissensions in the parish prevented his longer stay, he seems to have been no party to these dissensions and must meanwhile have learned to know the scene and all the actors of that later drama which he here depicts. He was, too, a man of education, travel, social experience. Born in England, the son of a scholarly Puritan minister, and doubtless educated there, he first appears in New England in 1676, and at the time of his call to Salem Village was making his home in Boston. Thither he returned in 1688: Samuel Sewall, who on May 13 had him in at Sunday dinner, notes in his diary that he “came to Town to dwell last week,” and often mentions him thereafter. How at the outbreak of the witchpanic he came to revisit the Village and to chronicle the doings there, he himself a dozen years later thus told his English friends: ¹

It pleased God in the Year of our Lord 1692 to visit the People at a place called Salem Village in New-England, with a very Sore and Grievous Affliction, in which they had reason to believe, that the Sovereign and Holy God was pleased to permit Satan and his Instruments, to Affright and Afflict those poor Mortals in such an Astonishing and Unusual manner.

Now, I having for some time before attended the work of the Ministry in that Village, the Report of those Great Afflictions came quickly to my notice; and the more readily because the first Person Afflicted was in the Minister's Family, who succeeded me, after I was removed from them; in pitty therefore to my Christian Friends, and former Acquaintance there, I was much concerned about them, frequently consulted with them, and fervently (by Divine Assistance) prayed for them; but especially my Concern was augmented, when it was Reported, at an Examination of a Person suspected for Witchcraft, that my Wife and Daughter, who Dyed Three Years before, were sent out of the World under the Malicious Operations of the Infernal Powers; as is more fully represented in the following Remarks. I did then Desire, and was also Desired, by some concerned in the Court, to be there present, that I might hear what was alledged in that respect; observing therefore, when I was amongst them, that the Case of the Afflicted was very amazing, and deplorable; and the Charges brought against the Accused, such as were Ground of Suspicions yet very intricate, and difficult to draw up right Conclusions about them; I thought good for the satisfaction of my self, and such of my Friends as might be curious to inquiry into those Mysteries of Gods Providence and Satans Malice, to draw up and keep by me, a Brief Account of the most Remarkable things, that came to my Knowledge in those Affairs; which Remarks were afterwards, (at my Request) Revised and Corrected by some who Sate Judges on the Bench, in those Matters; and were now Transcribed, from the same Paper, on which they were then Written.

A narrative so timely and so vouched for must have gone speedily into print. ² The latest day named in it — “the 5th of April” — was probably the date both of its completion and of its going to press. In 1693 it was

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

reprinted in London by John Dunton, who appended to it an anonymous “Further Account of the Tryals of the New–England Witches” (an extract from “a letter from thence to a Gentleman in London”) bringing the story to February, 1693, and to both joined Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience* (see pp. 377, 378, below), prefixing to the volume thus made up the title: *A Further Account of the Tryals of the New–England Witches. With the Observations of a Person who was upon the Place several Days when the suspected Witches were first taken into Examination. To which is added, Cases of Conscience, etc.*³ In 1704 Lawson, himself now in England, cast it into a new form as an appendix to the English edition of his Salemsermon.⁴ All names are now left out, that he “may not grieve any, whose Relations were either Accused or Afflicted, in those times of Trouble and Distress,” and what had been a narrative is given a statistical form under “three Heads, viz. (1.) Relating to the Afflicted, (2.) Relating to the Accused, And (3.) Relating to the Confessing Witches.”⁵ On his own views, and the probable trend of his influence while at Salem, light is thrown by his introductory words:

After this, ⁶ I being by the Providence of God called over into England, in the Year 1696; I then brought that Paper of Remarks on the Witchcraft with me; upon the sight thereof, some Worthy Ministers and Christian Friends here desired me to Reprint the Sermon and subjoyn the Remarks thereunto, in way of Appendix, but for some particular Reasons I did then Decline it; But now, forasmuch as I my self had been an Eye and Ear Witness of most of those Amazing things, so far as they come within the Notice of Humane Senses; and the Requests of my Friends were Renewed since I came to Dwell in London; I have given way to the Publishing of them; that I may satisfy such as are not resolved to the Contrary, that there may be (and are) such Operations of the Powers of Darkness on the Bodies and Minds of Mankind, by Divine Permission; and that those who Sate Judges in those Cases, may by the serious Consideration of the formidable Aspect and perplexed Circumstances of that Afflictive Providence be in some measure excused; or at least be less Censured, for passing Sentance on several Persons, as being the Instruments of Satan in those Diabolical Operations, when they were involved in such a Dark and Dismal Scene of Providence, in which Satan did seem to Spin a finer Thred of Spiritual Wickedness than in the ordinary methods of Witchcraft; hence the Judges desiring to bear due Testimony against such Diabolical Practices, were inclined to admit the validity of such a sort of Evidence as was not so clearly and directly demonstrable to Human Senses, as in other Cases is required, or else they could not discover the Mysteries of Witchcraft....

One can not read these words without a suspicion that the reaction in New England against those held responsible for the procedure at Salem may have had to do with his return to England; and even in England, it is clear, his cause now needed defense. If any can wish him further ill, let them be appeased by our two glimpses of his after fate — a despairing letter in 1714, ⁷ begging from his New England friends meat, drink, and clothing for his sick and starving family, and the passing phrase of a writer who in 1727, mentioning Thomas Lawson, adds that “he was the father of the unhappy Mr. Deodate Lawson, who came hither from New England.”⁸

But the reader should not enter on the study of the witchpanic of 1692 without knowing something of our other sources of knowledge. The contemporary narratives are practically all printed in the pages that follow, and a part of the trial records will be found embodied in Cotton Mather's *Wonders*;⁹ but most of these must be sought elsewhere, and, alas, they are sadly scattered. Some Governor Hutchinson preserved in his wise and careful pages on this subject,¹⁰ where alone a part can now be found. Many have drifted into private hands — like those which in 1860 came into the hands of the Massachusetts Historical Society and are in part printed in its *Proceedings* (1860–1862, pp. 31–37), or those published by Drake in the foot–notes and appendices to his various histories and editions,¹¹ or those now in the keeping of the Essex Institute at Salem or of the Boston Public Library.¹² Such of these as are in print are mentioned in the notes at the proper points. But most are still in public keeping at Salem; and these in 1864 were printed by W. Elliot Woodward in the two volumes of his *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, the work most fundamental for the first–hand study of this episode. It is, however, imperfect and far from complete, and there is hope of a better: the *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, of which a third volume has just appeared, must in due course include these witch–trials, and Mr.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

George Francis Dow, their editor (who has already by his publication of the witchcraft records relating to Topsfield ¹³ shown his keenness in such work), has in mind the seizing of this opportunity to print all obtainable papers relating to the Salem Witchcraft episode. Precious documents too are published by Upham in his classical *Salem Witchcraft* ¹⁴ and in the acute and learned studies of Mr. Abner C. Goodell and Mr. George H. Moore. ¹⁵

Notes

[1]. In the London edition of his Salem sermon. See below, p. 158, note 3.

[2]. One of the acutest students of New England witchcraft, Mr. George H. Moore (in his “Notes on the Bibliography of Witchcraft in Massachusetts” in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society, n. s., V. 248), has said of it: “I cannot resist the impression upon reading it, that it was promoted by Cotton Mather and that he wrote the ‘Bookseller’s’ notice ‘to the Reader.’” If so, he may well have inspired to the task both author and publisher.

[3]. The contents of this volume were reprinted at London, in 1862, by John Russell Smith, in the volume of his *Library of Old Authors* which contains also Cotton Mather’s *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. In this reprint they fill pp. 199–291, being described in its main title by only the misleading words, “A Farther Account of the Tryals of the New–England Witches, by Increase Mather.”

[4]. See below, p. 158, note 3.

[5]. This revised form of his *Account* has been reprinted in full at the end of C. W. Upham’s *Salem Witchcraft* (Boston, 1867), and, with but slight omissions, in the *Library of American Literature* edited by Stedman and Hutchinson (New York, 1891), II. 106–114.

[6]. This passage immediately follows that above quoted.

[7]. Published (from the Bodleian Library’s Rawlinson MS. C. 128, fol. 12) by George H. Moore, in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society, n. s., V. 268–269.

[8]. Edmund Calamy, in his *Continuation*, II. 629 (II. 192 of Palmer’s revision of 1775, *The Nonconformist’s Memorial*).

[9]. At pp. 215–244, below.

[10]. *History of Massachusetts*, II., ch. I.

[11]. In his *History and Antiquities of Boston* (Boston, 1856), pp. 497, 498, and in his *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, III. 126, 169–197. All these (the indictment and the testimony against Philip English, the

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

examination of Mary Clark and of the slave Tituba) are now in the New York Public Library, as are also his documents of the Morse case, mentioned above, p. 31, note 1.

[12]. As to the fate of the records in general see Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 462.

[13]. In vol. XIII. of the *Historical Collections* of the Topsfield Historical Society (1908).

[14]. Boston, 1867, two vols.

[15]. See p. 91, note 2; p. 373, note 3.

A BRIEF AND TRUE NARRATIVE: titlepage

A Brief and True Narrative Of some Remarkable Passages Relating to sundry Persons Afflicted by Witchcraft, at Salem Village Which happened from the Nineteenth of March, to the Fifth of April, 1692.

Collected by Deodat Lawson.

Boston, Printed for Benjamin Harris and are to be Sold at his Shop, over-against the Old-Meeting-House.
1692. 16

“The Bookseller to the Reader.”

The Ensuing Narrative, being a Collection of some Remarkables, in an Affair now upon the Stage, made by a Credible Eye-witness, is now offered unto the Reader, only as a Tast, of more that may follow in Gods Time. If the Prayers of Good People may obtain this Favour of God, That the Misterious Assaults from Hell now made upon so many of our Friends may be thoroughly Detected and Defeated, we suppose the Curious will be Entertained with as rare an History as perhaps an Age has had; whereof this Narrative is but a Forerunner.

Benjamin Harris .

Narrative

On the Nineteenth day of Marchlast ¹⁷ I went to Salem Village, ¹⁸ and lodged at Nathaniel Ingersols near to the Minister Mr. P's. house, ¹⁹ and presently after I came into my Lodging Capt. Walcuts Daughter Mary ²⁰ came to Lieut. Ingersols and spake to me, but, suddenly after as she stood by the door, was bitten, so that she cried out of her Wrist, and looking on it with a Candle, we saw apparently the marks of Teeth both upper and lower set, on each side of her wrist.

In the beginning of the Evening, I went to give Mr. P. ²¹ a visit. When I was there, his Kins-woman, Abigail Williams, (about 12 years of age,) had a grievous fit; she was at first hurried with Violence to and fro in the room, (though Mrs. Ingersol endeavoured to hold her,) sometimes making as if she would fly, stretching up her arms as high as she could, and crying “Whish, Whish, Whish!” several times; Presently after she said there was Goodw.N. ²² and said, “Do you not see her? Why there she stands!” And the said Goodw. N. offered her The Book, but she was resolved she would not take it, saying Often, “I wont, I wont, I wont, take it, I do not know what Book it is: I am sure it is none of Gods Book, it is the Divels Book, for ought I know.” After that, she run to the Fire, and begun to throw Fire Brands, about the house; and run against the Back, as if she would run up Chimney, and, as they said, she had attempted to go into the Fire in other Fits.

On Lords Day, the Twentieth of March, there were sundry of the afflicted Persons at Meeting, as, Mrs. Pope, and Goodwife Bibber, Abigail Williams. Mary Walcut, Mary Lewes, and Docter Griggs' Maid. ²³ There was also at Meeting, Goodwife C. ²⁴ (who was afterward Examined on suspicion of being a Witch:) They had several Sore Fits, in the time of Publick Worship, which did something interrupt me in my First Prayer; being so unusual. After Psalm was Sung, Abigail Williams said to me, “Now stand up, and Name your Text”: And after it was read, she said, “It is a long Text.” In the beginning of Sermon, Mrs. Pope, a Woman afflicted, said to me, “Now there is enough of that.” And in the afternoon, Abigail Williams upon my referring to my Doctrine said to me, “I know no Doctrine you had, If you did name one, I have forgot it.”

In Sermon time when Goodw. C was present in the Meetinghouse Ab. W. called out, “Look where Goodw. C sits on the Beam suckling her Yellow bird betwixt her fingers”! Anne Putnam another Girle afflicted said there was a Yellow-bird sat on my hat as it hung on the Pin in the Pulpit: but those that were by, restrained her from speaking loud about it.

On Monday the 21st of March, The Magistrates of Salem appointed to come to Examination of Goodw C. ²⁵ And about

twelve of the Clock, they went into the Meeting-House, which was Thronged with Spectators: Mr. Noyes ²⁶ began with a very pertinent and pathetic Prayer; and Goodwife C. being called to answer to what was Alledged against her, she desired to go to Prayer, which was much wondred at, in the presence of so many hundred people: The Magistrates told her, they would not admit it; they came not there to hear her Pray, but to Examine her, in what was Alledged against her. The Worshipful Mr. Hathorne ²⁷ asked her, Why she Afflicted those Children? she said, she did not Afflict them. He asked her, who did then? she said, “I do not know; How should I know?” The Number of the Afflicted Persons were about that time Ten, viz. Four Married Women, Mrs. Pope, Mrs. Putman, ²⁸ Goodw. Bibber, and an Ancient Woman, named Goodall, three Maids, Mary Walcut, Mercy Lewes, at Thomas Putman's, and a Maid at Dr. Griggs's, there were three Girls from 9 to 12 Years of Age, each of them, or thereabouts, viz. Elizabeth Parris, Abigail Williams and Ann Putman; these were most of them at G. C's Examination, and did vehemently accuse her in the Assembly of afflicting them, by Biting, Pinching, Strangling, etc. And that they did in their Fit see her Likeness coming to them, and bringing a Book to them, she said, she had no Book; they affirmed, she had a Yellow-Bird, that used to suck betwixt her Fingers, and being asked about it, if

she had any Familiar Spirit, that attended her, she said, She had no Familiarity with any such thing. She was a Gospel Woman: which Title she called her self by; and the Afflicted Persons told her, ah! She was, A Gospel Witch. Ann Putman did there affirm, that one day when Lieutenant Fuller was at Prayer at her Fathers House, she saw the shape of Goodw. C. and she thought Goodw. N. Praying at the same time to the Devil, she was not sure it was Goodw. N. she thought it was; but very sure she saw the Shape of G. C. The said C. said, they were poor, distracted Children, and no heed to be given to what they said. Mr. Hathorne and Mr. Noyes replied, it was the judgment of all that were present, they were Bewitched, and only she, the Accused Person said, they were Distracted. It was observed several times, that if she did but bite her Under lip in time of Examination the persons afflicted were bitten on their armes and wrists and produced the Marks before the Magistrates, Ministers and others. And being watched for that, if she did but Pinch her Fingers, or Graspe one hand hard in another, they were Pinched and produced the Marks before the Magistrates, and Spectators. After that, it was observed, that if she did but lean her Breast against the Seat, in the Meeting House, (being the Barr at which she stood,) they were afflicted. Particularly Mrs. Pope complained of grievous torment in her Bowels as if they were torn out. She vehemently accused said C. as the instrument, and first threw her Muff at her; but that flying not home, she got off her Shoe, and hit Goodwife C. on the head with it. After these postures were watched, if said C. did but stir her feet, they were afflicted in their Feet, and stamped fearfully. The afflicted persons asked her why she did not go to the company of Witches which were before the Meeting house mustering? Did she not hear the Drum beat? They accused her of having Familiarity with the Devil, in the time of Examination, in the shape of a Black man whispering in her ear; they affirmed, that her Yellow-Bird sucked betwixt her Fingers in the Assembly; and order being given to see if there were any sign, the Girl that saw it said, it was too late now; she had removed a Pin, and put it on her head; which was found there sticking upright.

They told her, she had Covenanted with the Devil for ten years, six of them were gone, and four more to come. She was required by the Magistrates to answer that Question in the Catechism, “How many persons be there in the God-Head?” she answered it but oddly, yet was there no great thing to be gathered from it; she denied all that was charged upon her, and said, They could not prove a Witch; she was that Afternoon Committed to Salem-Prison; and after she was in Custody, she did not so appear to them, and afflict them as before.

On Wednesday the 23 of March, I went to Thomas Putmans, on purpose to see his Wife: I found her lying on the Bed, having had a sore fit a little before. She spake to me, and said, she was glad to see me; her Husband and she both desired me to pray with her, while she was sensible; which I did, though the Apparition said, I should not go to Prayer. At the first beginning she attended; but after a little time, was taken with a fit: yet continued silent, and seemed to be Asleep: when Prayer was done, her Husband going to her, found her in a Fit; he took her off the Bed, to set her on his Knees; but at first she was so stiff, she could not be bended; but she afterwards set down; but quickly began to strive violently with her Arms and Leggs; she then began to Complain of, and as it were to Converse personally with, Goodw. N., saying, “Goodw. N. Be gone! Be gone! Be gone! are you not ashamed, a Woman of your Profession, to afflict a poor Creature so? what hurt did I ever do you in my life! you have but two years to live, and then the Devil will torment your Soul, for this your Name is blotted out of Gods Book, and it shall never be put in Gods Book again, be gone for shame, are you not afraid of that which is coming upon you? I Know, I know, what will make you afraid; the wrath of an Angry God, I am sure that will make you afraid; be gone, do not tourment me, I know what you would have (we judged she meant, her Soul) but it is out of your reach; it is Clothed with the white Robes of Christs Righteousness.” After this, she seemed to dispute with the Apparition about a particular Text of Scripture. The Apparition seemed to deny it, (the Womans eyes being fast closed all this time); she said, She was sure there was such a Text; and she would tell it; and then the Shape would be gone, for said she, “I am sure you cannot stand before that Text!” then she was sorely Afflicted; her mouth drawn on one side, and her body strained for about a minute, and then said, “I will tell, I will tell; it is, it is, it is!” three or four times, and then was afflicted to hinder her from telling, at last she broke forth and said, “It is the third Chapter of the Revelations.” I did something scruple the reading it, and did let my scruple appear, lest Satan should make any Superstitious lie to improve the Word of the Eternal God. However, tho' not versed in these things, I judged I might do it this once for an Experiment. I began to read, and before I had near read through the first verse, she opened her eyes, and was well; this fit continued near half an hour. Her Husband and the Spectators told me, she had often been so relieved by reading Texts that she named, something pertinent to her Case; as Isa. 40. 1, Isa. 49. 1, Isa. 50. 1, and several others.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

On Thursday the Twenty fourth of march, (being in course the Lecture Day, at the Village,) Goodwife N. was brought before the Magistrates Mr. Hathorne and Mr. Corwin,²⁹ about Ten of [the] Clock, in the Fore Noon, to be Examined in the Meeting House; the Reverend Mr. Hale³⁰ begun with Prayer, and the Warrant being read, she was required to give answer, Why she afflicted those persons? she pleaded her owne innocency with earnestness. Thomas Putman's Wife, Abigail Williams and Thomas Putmans daughter accused her that she appeared to them, and afflicted them in their fitts: but some of the other said, that they had seen her, but knew not that ever she had hurt them; amongst which was Mary Walcut, who was presently after she had so declared bitten, and cryed out of her in the meeting-house; producing the Marks of teeth on her wrist. It was so disposed, that I had not leisure to attend the whole time of Examination,³¹ but both Magistrates and Ministers told me, that the things alledged by the afflicted, and defences made by her, were much after the same manner, as the former was. And her Motions did produce like effects as to Biteing, Pinching, Bruising, Tormenting, at their Breasts, by her Leaning, and when, bended Back, were as if their Backs was broken. The afflicted persons said, the Black Man whispered to her in the Assembly, and therefore she could not hear what the Magistrates said unto her. They said also that she did then ride by the Meeting-house, behind the Black Man. Thomas Putman's wife had a grievous Fit, in the time of Examination, to the very great Impairing of her strength, and wasting of her spirits, insomuch as she could hardly move hand, or foot, when she was carryed out. Others also were there grievously afflicted, so that there was once such an hideous scritch and noise, (which I heard as I walked, at a little distance from the Meeting house,) as did amaze me, and some that were within told me the whole assembly was struck with consternation, and they were afraid, that those that sate next to them, were under the influence of Witchcraft. This woman also was that day committed to Salem Prison. The Magistrates and Ministers also did informe me, that they apprehended a child of Sarah G.³² and Examined it, being between 4 and 5 years of Age, And as to matter of Fact, they did Unanimously affirm, that when this Child did but cast its eye upon the afflicted persons, they were tormented, and they held her Head, and yet so many as her eye could fix upon were afflicted. Which they did several times make careful observation of: the afflicted complained, they had often been Bitten by this child, and produced the marks of a small set of teeth, accordingly, this was also committed to Salem Prison; the child looked hail, and well as other Children. I saw it at Lieut. Ingersols.³³ After the commitment of Goodw. N., Tho: Putmans wife was much better, and had no violent fits at all from that 24th of March to the 5th of April. Some others also said they had not seen her so frequently appear to them, to hurt them.

On the 25th of March, (as Capt. Stephen Sewal,³⁴ of Salem, did afterwards inform me) Eliza. Paris had sore Fits, at his house, which much troubled himself, and his wife, so as he told me they were almost discouraged. She related, that the great Black Man came to her, and told her, if she would be ruled by him, she should have whatsoever she desired, and go to a Golden City. She relating this to Mrs. Sewall, she told the child, it was the Divel, and he was a Lyar from the Beginning, and bid her tell him so, if he came again: which she did accordingly, at the next coming to her, in her fits.

On the 26th of March, Mr. Hathorne, Mr. Corwin, and Mr. Higison³⁵ were at the Prison-Keepers House, to Examine the Child,³⁶ and it told them there, it had a little Snake that used to Suck on the lowest Joynt of it[s] Fore-Finger; and when they inquired where, pointing to other places, it told them, not there, but there, pointing on the Lowest point of Fore-Finger; where they Observed a deep Red Spot, about the Bigness of a Flea-bite, they asked who gave it that Snake? whether the great Black man, it said no, its Mother gave it.

The 31 of March there was a Publick Fast kept at Salem on account of these Afflicted Persons. And Abigail Williams said, that the Witches had a Sacrament that day at an house in the Village, and that they had Red Bread and Red Drink. The first of April, Mercy Lewis, Thomas Putman's Maid, in her fitt, said, they did eat Red Bread like Mans Flesh, and would have had her eat some: but she would not; but turned away her head, and Spit at them, and said, "I will not Eat, I will not Drink, it is Blood," etc. She said, "That is not the Bread of Life, that is not the Water of Life; Christ gives the Bread of Life, I will have none of it!" This first of April also Marcy Lewis aforesaid saw in her fitt a White man and was with him in a Glorious Place, which had no Candles nor Sun, yet was full of Light and Brightness; where was a great Multitude in White glittering Robes, and they Sung the Song in the fifth of Revelation the Ninth verse, and the 110 Psalm, and the 149 Psalm; and said with her self, "How long shall I stay here? let me be along with you": She was loth to leave this place, and grieved that she could tarry no longer. This Whiteman³⁷ hath appeared several times to some of them, and given them notice how long it should be before they had another Fit, which was sometimes a day, or day and half, or more or less: it hath fallen

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

out accordingly.

The third of April, the Lords–Day, being Sacrament–day, at the Village, Goodw. C. ³⁸ upon Mr. Parris's naming his Text, John 6, 70, *One of them is a Devil*, the said Goodw. C. went immediately out of the Meeting–House, and flung the door after her violently, to the amazement of the Congregation: She was afterward seen by some in their Fits, who said, “O Goodw. C., I did not think to see you here!” (and being at their Red bread and drink) said to her, “Is this a time to receive the Sacrament, you ran–away on the Lords–Day, and scorned to receive it in the Meeting–House, and, Is this a time to receive it? I wonder at you!” This is the summ of what I either saw my self, or did receive Information from persons of undoubted Reputation and Credit.

Notes

[16]. Title–page of the original.

[17]. 1692. This narrative may well be studied in close connection with the parallel narratives of Calef and Hale, printed at pp. 296 ff. and 399 ff. of this volume.

[18]. Not Salem *town*, the present Salem city, but a rural district (what is now the township of Danvers, with parts of the townships adjoining it) which till 1672 had been a mere dependence of the town, but in that year, at the request of its inhabitants, was set off as a separate parish, though not as a distinct town. Despite the name of “village,” there was in Salem Village no huddle of houses amounting to a hamlet, though about the meeting–house (where now is Danvers Highlands) the farm–houses clustered more thickly than elsewhere. Prefixed to the Rev. Charles W. Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* is a map, which, on the basis of long and loving research, attempts to locate every house in all the region; and the text of that work will also be of constant use, as will the little volume of W. S. Nevins, *Witchcraft in Salem Village* (1892), with its views of sites and buildings (as “Stories of Salem Witchcraft” it had been printed in the *New England Magazine*, IV., V.) and the illustrated edition of John Fiske's *New France and New England* (1904).

[19]. Nathaniel Ingersoll, deacon in the village church and perhaps its most devoted member, kept the tavern, or “ordinary,” which was the recognized centre of the “Village.” The meeting–house adjoined it to the east, to the west the parsonage, where lived Mr. Parris.

[20]. Captain Jonathan Walcot, commander of the village militia, dwelt next beyond the parsonage. His daughter Mary was now seventeen.

[21]. The Rev. Samuel Parris (1653–1720), whose part, and whose family's, in the Salem panic was to be so great, had been at Salem Village since 1688, succeeding Deodat Lawson as its spiritual head. Till then, though educated at Harvard, which is to say for the ministry, he had been engaged in the West Indian trade, and had lived for a time in Barbadoes, whence he had brought back with him the two slaves, John and Tituba, perhaps half negro, half native, with whom we must soon have to do. Abigail Williams, his niece, was a member of his household; and we shall meet also his little daughter Elizabeth, aged nine. The account of his life by S. P. Fowler (Essex Institute, *Proceedings*, II. 49–68) has been separately printed (Salem, 1857) and is appended to Drake's ed. of Mather and Calef (III. 198–222). But the student needs also Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, and the documents reprinted by Calef, *More Wonders*, pp. 55–64.

[22]. Rebecca Nurse, a matron of 71, wife of Francis Nurse, an energetic and prosperous farmer.

[23]. Mrs. Pope was a woman of good social position and in early middle life; Sarah Bibber (or Vibber), aged

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

36, a loose-tongued creature, addicted to fits, who with her husband seems to have “worked out”; Mercy (not Mary) Lewes, a maid in the family of Thomas Putnam, whose wife and twelve-year-old daughter, both named Ann, were also to have a leading part among “the afflicted.” “Doctor Griggs' maid,” Elizabeth Hubbard, aged 17, was a niece of his wife. It was probably Dr. Griggs, the physician of the Village, who had first pronounced the girls bewitched.

[24]. Martha Corey, wife of Giles Corey. She too was advanced in years.

[25]. For the official report of this examination, as of those to follow and for all the legal documents connected with these cases, the student must of course turn to the publications embodying such court records (see p. 151, above). Those of Goodwife Corey's case may be found in Woodward's *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 50–60. Especially interesting is the evidence as to her rational attitude: “shee told us,” testify those who went to arrest her, “that shee did not thinke that there were any witches.” They add that it “was said of her that shee would open the eyes of the magistrates and ministers.”

[26]. The Rev. Nicholas Noyes, minister at Salem town.

[27]. John Hathorne, or Hawthorne, a magistrate of the colony, and, as a member of the highest court, a local magistrate as well, had his home on his farm in Salem Village and must have known personally all these neighbors. It must be remembered, and may well be pointed out here, that Massachusetts magistrates were not men trained to the law, but only respected laymen.

[28]. Putnam: this misspelling was common.

[29]. Jonathan Corwin was, like Hathorne, a member of the Court of Assistants, the highest legislative and judicial body of the colony, and like him the son of one of its founders. They were the men of highest note in the Salem region. Corwin lived in the town.

[30]. Of Beverly. As to him see p. 397, below.

[31]. What drew Mr. Lawson away from the examinations was doubtless the need to complete his preparation for the important sermon of that day; and it must have been this on which he was pondering when (as he records a few lines later) the shrieks of the afflicted reached him as he walked, “a little distance from the meeting-house.” That sermon was, however, no extempore production, but a studied disquisition on the power and malice of the Devil, who “Contracts and Indents with Witches and Wizzards, that they shall be the Instruments by whom he may more secretly Affect and Afflict the Bodies and Minds of others.” “And the Devil,” taught Lawson, committing himself wholly to belief in the worth of that “spectral evidence” which was to play such a part in the Salem episode, “having them in his subjection, by their Consent, he will use their Bodies and Minds, Shapes and Representations, to Affright and Afflict others at his pleasure.” The magistrates were present at the sermon; and to them he dedicated the sermon when, in the following year, he gave it to the press under the title of *Christ's Fidelity the only Shield against Satan's Malignity*. A second edition was printed under his eye at London in 1704 (see p. 149, above).

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[32]. Sarah Good, who with Sarah Osburn and Parris's slave–woman Tituba had been examined and committed to jail on March 1, before Lawson's visit (see p. 343, below).

[33]. Little Dorcas Good, thus sent to prison “as hale and well as other children,” lay there seven or eight months, and “being chain'd in the dungeon was so hardly used and terrified” that eighteen years later her father alleged “that she hath ever since been very chargeable, haveing little or no reason to govern herself.” See his petition for damages, September 13, 1710 (printed in the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXXV. 253 — the MS. is now in the President White Library at Cornell University). He was allowed £30.

[34]. Stephen Sewall, clerk of the courts at Salem, in whose home the Rev. Mr. Parris had now placed his daughter Elizabeth — a fact which may have some connection with his being one of the most ardent furtherers of the trials. It was from him that Cotton Mather later asked the materials for his account of them (see p. 206, below). He must, of course, not be confused with his more eminent brother, Samuel Sewall, of Boston, whom we shall soon meet as a judge in the Salem trials.

[35]. The Rev. John Higginson, the aged senior minister of the church in Salem.

[36]. Dorcas Good, of course, not Elizabeth Parris.

[37]. White man.

[38]. Not Goodwife Corey, but Goodwife Sarah Cloyse, sister of Rebecca Nurse. For an explanation of the slammed door, see p. 346, below.

Remarks of things more than ordinary about the Afflicted Persons.

1. They are in their Fits tempted to be Witches, are shewed the List of the Names of others, and are tortured, because they will not yield to Subscribe, or meddle with, or touch the Book, and are promised to have present Relief if they would do it.

2. They did in the Assembly mutually Cure each other, even with a Touch of their Hand, when Strangled, and otherwise Tortured; and would endeavour to get to their Afflicted, to Relieve them.

3. They did also foretel when anothers Fit was a–coming, and would say, “Look to her! she will have a Fit presently,” which fell out accordingly, as many can bear witness, that heard and saw it.

4. That at the same time, when the Accused Person was present, the Afflicted Persons saw her Likeness in other places of the Meeting–House, suckling her Familiar, sometimes in one place and posture, and sometimes in another.

5. That their Motions in their Fits are Preternatural, both as to the manner, which is so strange as a well person could not Screw their Body into; and as to the violence also it is preternatural, being much beyond the Ordinary force of the same person when they are in their right mind.

6. The eyes of some of them in their fits are exceeding fast closed, and if you ask a question they can give no answer, and I do believe they cannot hear at that time, yet do they plainly converse with the Appearances, as if they did discourse with real persons.

7. They are utterly pressed against any persons Praying with them, and told by the appearances, they shall not go to Prayer, so Tho. Putmans wife was told, I should not Pray; but she said, I should: and after I had done, reasoned with the Appearance, “Did not I say he should go to Prayer?”

8. The forementioned Mary W. ³⁹ being a little better at ease, the Afflicted persons said, she had signed the book; and that was the reason she was better. Told me by Edward Putman. ⁴⁰

Notes

[39]. Walcot.

[40]. Deacon Edward Putnam, a pillar of the village church, was brother and close neighbor to Thomas Putnam, whose wife, daughter, and maid were leaders among “the afflicted.”

Remarks concerning the Accused.

1. For introduction to the discovery of those that afflicted them, It is reported Mr. Parris's Indian Man and Woman made a Cake of Rye Meal, and the Childrens water, baked it in the Ashes, and gave it to a Dogge, since which they have discovered, and seen particular persons hurting of them.

2. In Time of Examination, they seemed little affected, though all the Spectators were much grieved to see it.

3. Natural Actions in them produced Preternatural actions in the Afflicted, so that they are their own Image without any Poppits of Wax or otherwise. ⁴¹

4. That they are accused to have a Company about 23 or 24 and they did Muster in Armes, as it seemed to the Afflicted Persons.

5. Since they were confined, the Persons have not been so much Afflicted with their appearing to them, Biteing or Pinching of them, etc.

6. They are reported by the Afflicted Persons to keep dayes of Fast and dayes of Thanksgiving, and Sacraments;. Satan endeavours to Transforme himself to an Angel of Light, and to make his Kingdom and Administrations to resemble those of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Satan Rages Principally amongst the Visible Subjects of Christ's Kingdom and makes use (at least in appearance) of some of them to Afflict others; that Christ's Kingdom may be divided against it self, and so be weakened.

8. Several things used in England at Tryal of Witches, to the Number of 14 or 15, which are wont to pass instead of or in Concurrence with Witnesses, at least 6 or 7 of them are found in these accused: see Keebles Statutes. ⁴²

9. Some of the most solid Afflicted Persons do affirme the same things concerning seeing the accused out of their Fitts as well as in them.

10. The Witches had a Fast, and told one of the Afflicted Girles, she must not Eat, because it was Fast Day, she said, she would: they told her they would Choake her then; which when she did eat, was endeavoured.

Finis .

Notes

[41] *I. e.* ., these witches have no need, as do others (see p.104), to make images, or puppets, in the likeness of those they wish to torment, and then by torturing the puppets to inflict the same tortures on those they represent: these witches have only to act, and their victims are preternaturally compelled to the same action.

[42] What is meant is clearly not the collection of English statutes compiled by Joseph Keeble, or Keble, (1632–1710). Often printed (1676, 1681, 1684, 1695, 1706), this seems to have been standard in the colonies as at home; but it contains absolutely nothing but the text of the statutes in force, “with the titles of such as are expired, repealed, altered, or out of use,” and at the end an analytical table of subjects.” The work really meant is Keble's *An Assistance to Justices of the Peace* (London, 1683, 1689). This work, however, borrows its pages on witchcraft (pp.217–220) from the older manuals of Lambarde, West, and Dalton; and the passage in question is one compiled by Michael Dalton, for the later editions of his *The Countrey Justice*, from Thomas Potts's *Discoverie of Witches* (1613) and Richard Barnard's *Guide to Grand–Jury Men* (1627). For aid in this identification, and for a transcript of these pages from the Harvard copy of Keble, the editor is indebted to Mr. David M. Matteson.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692

INTRODUCTION

From that April day when Mr. Lawson closed his account it was long before another eye–witness undertook a narrative. Yet great things were doing. At Salem accusation and hearing went on apace, and the jails grew crowded, awaiting the session of a court. On May 14 arrived from England President Increase Mather, bringing the new charter, and with him the new governor, Sir William Phips. What the governor thought of the emergency and how he dealt with it we shall presently learn from his own pen. But other pens were earlier busy. Perhaps the most notable was that of Thomas Brattle, who early in October addressed the following letter to some clerical correspondent. Who this divine may have been whose questions the letter answers is unknown: our document is not the original, but a copy without superscription, and from its contents we can infer no more than that he lived or had lived in the colony. But Thomas Brattle we know well. “He was,” wrote President Leverett of Harvard at his death, “a gentleman by his birth and education of the first order in this country.” Born at Boston, in 1658, of wealthy parentage, a graduate and a master of arts of Harvard, then a traveller and a student abroad, he won such distinction as a mathematician, and notably as an astronomer, as to be made a member of the Royal Society, and was in close touch with the world of scholars; but his career was that of an opulent and cultivated Boston merchant, and for twenty years, from 1693 to his death in 1713, he was treasurer of Harvard College. “In the Church,” said of him the *Boston News–Letter*, “he was known and valued for his Catholick Charity to all of the reformed Religion, but more especially his great Veneration for the Church of England, although his general and more constant communion was with the Nonconformists.” In other words, he was of the liberal party in religion and politics, an eminent opponent of the Puritan theocracy, and he did not escape the epithets “apostate” and “infidel.”

The letter here printed did not see print in his own day; but that the present copy exists suggests that it may have been meant to circulate in manuscript,⁴³ and it is not impossible that it was even written for that purpose. Yet if so, we may be sure it was used with discretion. It was his grand–nephew, the then well–known Thomas Brattle, Esq., of Cambridge, who late in the eighteenth century communicated it to the Massachusetts Historical Society.⁴⁴ From that manuscript copy it is here reprinted.

Notes

[43]. The suggestion is that of Sibley, in his sketch of Brattle's life (*Harvard Graduates*, II. 489–498), the best summary of what is known of him. That the extant copy is without superscription, and signed by initials only, may point to such a use. It must not be forgotten that it was written on the eve of the session of the General Court.

[44]. It was first published in that society's *Collections*, V. 61–79.

LETTER OF THOMAS BRATTLE, F. R. S., 1692

October 8, 1692.

Reverend Sir,

Your's I received the other day, and am very ready to serve you to my utmost. I should be very loath to bring myself into any snare by my freedom with you, and therefore hope that you will put the best construction on what I write, and secure me from such as would interpret my lines otherwise than they are designed. Obedience to lawfull authority I evermore accounted a great duty; and willingly I would not practise any thing that might thwart and contradict such a principle. Too many are ready to despise dominions, and speak evil of Dignities; and I am sure the mischiefs, which arise from a factious and rebellious spirit, are very sad and notorious; insomuch that I would sooner bite my finger's ends than willingly cast dirt on authority, or any way offer reproach to it: Far, therefore, be it from me, to have any thing to do with those men your letter mentions, whom you acknowledge to be men of a factious spirit, and never more in their element than when they are declaiming against men in public place, and contriving methods that tend to the disturbance of the common peace. I never accounted it a credit to my cause, to have the good liking of such men. *My son!* (says Solomon) *fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.* Prov. xxiv. 21. However, Sir, I never thought Judges infallible; but reckoned that they, as well as private men, might err; and that when they were guilty of erring, standers by, who possibly had not half their judgment, might, notwithstanding, be able to detect and behold their errors. And furthermore, when errors of that nature are thus detected and observed, I never thought it an interfering with dutifullness and subjection for one man to communicate his thoughts to another thereabout; and with modesty and due reverence to debate the premised failings; at least, when errors are fundamental, and palpably pervert the great end of authority and government: for as to circumstantial errors, I must confesse my principle is, that it is the duty of a good subject to cover with his silence a multitude of them. But I shall no longer detain you with my preface, but passe to some things you look for, and whether you expect such freedom from me, yea or no, yet shall you find, that I am very open to communicate my thoughts unto you, and in plain terms to tell you what my opinion is of the Salem proceedings.

First, as to the method which the Salem Justices do take in their examinations, it is truly this: A warrant being issued out to apprehend the persons that are charged and complained of by the afflicted children, (as they are called); said persons are brought before the Justices, (the afflicted being present.) The Justices ask the apprehended why they afflict those poor children; to which the apprehended answer, they do not afflict them. The Justices order the apprehended to look upon the said children, which accordingly they do; and at the time of that look, (I dare not say by that look, as the Salem Gentlemen do) the afflicted are cast into a fitt. The apprehended are then blinded, and ordered to touch the afflicted; and at that touch, tho' not by the touch, (as above) the afflicted ordinarily do come out of their fitts. The afflicted persons then declare and affirm, that the apprehended have afflicted them; upon which the apprehended persons, tho' of never so good repute, are forthwith committed to prison, on suspicion for witchcraft. One of the Salem Justices ⁴⁵ was pleased to tell Mr. Alden, ⁴⁶ (when upon his examination) that truly he had been acquainted with him these many years; and had always accounted him a good man; but indeed now he should be obliged to change his opinion. This, there are more than one or two did hear, and are ready to swear to, if not in so many words, yet as to its natural and plain meaning. He saw reason to change his opinion of Mr. Alden, because that at the time he touched the poor child, the poor child came out of her fitt. I suppose his Honour never made the experiment, whether there was not as much virtue in his own hand, as there was in Mr. Alden's, to cure by a touch. I know a man that will venture two to one with any Salemite whatever, that let the matter be duly managed, and the afflicted person shall come out of her fitt upon the touch of the most religious hand in Salem. It is worthily noted by some, that at some times the afflicted will not presently come out of their fitts upon the touch of the suspected; and then, forsooth, they are ordered by the Justices to grasp hard, harder yet, etc. insomuch that at length the afflicted come out of their fitts; and the reason is very

good, because that a touch of any hand, and processe of time, will work the cure; infallibly they will do it, as experience teaches.

I cannot but condemn this method of the Justices, of making this touch of the hand a rule to discover witchcraft; because I am fully persuaded that it is sorcery, and a superstitious method, and that which we have no rule for, either from reason or religion. The Salem Justices, at least some of them, do assert, that the cure of the afflicted persons is a natural effect of this touch; and they are so well instructed in the Cartesian philosophy, and in the doctrine of *effluvia*, that they undertake to give a demonstration how this touch does cure the afflicted persons; and the account they give of it is this; that by this touch, the venemous and malignant particles, that were ejected from the eye, do, by this means, return to the body whence they came, and so leave the afflicted persons pure and whole. I must confesse to you, that I am no small admirer of the Cartesian philosophy; but yet I have not so learned it. Certainly this is a strain that it will by no means allow of.

I would fain know of these Salem Gentlemen, but as yet could never know, how it comes about, that if these apprehended persons are witches, and, by a look of the eye, do cast the afflicted into their fitts by poisoning them, how it comes about, I say, that, by a look of their eye, they do not cast others into fitts, and poison others by their looks; and in particular, tender, fearfull women, who often are beheld by them, and as likely as any in the whole world to receive an ill impression from them. This Salem philosophy, some men may call the new philosophy; but I think it rather deserves the name of Salem superstition and sorcery, and it is not fitt to be named in a land of such light as New-England is. I think the matter might be better solved another way; but I shall not make any attempt that way, further than to say, that these afflicted children, (as they are called,) do hold correspondence with the devill, even in the esteem and account of the S. G.;⁴⁷ for when the black man, *i. e.* (say these gentlemen,) the Devill, does appear to them, they ask him many questions, and accordingly give information to the inquirer; and if this is not holding correspondence with the devill, and something worse, I know not what is.

But furthermore, I would fain know of these Salem Justices what need there is of further proof and evidence to convict and condemn these apprehended persons, than this look and touch, if so be they are so certain that this falling down and arising up, when there is a look and a touch, are natural effects of the said look and touch, and so a perfect demonstration and proof of witchcraft in those persons. What can the Jury or Judges desire more, to convict any man of witchcraft, than a plain demonstration, that the said man is a witch? Now if this look and touch, circumstanced as before, be a plain demonstration, (as their Philosophy teaches,) what need they seek for further evidences, when, after all, it can be but a demonstration?

But let this pass with the S. G. for never so plain and natural a demonstration; yet certain is it, that the reasonable part of the world, when acquainted herewith, will laugh at the demonstration, and conclude that the said S. G. are actually possessed, at least, with ignorance and folly.

I most admire⁴⁸ that Mr. N. N.⁴⁹ the Reverend Teacher at Salem, who was educated at the School of Knowledge, and is certainly a learned, a charitable, and a good man, though all the devils in Hell, and all the possessed girls in Salem, should say to the contrary; at him, (I say,) I do most admire; that he should cry up the above mentioned philosophy after the manner that he does. I can assure you, that I can bring you more than two, or twice two, (very credible persons) that will affirm, that they have heard him vindicate the above mentioned demonstration as very reasonable.

Secondly, with respect to the confessours, (as they are improperly called,) or such as confesse themselves to be witches, (the second thing you inquire into in your letter), there are now about fifty of them in Prison; many of which I have again and again seen and heard; and I cannot but tell you, that my faith is strong concerning them, that they are deluded, imposed upon, and under the influence of some evill spirit; and therefore unfitt to be evidences either against themselves, or any one else. I now speak of one sort of them, and of others afterward.

These confessours, (as they are called,) do very often contradict themselves, as inconsistently as is usual for any crazed, distempered person to do. This the S. G. do see and take notice of; and even the Judges themselves have, at some times, taken these confessours in flat lyes, or contradictions, even in the Courts; By reason of which, one would have thought, that the Judges would have frowned upon the said confessours, discarded them, and not minded one tittle of any thing that they said; but instead thereof, (as sure as we are men,) the Judges vindicate these confessours, and salve their contradictions, by proclaiming, that the Devill takes away their memory, and imposes upon their brain. If this reflects any where, I am very sorry for it: I can but assure you, that, upon the word of an honest man, it is truth, and that I can bring you many credible persons to witnesse it, who

have been eye and ear witnesses to these things.

These confessours then, at least some of them, even in the Judges' own account, are under the influence of the Devill; and the brain of these Confessours is imposed upon by the Devill, even in the Judges' account. But now, if, in the Judges' account, these confessours are under the influence of the Devill, and their brains are affected and imposed upon by the Devill, so that they are not their own men, why then should these Judges, or any other men, make such account of, and set so much by, the words of these Confessours, as they do? In short, I argue thus:

If the Devill does actually take away the memory of them at some times, certainly the Devill, at other times, may very reasonably be thought to affect their fancies, and to represent false ideas to their imagination. But now, if it be thus granted, that the Devill is able to represent false ideas (to speak vulgarly) to the imaginations of the confessours, what man of sense will regard the confessions, or any of the words, of these confessours?

The great cry of many of our neighbours now is, What, will you not believe the confessours? Will you not believe men and women who confesse that they have signed to the Devill's book? that they were baptized by the Devill; and that they were at the mock-sacrament once and again? What! will you not believe that this is witchcraft, and that such and such men are witches, altho' the confessours do own and assert it?

Thus, I say, many of our good neighbours do argue; but methinks they might soon be convinced that there is nothing at all in all these their arguings, if they would but duly consider of the premises.

In the mean time, I think we must rest satisfied in it, and be thankfull to God for it, that all men are not thus bereft of their senses; but that we have here and there considerate and thinking men, who will not thus be imposed upon, and abused, by the subtle endeavours of the crafty one.

In the next place, I proceed to the form of their inditements, and the Trials thereupon.

The Inditement runs for sorcery and witchcraft, acted upon the body of such an one, (say M. Warren), at such a particular time, (say April 14, '92,) and at divers other times before and after, whereby the said M. W. is wasted and consumed, pined, etc.

Now for the proof of the said sorcery and witchcraft, the prisoner at the bar pleading not guilty.

1. The afflicted persons are brought into Court; and after much patience and pains taken with them, do take their oaths, that the prisoner at the bar did afflict them: And here I think it very observable, that often, when the afflicted do mean and intend only the appearance and shape of such an one, (say G. Proctour) yet they positively swear that G. Proctour did afflict them; and they have been allowed so to do; as tho' there was no real difference between G. Proctour and the shape of G. Proctour. This, methinks, may readily prove a stumbling block to the Jury, lead them into a very fundamental error, and occasion innocent blood, yea the innocentest blood imaginable, to be in great danger. Whom it belongs unto, to be eyes unto the blind, and to remove such stumbling blocks, I know full well; and yet you and every one else, do know as well as I who do not. ⁵⁰

2. The confessours do declare what they know of the said prisoner; and some of the confessours are allowed to give their oaths; a thing which I believe was never heard of in this world; that such as confesse themselves to be witches, to have renounced God and Christ, and all that is sacred, should yet be allowed and ordered to swear by the name of the great God! This indeed seemeth to me to be a grosse taking of God's name in vain. I know the S. G. do say, that there is hopes that the said Confessours have repented; I shall only say, that if they have repented, it is well for themselves; but if they have not, it is very ill for you know who. But then,

3. Whoever can be an evidence against the prisoner at the bar is ordered to come into Court; and here it scarce ever fails but that evidences, of one nature and another, are brought in, tho', I think, all of them altogether aliene to the matter of inditement; for they none of them do respect witchcraft upon the bodies of the afflicted, which is the alone matter of charge in the inditement.

4. They are searched by a Jury; and as to some of them, the Jury brought in, that [on] such or such a place there was a preternatural excrescence. And I wonder what person there is, whether man or woman, of whom it cannot be said but that, in some part of their body or other, there is a preternatural excrescence. The term is a very general and inclusive term.

Some of the S. G. are very forward to censure and condemn the poor prisoner at the bar, because he sheds no tears: but such betray great ignorance in the nature of passion, and as great heedlesnesse as to common passages of a man's life. Some there are who never shed tears; others there are that ordinarily shed tears upon light occasions, and yet for their lives cannot shed a tear when the deepest sorrow is upon their hearts; and who is there that knows not these things? Who knows not that an ecstasie of Joy will sometimes fetch teares, when as the quite

contrary passion will shutt them close up? Why then should any be so silly and foolish as to take an argument from this appearance? But this is by the by. In short, the prisoner at the bar is indited for sorcery and witchcraft acted upon the bodies of the afflicted. Now, for the proof of this, I reckon that the only pertinent evidences brought in are the evidences of the said afflicted.

It is true, that over and above the evidences of the afflicted persons, there are many evidences brought in, against the prisoner at the bar; either that he was at a witch meeting, or that he performed things which could not be done by an ordinary natural power; or that she sold butter to a saylor, which proving bad at sea, and the seamen exclaiming against her, she appeared, and soon after there was a storm, or the like. But what if there were ten thousand evidences of this nature; how do they prove the matter of inditement! And if they do not reach the matter of inditement, then I think it is clear, that the prisoner at the bar is brought in guilty, and condemned, merely from the evidences of the afflicted persons.

The S. G. will by no means allow, that any are brought in guilty, and condemned, by virtue of spectre Evidence, (as it is called,) *i. e.* the evidence of these afflicted persons, who are said to have spectral eyes; but whether it is not purely by virtue of these spectre evidences, that these persons are found guilty, (considering what before has been said,) I leave you, and any man of sense, to judge and determine. When any man is indited for murdering the person of A. B. and all the direct evidence be, that the said man pistoled the shadow of the said A. B. tho' there be never so many evidences that the said person murdered C. D., E. F. and ten more persons, yet all this will not amount to a legal proof, that he murdered A. B.; and upon that inditement, the person cannot be legally brought in guilty of the said inditement; it must be upon this supposition, that the evidence of a man's pistolling the shadow of A. B. is a legal evidence to prove that the said man did murder the person of A. B. Now no man will be so much out of his witts as to make this a legal evidence; and yet this seems to be our case; and how to apply it is very easy and obvious.

As to the late executions, ⁵¹ I shall only tell you, that in the opinion of many unprejudiced, considerate and considerable spectatours, some of the condemned went out of the world not only with as great protestations, but also with as good shews of innocency, as men could do.

They protested their innocency as in the presence of the great God, whom forthwith they were to appear before: they wished, and declared their wish, that their blood might be the last innocent blood shed upon that account. With great affection ⁵² they intreated Mr. C. M. ⁵³ to pray with them: they prayed that God would discover what witchcrafts were among us; they forgave their accusers; they spake without reflection on Jury and Judges, for bringing them in guilty, and condemning them: they prayed earnestly for pardon for all other sins, and for an interest in the pretious blood of our dear Redeemer; and seemed to be very sincere, upright, and sensible of their circumstances on all accounts; especially Proctor and Willard, whose whole management of themselves, from the Goal to the Gallows, and whilst at the Gallows, was very affecting and melting to the hearts of some considerable Spectatours, whom I could mention to you: — but they are executed, and so I leave them.

Many things I cannot but admire and wonder at, an account of which I shall here send you.

And 1. I do admire that some particular persons, and particularly Mrs. Thatcher of Boston, ⁵⁴ should be much complained of by the afflicted persons, and yet that the Justices should never issue out their warrants to apprehend them, when as upon the same account they issue out their warrants for the apprehending and imprisoning many others.

This occasions much discourse and many hot words, and is a very great scandal and stumbling block to many good people; certainly distributive Justice should have its course, without respect to persons; and altho' the said Mrs. Thatcher be mother in law to Mr. Corwin, ⁵⁵ who is one of the Justices and Judges, yet if Justice and conscience do oblige them to apprehend others on the account of the afflicted their complaints, I cannot see how, without injustice and violence to conscience, Mrs. Thatcher can escape, when it is well known how much she is, and has been, complained of.

2. I cannot but admire that Mr. H. U. ⁵⁶ (whom we all think innocent,) should yet be apprehended on this account, and ordered to prison, by a mittimus under Mr. Lynd's ⁵⁷ his hand, and yet that he should be suffered, for above a fortnight, to be in a private house; and after that, to quitt the house, the town, and the Province, and yet that authority should not take effectual notice of it. Methinks that same Justice, that actually imprisoned others, and refused bail for them on any terms, should not be satisfied without actually imprisoning Mr. U. and refusing bail for him, when his case is known to be the very same with the case of those others.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

If he may be suffered to go away, why may not others? If others may not be suffered to go, how in Justice can he be allowed herein?

3. If our Justices do think that Mrs. C. ⁵⁸ Mr. E. ⁵⁹ and hiswife, Mr. A. ⁶⁰ and others, were capital offenders, and justly imprisoned on a capital account, I do admire that the said Justices should hear of their escape from prison, and where they are gone and entertained, and yet not send forthwith to the said places, ⁶¹ for the surrendering of them, that Justice might be done them. In other Capitalls ⁶² this has been practised; why then is it not practised in this case, if really judged to be so heinous as is made for?

4. I cannot but admire, that any should go with their distempered friends and relations to the afflicted children, to know what their distempered friends ayl; whether they are not bewitched; who it is that afflicts them, and the like. It is true, I know no reason why these afflicted may not be consulted as well as any other, if so be that it was only their natural and ordinary knowledge that was had recourse to: but it is not on this notion that these afflicted children are sought unto; but as they have a supernatural knowledge; a knowledge which they obtain by their holding correspondence with spectres or evill spirits, as they themselves grant. This consulting of these afflicted children, as abovesaid, seems to me to be a very grosse evill, a real abomination, not fitt to be known in N.E. ⁶³ and yet is a thing practised, not only by Tom and John — I mean the ruder and more ignorant sort — but by many who professe high, and passe among us for some of the better sort. This is that which aggravates the evil, and makes it heinous and tremendous; and yet this is not the worst of it, for, as sure as I now write to you, even some of our civil leaders, and spiritual teachers, who, (I think,) should punish and preach down such sorcery and wickedness, do yet allow of, encourage, yea, and practise this very abomination.

I know there are several worthy Gentlemen in Salem, who account this practise as an abomination, have trembled to see the methods of this nature which others have used, and have declared themselves to think the practise to be very evill and corrupt; but all avails little with the abettours of the said practice.

A person from Boston, of no small note, carried up his child to Salem, (near 20 miles,) on purpose that he might consult the afflicted about his child; which accordingly he did; and the afflicted told him, that his child was afflicted by Mrs. Cary and Mrs. Obinson. ⁶⁴ The man returned to Boston, and went forthwith to the Justices for a warrant to seise the said Obinson, (the said Cary being out of the way); but the Boston Justices saw reason to deny a warrant. The Rev. Mr. I. M. ⁶⁵ of Boston, took occasion severely to reprove the said man; asking him whether there was not a God in Boston, that he should go to the Devill in Salem for advice; warning him very seriously against such naughty practices; which, I hope, proved to the conviction and good of the said person; if not, his blood will be upon his own head.

This consulting of these afflicted children, about their sick, was the unhappy begining of the unhappy troubles at poor Andover: Horse and man were sent up to Salem Village, from the said Andover, for some of the said afflicted; and more than one or two of them were carried down to see Ballard'swife, ⁶⁶ and to tell who it was that did afflict her. I understand that the said B. took advice before he took this method; but what pity was it, that he should meet with, and hearken to such bad Counsellours? Poor Andover does now rue the day that ever the said afflicted went among them; they lament their folly, and are an object of great pity and commiseration. Capt. B. ⁶⁷ and Mr. St. ⁶⁸ are complained of by the afflicted, have left the town, and do abscond. Deacon Fry's wife, Capt'n Osgood's wife, and some others, remarkably pious and good people in repute, are apprehended and imprisoned; and that that is more admirable, the forementioned women are become a kind of confessours, being first brought thereto by the urgings and arguings of their good husbands, who, having taken up that corrupt and highly pernicious opinion, that whoever were accused by the afflicted, were guilty, did break charity with their dear wives, upon their being accused, and urge them to confesse their guilt; which so far prevailed with them as to make them say, they were afraid of their being in the snare of the Devill; and which, through the rude and barbarous methods* that were afterwards used at Salem, issued in somewhat plainer degrees of confession, and was attended with imprisonment. The good Deacon and Captain are now sensible of the error they were in; do grieve and mourn bitterly, that they should break their charity with their wives, and urge them to confesse themselves witches. They now see and acknowledge their rashnesse and uncharitableness, and are very fitt objects for the pity and prayers of every good Christian. Now I am writing concerning Andover, I cannot omit the opportunity of sending you this information; that Whereas there is a report spread abroad the country, how that they were much addicted to Sorcery in the said town, and that there were fourty men in it that could raise the Devill as well as any astrologer, and the like; after the best search that I can make into it, it proves a mere slander, and a very

unrighteous imputation.

The Rev'd Elders of the said place were much surprized upon their hearing of the said Report, and faithfully made inquiry about it; but the whole of naughtiness, that they could discover and find out, was only this, that two or three girls had foolishly made use of the sieve and scissors,⁷⁰ as children have done in other towns. This method of the girls I do not Justifye in any measure; but yet I think it very hard and unreasonable, that a town should lye under the blemish and scandal of sorceryes and conjuration, merely for the inconsiderate practices of two or three girls in the said town.

5. I cannot but admire that the Justices, whom I think to be well-meaning men, should so far give ear to the Devill, as merely upon his authority to issue out their warrants, and apprehend people. Liberty was evermore accounted the great priviledge of an Englishman; but certainly, if the Devill will be heard against us, and his testimony taken, to the siezing and apprehending of us, our liberty vanishes, and we are fools if we boast of our liberty. Now, that the Justices have thus far given ear to the Devill, I think may be mathematically demonstrated to any man of common sense: And for the demonstration and proof hereof, I desire, only, that these two things may be duly considered, *viz.*

1. That several persons have been apprehended purely upon the complaints of these afflicted, to whom the afflicted were perfect strangers, and had not the least knowledge of imaginable, before they were apprehended.

2. That the afflicted do own and assert, and the Justices do grant, that the Devill does inform and tell the afflicted the names of those persons that are thus unknown unto them. Now these two things being duly considered, I think it will appear evident to any one, that the Devill's information is the fundamental testimony that is gone upon in the apprehending of the aforesaid people.

If I believe such or such an assertion as comes immediately from the Minister of God in the pulpitt, because it is the word of the everliving God, I build my faith on God's testimony: and if I practise upon it, this my practice is properly built on the word of God: even so in the case before us,

If I believe the afflicted persons as informed by the Devill, and act thereupon, this my act may properly be said to be grounded upon the testimony or information of the Devill. And now, if things are thus, I think it ought to be for a lamentation to you and me, and all such as would be accounted good Christians.

If any should see the force of this argument, and upon it say, (as I heard a wise and good Judge once propose,) that they know not but that God almighty, or a good spirit, does give this information to these afflicted persons; I make answer thereto, and say, that it is most certain that it is neither almighty God, nor yet any good Spirit, that gives this information; and my Reason is good, because God is a God of truth; and the good Spirits will not lye; whereas these informations have several times proved false, when the accused were brought before the afflicted.

6. I cannot but admire that these afflicted persons should be so much countenanced and encouraged in their accusations as they are: I often think of the Groton woman, that was afflicted, an account of which we have in print, and is a most certain truth, not to be doubted of.⁷¹ I shall only say, that there was as much ground, in the hour of it, to countenance the said Groton woman, and to apprehend and imprison, on her accusations, as there is now to countenance these afflicted persons, and to apprehend and imprison on their accusations. But furthermore, it is worthy of our deepest consideration, that in the conclusion, (after multitudes have been imprisoned, and many have been put to death,) these afflicted persons should own that all was a mere fancy and delusion of the Devill's, as the Groton woman did own and acknowledge with respect to herself; if, I say, in after times, this be acknowledged by them, how can the Justices, Judges, or any else concerned in these matters, look back upon these things without the greatest of sorrow and grief imaginable? I confesse to you, it makes me tremble when I seriously consider of this thing. I have heard that the chief judge⁷² has expressed himself very hardly of the accused woman at Groton, as tho' he believed her to be a witch to this day; but by such as knew the said woman, this is judged a very uncharitable opinion of the said Judge, and I do not understand that any are proselyted thereto.

Rev'd Sir, these things I cannot but admire and wonder at. Now, if so be it is the effect of my dullness that I thus admire, I hope you will pity, not censure me: but if, on the contrary, these things are just matter of admiration, I know that you will join with me in expressing your admiration hereat.

The chief Judge is very zealous in these proceedings, and says, he is very clear as to all that hath as yet been acted by this Court, and, as far as ever I could perceive, is very impatient in hearing any thing that looks another way. I very highly honour and reverence the wisdome and integrity of the said Judge, and hope that this matter

shall not diminish my veneration for his honour; however, I cannot but say, my great fear is, that wisdom and counsel are withheld from his honour as to this matter, which yet I look upon not so much as a Judgment to his honour as to this poor land.

But altho' the Chief Judge, and some of the other Judges, be very zealous in these proceedings, yet this you may take for a truth, that there are several about the Bay, men for understanding, Judgment, and Piety, inferior to few, (if any,) in N. E. that do utterly condemn the said proceedings, and do freely deliver their Judgment in the case to be this, *viz.* that these methods will utterly ruin and undo poor N. E. I shall nominate some of these to you, *viz.* The hon'ble Simon Bradstreet, Esq. (our late Governor); the hon'ble Thomas Danforth, Esq. (our late Deputy Governor); the Rev'd Mr. Increase Mather, and the Rev'd Mr. Samuel Willard. Major N. Saltonstall, Esq. who was one of the Judges, has left the Court, and is very much dissatisfied with the proceedings of it. Excepting Mr. Hale, Mr. Noyes, and Mr. Parris, the Rev'd Elders, almost throughout the whole Country, are very much dissatisfied. Several of the late Justices, *viz.* Thomas Graves, Esq. N. Byfield, Esq. Francis Foxcroft, Esq. are much dissatisfied; also several of the present Justices; and in particular, some of the Boston Justices, were resolved rather to throw up their commissions than be active in disturbing the liberty of their Majesties' subjects, merely on the accusations of these afflicted, possessed children.

Finally; the principal Gentlemen in Boston, and thereabout, are generally agreed that irregular and dangerous methods have been taken as to these matters.

Sir, I would not willingly lead you into any error, and therefore would desire you to note,

1. That when I call these afflicted "the afflicted children," I would not be understood as though I meant, that all that are afflicted are *children*: there are several young men and women that are afflicted, as well as children: but this term has most prevailed among us, because of the younger sort that were first afflicted, and therefore I make use of it.

2. That when I speak of the Salem Gentlemen, I would not be understood as tho' I meant every Individual Gentleman in Salem; nor yet as tho' I meant, that there were no men but in Salem that run upon these notions: some term they must have, and this seems not improper, because in Salem this sort of Gentlemen does most abound.

3. That other Justices in the Country, besides the Salem Justices, have issued out their warrants, and imprisoned, on the accusations of the afflicted as aforesaid; and therefore, when I speak of the Salem Justices, I do not mean them exclusively.

4. That as to the above mentioned Judges, that are commissioned for this Court at Salem, five of them do belong to Suffolk county; four of which five do belong to Boston; ⁷³ and therefore I see no reason why Boston should talk of Salem, as tho' their own Judges had had no hand in these proceedings at Salem.

Nineteen persons have now been executed, and one pressed to death for a mute: seven more are condemned; two of which are reprieved, because they pretend their being with child; one, *viz.* Mrs. Bradbury of Salisbury, from the intercession of some friends; and two or three more, because they are confessours. ⁷⁴

The Court is adjourned to the first Tuesday in November, then to be kept at Salem; between this and then will be [the] great assembly, ⁷⁵ and this matter will be a peculiar matter of their agitation. I think it is matter of earnest supplication and prayer to almighty God, that he would afford his gracious presence to the said assembly, and direct them aright in this weighty matter. Our hopes are here; and if, at this juncture, God does not graciously appear for us, I think we may conclude that N. E. is undone and undone.

I am very sensible, that it is irksome and disagreeable to go back, when a man's doing so is an implication that he has been walking in a wrong path: however, nothing is more honourable than, upon due conviction, to retract and undo, (so far as may be,) what has been amiss and irregular.

I would hope that, in the conclusion, both the Judges and Justices will see and acknowledge that such were their best friends and advisers as dissuaded from the methods which they have taken, tho' hitherto they have been angry with them, and apt to speak very hardly of them.

I cannot but highly applaud, and think it our duty to be very thankful, for the endeavours of several Elders, ⁷⁶ whose lips, (I think,) should preserve knowledge, and whose counsel should, I think, have been more regarded, in a case of this nature, than as yet it has been: in particular, I cannot but think very honourably of the endeavours of a Rev'd person in Boston, ⁷⁷ whose good affection to his country in general, and spiritual relation to three of the Judges in particular, has made him very solicitous and industrious in this matter; and I am fully persuaded, that

had his notions and proposals been hearkened to, and followed, when these troubles were in their birth, in an ordinary way, they would never have grown unto that height which now they have. He has as yet mett with little but unkindness, abuse, and reproach from many men; but I trust that, in after times, his wisdom and service will find a more universal acknowledgment; and if not, his reward is with the Lord.

Two or three things I should have hinted to you before, but they slipped my thoughts in their proper place.

Many of these afflicted persons, who have scores of strange fitts in a day, yet in the intervals of time are hale and hearty, robust and lusty, as tho' nothing had afflicted them. I Remember that when the chief Judge gave the first Jury their charge, he told them, that they were not to mind whether the bodies of the said afflicted were really pined and consumed, as was expressed in the inditement; but whether the said afflicted did not suffer from the accused such afflictions as naturally *tended* to their being pined and consumed, wasted, etc. This, (said he,) is a pining and consuming in the sense of the law. I add not.

Furthermore: These afflicted persons do say, and often have declared it, that they can see Spectres when their eyes are shutt, as well as when they are open. This one thing I evermore accounted as very observable, and that which might serve as a good key to unlock the nature of these mysterious troubles, if duly improved by us. Can they see Spectres when their eyes are shutt? I am sure they lye, at least speak falsely, if they say so; for the thing, in nature, is an utter impossibility. It is true, they may strongly fancye, or have things represented to their imagination, when their eyes are shutt; and I think this is all which ought to be allowed to these blind, nonsensical girls; and if our officers and Courts have apprehended, imprisoned, condemned, and executed our guiltlesse neighbours, certainly our error is great, and we shall rue it in the conclusion. There are two or three other things that I have observed in and by these afflicted persons, which make me strongly suspect that the Devill imposes upon their brains, and deludes their fancye and imagination; and that the Devill's book (which they say has been offered them) is a mere fancye of theirs, and no reality: That the witches' meeting, the Devill's Baptism, and mock sacraments, which they oft speak of, are nothing else but the effect of their fancye, depraved and deluded by the Devill, and not a Reality to be regarded or minded by any wise man. And whereas the Confessours have owned and asserted the said meetings, the said Baptism, and mock Sacrament, (which the S. G. and some others, make much account of) I am very apt to think, that, did you know the circumstances of the said Confessours, you would not be swayed thereby, any otherwise than to be confirmed, that all is perfect Devilism, and an Hellish design to ruine and destroy this poor land: For whereas there are of the said Confessours 55 in number, some of them are known to be distracted, crazed women, something of which you may see by a petition lately offered to the chief Judge, a copy whereof I may now send you; ⁷⁸ others of them denyed their guilt, and maintained their innocency for above eighteen hours, after most violent, distracting, and draggoning ⁷⁹ methods had been used with them, to make them confesse. Such methods they were, that more than one of the said confessours did since tell many, with teares in their eyes, that they thought their very lives would have gone out of their bodies; and wished that they might have been cast into the lowest dungeon, rather than be tortured with such repeated buzzings and chuckings and unreasonable urgings as they were treated withal.

They soon recanted their confessions, acknowledging, with sorrow and grief, that it was an hour of great temptation with them; and I am very apt to think, that as for five or six of the said confessours, if they are not very good Christian women, it will be no easy matter to find so many good Christian women in N. E. But, finally, as to about thirty of these fiftyfive Confessours, they are possessed (I reckon) with the Devill, and afflicted as the children are, and therefore not fitt to be regarded as to any thing they say of themselves or others. And whereas the S. G. do say that these confessours made their Confessions before they were afflicted, it is absolutely contrary to universal experience, as far as ever I could understand. It is true, that some of these have made their confession before they had their falling, tumbling fitts, but yet not absolutely before they had any fitts and marks of possession, for (as the S. G. know full well) when these persons were about first confessing, their mouths would be stopped, and their throats affected, as tho' there was danger of strangling, and afterward (it is true) came their tumbling fitts. So that, I say, the confessions of these persons were in the beginning of their fitts, and not truly before their fitts, as the S. G. would make us believe.

Thus, (Sir,) I have given you as full a narrative of these matters as readily occurs to my mind, and I think every word of it is matter of fact; the several glosses and descants whereupon, by way of Reasoning, I refer to your Judgment, whether to approve or disapprove.

What will be the issue of these troubles, God only knows; I am afraid that ages will not wear off that reproach

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

and those stains which these things will leave behind them upon our land. I pray God pity us, Humble us, Forgive us, and appear mercifully for us in this our mount of distress: Herewith I conclude, and subscribe myself,
Reverend Sir, your real friend and humble servant,

T. B.

Notes

[45]. Bartholomew Gedney.

[46]. Captain John Alden, of Boston, son of the John Alden of the *Mayflower* and of Longfellow's poem. For Alden's own account of this episode see pp. 353–355, below.

[47]. *I. e.*, Salem gentlemen — and so hereafter.

[48]. Marvel, am surprised.

[49]. Nicholas Noyes.

[50]. He means, of course, the judges.

[51]. The names presently mentioned would seem to show that he has especially in mind the executions of August 19, and his words suggest that he was present on this occasion. Those then executed, besides John Proctor and John Willard, were the Rev. George Burroughs, George Jacobs, and Martha Carrier. For two other accounts of their death, both perhaps by eye-witnesses, see below, pp. 360–364. But there had been executions also on June 10, July 19, and September 22.

[52]. Emotion, earnestness.

[53]. Cotton Mather.

[54]. Mrs. Margaret Thacher (1625–1694), widow of the Rev. Thomas Thacher (d. 1678), first minister of the Old South Church. She was the only child of the wealthy Boston merchant Henry Webb, and had been left by a first marriage the widow of Jacob Sheafe, then the richest man in Boston.

[55]. Jonathan Corwin, of Salem.

[56]. Hezekiah Usher (1639–1697), a prominent Boston merchant.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[57]. Doubtless Joseph Lynde (1637–1727), of Charlestown — since June a member of the Council under the new Mather charter.

[58]. Mrs. Nathaniel Cary, of Charlestown. See pp. 349–352.

[59]. Philip English, of Salem. See p. 371 and note 1.

[60]. John Alden, of Boston. See p. 170, note 2.

[61]. *I. e.*, to New York.

[62]. *I. e.*, capital cases.

[63]. New England.

[64]. Mrs. Obinson was probably the wife of William Obinson, or Obbinson, a Boston tanner.

[65]. Increase Mather.

[66]. Mrs. Joseph Ballard. See below, pp. 371–372; and, for more as to this Andover episode, pp. 241–244, 418–420. The records of the Andover cases are printed by Woodward in his *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (Roxbury, 1864), and there are chapters on the episode in Abiel Abbot's *History of Andover* (Andover, 1829) and Sarah Loring Bailey's *Historical Sketches of Andover* (Boston, 1880).

[67]. Dudley Bradstreet. See p. 372.

[68]. Stevens? The conjecture is Mrs. Bailey's (*Historical Sketches of Andover*, 228).

[*] You may possibly think that my terms are too severe; but should I tell you what a kind of Blade was employed in bringing these women to their confession; what methods from damnation were taken; with what violence urged; how unseasonably they were kept up; what buzzings and chuckings of the hand were used, and the like, I am sure that you would call them, (as I do), rude and barbarous methods. [Marginal note in the original.]

[69]. What Brattle may mean by “methods from *damnation*” is a puzzle to the editor. Perhaps “damnation” is only a euphemism for “hell.” Possibly he thinks of that clause in the Massachusetts laws (*Body of Liberties of 1641*, art. 45; *Lawes and Libertyes*, 1660, p. 67; 1672, p. 129) which permits a prisoner “in some capital case, when he is first fully convicted by clear and sufficient evidence to be guilty,” to be tortured for the discovery of

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

his accomplices, yet not with such tortures as are barbarous and inhuman. What he means by “buzzings and chuckings of the hand,” *i. e.*, whisperings and wheedlings, will grow clear if one turn to pp. 374–376, and read what these Andover women themselves tell of the methods used with them.

[70]. A mode of divination much in vogue in New England as in Old. Called also “sieve and shears” or “riddle and shears”: the learned name is *coscinomancy*.

[71]. “The Groton woman” was Elizabeth Knapp, and the “account in print” probably that of Increase Mather reprinted above, pp. 21–23, though possibly Willard's sermon (see p. 21, note 4) is meant.

[72]. William Stoughton, the new lieutenant–governor. He had been educated for the ministry in the Harvard class of 1650, and went to England, where he preached for some ten years, receiving meanwhile at Oxford his mastership in arts and the honor of a fellowship; but, ejected at the Restoration, he returned to New England, and there, though counted an able preacher, declined a settlement and drifted into public life. He seems to have set store by his learning in theology, and to the end to have maintained the Devil's impotence to personate by a spectre any but a guilty witch. As to his career see the careful study by Sibley, in his *Harvard Graduates* (I. 194–208).

[73]. See p. 355. Richards, Sargent, Sewall, Winthrop, were of Boston; Stoughton of Dorchester, close by. Only Gedney was of Salem, till Corwin was called in to replace Saltonstall (who was of Haverhill).

[74]. As to all these see below, pp. 360–374.

[75]. The General Court. It convened on October 12. Its attitude as to the Salem trials is thus tersely intimated in Judge Sewall's diary: “Oct. 26, 1692. A Bill is sent in about calling a Fast and Convocation of Ministers, that [we] may be led in the right way as to the Witchcrafts. The season and manner of doing it, is such, that the Court of Oyer and Terminer count themselves thereby dismissed. 29 Nos and 33 yeas to the Bill.” The bill itself has been printed (from the Mass. Archives, XI. 70) by G. H. Moore, in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society (n. s., II. 172); and that those of Brattle's mind had not relied alone on prayer to influence the assembly may be seen by the petition printed in the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXVII. 55, and in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society, n. s., V. 246 (see also *Proceedings*, n. s., II. 171).

[76]. The ministers, now practically the only “elders.”

[77]. It has been generally assumed, and with reason, that this “Rev'd person” was the Rev. Samuel Willard. Three of the judges (Sargent, Sewall, and Winthrop) were members of his church (the Old South), and, unless one suspect Brattle of intent to mislead, “spiritual relation” must here mean a pastor's. The phrase “good affection to the country” suggests, too, one who, like Willard, shared Brattle's political views. We have seen already (p. 23) what caution in 1671 he used in the case of Elizabeth Knapp; and, if the “notions and proposals” meant by Brattle are now lost, we have from his pen what puts his position in 1692 beyond all question — a little dialogue, published anonymously while the troubles were at their height, which with fairness and courtesy, but with striking clearness and boldness, argues against the iniquity of the procedure. Its title runs: *Some Miscellany Observations on our Present Debates respecting Witchcrafts, in a Dialogue between S. and B. By P. E. and J. A. Philadelphia,*

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Printed by William Bradford, for Hezekiah Usher. 1692. “S.” and “B.” undoubtedly mean Salem and Boston. Philadelphia and Bradford probably had as little to do with the book (the type is not Bradford's) as did Hezekiah Usher, P. E. (Philip English), or J. A. (John Alden), three notable fugitives from Salem justice. All alike were merely remote enough to bear in safety the imputation of such a book. John Alden and Hezekiah Usher were members of Willard's church; and Philip English and his wife he visited while in custody at Boston, and probably was a party to their escape. At least the Rev. William Bentley, of Salem, recording in his diary, May 21, 1793, what their great-granddaughter Susanna Hathorne had told him, relates that Willard and Moody “visited them and invited them to the public worship on the day before they were to return to Salem for trial. Their text was that they that are persecuted in one city, let them flee to another. After Meeting the Ministers visited them at the Gaol, and asked them whether they took notice of the discourse, and told them their danger and urged them to escape since so many had suffered. Mr. English replied, ‘God will not permit them to touch me.’ Mrs. English said: ‘Do you not think the sufferers innocent?’ He (Moody) said ‘Yes.’ She then added, ‘Why may we not suffer also?’ The Ministers then told him if he would not carry his wife away they would.” (Quoted by R. D. Paine, in his *Ships and Sailors of Old Salem*, from Bentley's privately printed diary, which seems to give the tale in a more primitive form than his letter to Alden, in the Mass. Hist. Soc., *Collections*, X.) “It ought never to be forgotten,” said Willard's colleague, Ebenezer Pemberton, preaching in 1707 his funeral sermon, “with what Prudence, Courage and Zeal he appeared for the Good of this People in that Dark and Mysterious Season when we were assaulted from the Invisible World. And how singularly Instrumental he was in discovering the Cheats and Delusions of Satan, which did threaten to stain our Land with Blood and to deluge it with all manner of Woes.” True, Judge Sewall, mentioning in 1696 (*Diary*, I. 433) Willard's sermon at the day of public prayer, says that he spake smartly “at last” about the Salem witchcraft; but “at last” here means “at the end,” “as the peroration of his sermon.” It is clearly Willard whom Cotton Mather has especially in mind when in his life of Phips and again in his *Magnalia* (bk. II., p. 62) he sets forth the views of those “who from the beginning were very much dissatisfied with these proceedings,” having “already known of one at the Town of Groton” who had falsely accused a neighbor. The strange suggestion of W. F. Poole that Brattle here means Cotton Mather himself, is adequately answered by Upham, in his *Salem Witchcraft and Cotton Mather*.

[78]. The paper meant is doubtless that printed at pp. 374–375, below.

[79]. The attempt of Louis XIV. to force his Protestant subjects to abandon their faith by turning loose his dragoons upon them had already furnished the English language with this new word.

LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS TO THE HOME GOVERNMENT, 1692–1693

INTRODUCTION

Sir William Phips, who arrived in May as the royal governor under the new charter, was no stranger to New England. Born in 1651 at a hamlet on the Maine coast, just beyond the Kennebec, where his father, a Bristol gunsmith, had become a settler, he had early turned from sheep-herding to ship-carpentry, and then coming up to Boston, where at twenty-two he first learned to read and write, he had by thrift become the master of a vessel and had found a path to fortune in the rescue of lost treasure from Spanish galleons sunken in West Indian waters. These ventures had brought him into partnership with some of the most powerful of English nobles, and even with royalty itself, and his sturdy honesty (or perhaps a wise use of his wealth) won him from the King in 1687 the honor of knighthood and in 1688 appointment as high sheriff of New England. The hostility of Governor Andros brought the sheriffship to nothing; but the English revolution overturned Andros in 1689, and the emancipated colonies made Sir William head of the expedition that conquered Nova Scotia, and then sent him with another against Quebec. Meanwhile President Increase Mather was laboring in England, as the agent of Massachusetts, for the restoration of the ancient charter; and when Sir William (who during his absence had, as his son's convert, become a member of his church) turned up there too, and just in time to support him against the other New England commissioners in accepting from the King what could be got, though not what could be wished, he was the natural nominee for the new governorship.

But the new governor was little trained for such an emergency as awaited him in New England. What more natural in such a crisis, which to the thought of that day seemed to need the divine more than the statesman, than to turn for counsel to his pastor and patron, or to his colleague the new lieutenant-governor,⁸⁰ who had enjoyed precisely that training in theology which seemed now his own chief lack? Stoughton was made chief justice of a special court created by the governor to try the witch-cases,⁸¹ and during the latter's repeated absences⁸² at the frontier became the acting governor. The ministers of Boston were "consulted by his Excellency and the Honourable Council" as to the conduct of the trials. Their "Return," bearing date of June 15, was drawn by Cotton Mather;⁸³ and it was perhaps now that that divine, who had early (May 31) furnished the judges a body of instructions,⁸⁴ was inspired by "the Direction of His Excellency the Governor"⁸⁵ to undertake that "Account of the Sufferings brought upon the Countrey by Witchcraft," which was ready for submission to Sir William on his return from the east in early October, and with which, under its title of *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, we must soon make acquaintance. The opening clauses of the governor's letter show plainly the influence of that book;⁸⁶ and the change in tone between its earlier and its later portion, and yet more between the letter of October and that of February, is not the least interesting feature of these documents.⁸⁷

Notes

[80]. William Stoughton (see above, p. 183 and note 2

) was of course also a nominee of Mather's. He had not been forward in the revolution which overthrew the Andros government, but he had rallied to it, and Cotton Mather had written his father wishing he might “do anything to restore him to the favor of the country.”

[81]. In the last week of May, at his first meetings with the new Council. The court began its sessions at Salem on June 2.

[82]. He was present in Boston at meetings of the Council on June 13, 18, July 4, 8, 15, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, September 5, 12, 16, and again on October 14 (Moore, in American Antiquarian Society, *Proceedings*, n. s., V. 251 note). Sewall on September 29 notes in his diary: “Governor comes to Town.”

[83]. A summary of it may be found on pp. 356–357, below; the full text is appended to Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience* (1693) and has been often reprinted, both with that work and in later books. It is Cotton Mather himself (in his life of Phips) who tells us that he drafted it.

[84]. In his letter of May 31 to his parishioner John Richards, a member of the court (*Mather Papers*, pp. 391–397). It is endorsed — with reason — “Mr Cotton Mather, an Essay concerning Witchcraft”; for an essay it really is. A supplement, and an interesting one, is his letter of August 17 to John Foster, a member of the Council (printed by Upham in his *Salem Witchcraft and Cotton Mather*, pp. 39–40).

[85]. It has been questioned (by Upham and again by G. H. Moore) whether “the Governor” whose “commands” Mather alleges (see p. 206) may not be Stoughton instead of Phips; but his discrimination between the two is too clear and too constant to admit the suspicion, and still less can Stoughton and Sewall (see pp. 251, 378) have been inexact. A doubt as to who consulted the clergy must be similarly answered. Yet Stoughton may well have been behind both acts.

[86]. His phrases are taken almost bodily from the book (see, in Drake's edition, pp. 102–109, not here reprinted); and his statement as to the methods of the court echoes Mather's. It has been suggested (by Moore) that Mather himself drafted the letter; but neither the style nor the matter of its later portion can be his.

[87]. Cotton Mather, in his life of Phips, names as one of the causes of the Proceedings of the Mass. Hist. Soc., second series, I, 348–358) throw a vivid light on the problems then agitating the public mind. They are dated at New York on October 5, and the answers, dated October 11, cannot have reached Boston before the middle of that month. More distinctly than the Boston clergy they reject “spectral evidence.” According to the Anglican rector at New York, John Miller (commenting on Mather's statement as borrowed by the geographer Hermann Moll), “the advice of the established English Minister was also asked and generously given”; “but,” he adds,

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

“they were not so civill as to thank him for it, nor do they here acknowledge it, although it was much to their purpose, and stood them in good stead.” It may be found, however, written out by his own hand in his copy of Moll's *Atlas* (now in the New York Public Library); and it is summarized at pp. 274–276 of the New York Historical Society's *Collections* for 1869 and in the edition of Miller's *New York considered* (1695) by Mr. Paltsits (1903), to whom the editor owes suggestion of the matter. Miller's answers are, indeed, somewhat less credulous than those of his Calvinist colleagues; but (as appears from a “Memorandum” of his own) it is by no means certain that they reached New England.

LETTERS OF GOVERNOR PHIPS

When I first arrived I found this Province miserably harrassed with a most Horrible witchcraft or Possession of Devills which had broke in upon severall Townes, some scores of poor people were taken with preternaturall torments some scalded with brimstone some had pins stuck in their flesh others hurried into the fire and water and some dragged out of their houses and carried over the tops of trees and hills for many Miles together; it hath been represented to mee much like that of Sweden about thirtyyears agoe, ⁸⁸ and there were many committed to prison upon suspicion of Witchcraft before my arrivall. The loud cries and clamours of the friends of the afflicted people with the advice of the Deputy Governor and many others prevailed with mee to give a Commission of Oyer and Terminer for discovering what witchcraft might be at the bottome or whether it were not a possession. The chief Judge in this Commission was the Deputy Governour and the rest were persons of the best prudence and figure that could then be pitched upon. When the Court came to sitt at Salem in the County of Essex they convicted more than twenty persons of being guilty of witchcraft, some of the convicted were such as confessed their Guilt, the Court as I understand began their proceedings with the accusations of the afflicted and then went upon other humane ⁸⁹ evidences to strengthen that. I was almost the whole time of the proceeding abroad in the service of Their Majesties in the Eastern part of the Country and depended upon the Judgement of the Court as to a right method of proceeding in cases of Witchcraft but when I came home I found many persons in a strange ferment of dissatisfaction which was increased by some hott Spiritts that blew up the flame, ⁹⁰ but on enquiring into the matter I found that the Devill had taken upon him the name and shape of severall persons who were doubtless inocent and to my certain knowledge of good reputation for which cause I have now forbidden the committing of any more that shall be accused without unavoydable necessity, and those that have been committed I would shelter from any Proceedings against them wherein there may be the least suspition of any wrong to be done unto the Innocent. I would also wait for any particular directions or commands if their Majesties please to give mee any for the fuller ordering this perplexed affair. I have also put a stop to the printing of any discourses one way or other, that may increase the needless disputes of people upon this occasion, because I saw a likely-hood of kindling an inextinguishable flame if I should admitt any publique and open Contests and I have grieved to see that some who should have done their Majesties and this Province better service have so far taken Councill of Passion as to desire the precipitancy of these matters, these things have been improved by some to give me many interuptions in their Majesties service and in truth none of my vexations have been greater than this, than that their Majesties service has been hereby unhappily clogged, and the Persons who have made soe ill improvement of these matters here are seeking to turne it all uponmee, ⁹¹ but I hereby declare that as soon as I came from fighting against their Majesties Enemyes and understood what danger some of their innocent subjects might be exposed to, if the evidence of the afflicted persons only did prevaile either to the committing or trying any of them, I did before any application was made unto me about it put a stop to the proceedings of the Court and they are now stopt till their Majesties pleasure be known. Sir I beg pardon for giving you all this trouble, the reason is because I know my enemies are seeking to turn it all upon me and I take this liberty because I depend upon your friendship, and desire you will please to give a true understanding of the matter if any thing of this kind be urged or made use of against mee. Because the justnesse of my proceeding herein will bee a sufficient defence. Sir

I am with all imaginable respect Your most humble Servt

William Phips .

Letter

Dated at Boston the 12th of october 1692.

92

Mem'dm

That my Lord President be pleased to acquaint his Ma'ty in Council with the account received from New England from Sir Wm. Phips the Governor there touching Proceedings against severall persons for Witchcraft as appears by the Governor's letter concerning those matters.

Letter

Boston in New England Febr 21st, 1692/3.

May it please yor. Lordshp.

By the Capn. of the *Samuell and Henry* I gave an account that att my arrivall here I found the Prisons full of people committed upon suspicion of witchcraft and that continuall complaints were made to me that many persons were grievously tormented by witches and that they cryed out upon severall persons by name, as the cause of their torments. The number of these complaints increasing every day, by advice of the Lieut Govr. and the Councill I gave a Commission of Oyer and Terminer to try the suspected witches and at that time the generality of the People represented the matter to me as reall witchcraft and gave very strange instances of the same. The first in Commission was the Lieut. Govr. and the rest persons of the best prudence and figure that could then be pitched upon and I depended upon the Court for a right method of proceeding in cases of witchcraft. At that time I went to command the army at the Eastern part of the Province, for the French and Indians had made an attack upon some of our Fronteer Towns. I continued there for some time but when I returned I found people much dissatisfied at the proceedings of the Court, for about Twenty persons were condemned and executed of which number some were thought by many persons to be innocent. The Court still proceeded in the same method of trying them, which was by the evidence of the afflicted persons who when they were brought into the Court as soon as the suspected witches looked upon them instantly fell to the ground in strange agonies and grievous torments, but when touched by them upon the arme or some other part of their flesh they immediately revived and came to themselves, upon [which] they made oath that the Prisoner at the Bar did afflict them and that they saw their shape or spectre come from their bodies which put them to such paines and torments: When I enquired into the matter I was enformed by the Judges that they begun with this, but had humane testimony against such as were condemned and undoubted proof of their being witches, but at length I found that the Devill did take upon him the shape of Innocent persons and some were accused of whose innocency I was well assured and many considerable persons of unblameable life and conversation were cried out upon as witches and wizards. The Deputy Govr. notwithstanding persisted vigorously in the same method, to the great dissatisfaction and disturbance of the people, until I put an end to the Court and stopped the proceedings, which I did because I saw many innocent persons might otherwise perish and at that time I thought it my duty to give an account thereof that their Ma'ties pleasure might be signified, hoping that for the better ordering thereof the Judges learned in the law in England might give such rules and directions as have been practized in England for proceedings in so difficult and so nice a point; When I put an end to the Court ⁹³ there were at least fifty persons in prison in great misery by reason of the extream cold and their poverty, most of them having only spectre evidence against them, and their mittimus being defective, I caused some of them to be lett out upon bayle and put the Judges upon considering of a way to reliefe others and prevent them from perishing in prison, upon which some of them were convinced and acknowledged that their former proceedings were too violent and not grounded upon a right foundation but that if they might sit againe, they would proceed after another method, and whereas Mr. Increase Mathew ⁹⁴ and severall other Divines did give it as their Judgment that the Devill might afflict in the shape of an innocent person and that the look and the touch of the suspected persons was not sufficient prooffe against them, these things had not the same stress layd upon them as before, and upon this consideration I permitted a spetiall Superior Court ⁹⁵ to be held at Salem in the County of Essex on the third day of January, the Lieut Govr. being Chief Judge. Their method of proceeding being altered, all that were brought to tryall to the number of fifty two, were cleared saving three, and I was enformed by the Kings Attorney Generall that some of the cleared and the condemned were under the same circumstances or that there was the same reason to clear the three condemned as the rest according to his Judgment. The Deputy Govr. signed a Warrant for their speedy execution and also of five others who were condemned at the former Court of Oyer and terminer, but considering how the matter had been managed I sent a reprieve whereby the execution was stopped untill their Maj. pleasure be signified and declared. The Lieut. Gov. upon this occasion was intranged and filled with passionate anger and refused to sitt upon the bench in a Superior Court then held at Charles Towne, ⁹⁶ and indeed hath from the beginning hurried on these matters with great

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

precipitancy and by his warrant hath caused the estates, goods and chattles of the executed to be seized and disposed of without my knowledge or consent. The stop put to the first method of proceedings hath dissipated the blak cloud that threatened this Province with destruccion; for whereas this delusion of the Devill did spread and its dismall effects touched the lives and estates of many of their Ma'ties Subjects and the reputacion of some of the principall persons here, ⁹⁷ and indeed unhappily clogged and interrupted their Ma'ties affaires which hath been a great vexation to me, I have no new complaints but peoples minds before divided and distracted by differing opinions concerning this matter are now well composed.

I am Yor. Lordships most faithfull humble Servant
William Phips

[Addressed:] To the Rt. Honble the Earle of Nottingham att Whitehall London

[Indorsed:] R [*i. e.*, received] May 24, 93 abt. Witches ⁹⁸

Notes

[88]. The famous case at Mohra in 1669–1670. Cotton Mather had appended to his *Wonders* an account of it.

[89]. Human.

[90]. He thinks perhaps of the Baptist preacher, William Milborne, one of the leaders in the later revolution, who on June 25 was called before the Council because of two papers subscribed by him and several others, “containing very high reflections upon the administration of public justice within this their Majesty's Province” (Moore, *Notes on Witchcraft*, p. 12; *Final Notes*, p. 72). What seems one of these papers, addressed “to the Grave and Judicious the Generall Assembly of the Province,” has been found (see it in *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXVII. 55, and reprinted by Moore in American Antiquarian Society, *Proceedings*, n. s., V. 246) and proves a protest against the conviction “upon bare specter testimonie” of “persons of good fame and of unspotted reputation.” It must have been in circulation before the detection of its author, and was very possibly the reason for the consultation of the clergy.

[91]. It must be remembered that the new charter, by opening the suffrage to those who were not church members, had greatly strengthened the party opposed to the theocracy — and to the theocracy's governor. More than once it has been said, too, that the Salem witchcraft was the rock on which the theocracy shattered.

[92]. This letter, with its memorandum, has been printed in the *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, IX. 86–88, from a copy made in the British archives (“Colonial Entry Book, vol. 62, p. 414,” now C. O. 5: 905, p. 414). It has since been printed also in the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1689–1692 (no. 2551, p. 720), which uses not only this MS. (mistakenly called “an extract”) but another (“Board of Trade, New England, 6, no. 7,” now C. O. 5: 857, no. 7); but the editor has corrected and paraphrased. The last-named MS. (C. O. 5: 857, no. 7) is, however, the original letter; and the present impression has been carefully collated with it at London, many corrections resulting. October 14, in the Essex Institute's reprint, is only a printer's error for October 12. The letter was addressed to William Blathwayt, clerk of the Privy Council, and it is he who added the memorandum (to the Entry Book copy).

[93]. It was on October 29, three days after the passage by the General Court of the bill calling for a fast and a convocation of ministers for guidance “as to the witchcrafts,” and, as Judge Sewall tells us (see p. 186, note 1, above) in such “season and manner” that “the Court of Oyer and Terminer count themselves thereby dismissed,” that in the Council, when “Mr. Russel asked whether the Court of Oyer and Terminer should sit, expressing some fear of Inconvenience by its fall,” the “Governour said it must fall.” (Sewall's *Diary*, I. 368.)

[94]. Mather. Undoubtedly an error of the English copyist. The advice meant was that of the twelve ministers of Boston and vicinity on June 15. See introduction.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[95]. The Superior Court was created by act of the General Court of the province — of course with the concurrence of the governor — on November 25, 1692; but its session at Salem would, under the law, have come in the next November, and a supplementary act was passed on December 16, providing, “upon consideration that many persons charged capital offenders are now in custody within the county of Essex,” for a court of assize and general jail delivery there on January 3.

[96]. For this episode see pp. 382–383.

[97]. A “letter from Boston” printed in the British *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1693–1696, p. 63, says that “The witchcraft at Salem went on vigorously... until at last members of Council and Justices were accused”; and the Boston merchant Calef in 1697 wrote: “If it be true what was said at the Counsel-board in answer to the commendations of Sir William, for his stopping the proceedings about Witchcraft, *viz.* That it was high time for him to stop it, his own Lady being accused; if that Assertion were a truth, then New-England may seem to be more beholden to the accusers for accusing of her, and thereby necessitating a stop, than to Sir William” (*More Wonders*, p. 154). Lady Phips had earned an accusation by daring, in Sir William's absence, herself to issue a warrant for the discharge of an accused woman. The keeper lost his place. (MS. letter quoted by Hutchinson, II. 61, note; the writer had it from the keeper himself and had seen the document.)

[98]. This letter is here reprinted from the Massachusetts Historical Society's *Proceedings*, second ser., I. 340–342, where the original, in the British archives, is described as “America and West Indies, No. 591” and “also in Colonial Entry Book, No. 62, p. 426”; but the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1693–1696, which again prints it, though in abridged form, ascribes it to “America and West Indies, 561, nos. 28, 29,” and mentions the duplicate as “Col. Entry Bk., Vol. LXII, pp. 426–430,” and as “entered as addressed to William Blathwayt.” It may also be found in G. H. Moore's *Final Notes on Witchcraft in Massachusetts* (New York, 1885), pp. 90–93, with his annotations. Examination at the British Public Record Office shows that the original letter (formerly America and West Indies, 561, no. 28) is now C. O. 5: 51, no. 28, and is plainly addressed to the Earl of Nottingham.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

**FROM “THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD,” BY COTTON
MATHER, 1693**

INTRODUCTION

How *The Wonders of the Invisible World* came to be written we have already seen.⁹⁹ Its author had “a talent for sudden composures.” We have seen what a scrap–bag was his *Memorable Providences*; and the pigeon–holes of his desk must for months have been gathering materials that could now be put to use. What these materials were is suggested by his title–page; but the title–page description is not exact. There is first an essay, entitled “Enchantments Encountered,” on New England as a home of the saints and the plot of the Devil against her, especially as revealed by the witches now confessing; next an abstract of the rules of Perkins, Gaule, and Bernard for the detection of witches. Then follows “A Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World, uttered (in part) on Aug. 4, 1692.” It is a sermon on Rev. xii. 12, depicting in apocalyptic phrase the Devil's wrath and its present manifestation. Next comes “An Hortatory and Necessary Address, to a Country now extraordinarily alarm'd by the Wrath of the Devil” — this, too, doubtless written for a sermon. “Having thus discoursed on the Wonders of the Invisible World,” says then the author, “I shall now, with God's help, go on to relate some Remarkable and Memorable Instances of Wonders which that World has given to ourselves.” Yet he still inserts “A Narrative of an Apparition which a Gentleman in Boston had of his Brother,” before proceeding to those Salem trials, the kernel of his book, which are reprinted below.

Doubtless these were meant, as the title–page suggests, to form a part of the “Enchantments Encountered,” but failed to arrive in time. Mather had long been begging them from Stephen Sewall (brother of Judge Sewall), the clerk of the court; but the clerk was then very busy. On September 20 Mather wrote: “That I may be the more capable to assist in lifting up a standard against the infernal enemy, I must renew my most importunate request.” What he asks is “a narrative of the evidence given in at the trials of half a dozen, or if you please, a dozen, of the principal witches that have been condemned.” He pleads not only Sewall's promise, but that “his Excellency, the Governor, laid his positive commands upon me to desire this favor of you”; “and the truth is,” he adds, “there are some of his circumstances with reference to this affair, which I need not mention, that call for the expediting of your kindness.” He wants also some of the clerk's “observations about the confessors, and the credibility of what they assert, or about things evidently preternatural in the witchcrafts”; but, “assure yourself,” he concludes, “I shall not wittingly make what you write prejudicial to any worthy design which those two excellent persons, Mr. Hale and Mr. Noyes, may have in hand.” But the clerk took counsel before he acted. His brother's *Diary* records, on Thursday, September 22, that “William Stoughton, Esqr., John Hathorne, Esqr., Mr. Cotton Mather, and Capt. John Higginson, with my brother St., were at our house, speaking about publishing some Trials of the Witches.” These had been received and utilized by early October (see p. 247), and the book, thus far complete, could before October 11 be laid before the judges (see p. 251) and by the 12th could furnish material for the governor's letter (see p. 195).

Before the book was out of press there was time to add the narrative of the Swedish witches and the sermon on “the Devil discovered”; but these could not seriously have delayed the printing, for the book, complete and printed, must have gone to London by the same ship which in mid–October took Sir William's letter. A copy of the book was doubtless sent, with this letter, to the home government; and it was perhaps precisely for this use that the volume had been hurried into existence and into print. What is certain is that such a copy had before December 24 reached the hands of John Dunton, the London publisher; for on that day he announced its speedy publication, and by December 29 it was already in print, though with “1693” on its title–page.¹⁰⁰ A “second edition,” much abridged (though not by the omission of the Salem trials), he issued in February 1693, and reprinted it as a “third” in June.

The news–letter, with imprint of 1692, calling itself *A True Account of the Tryals... at Salem, in New England... in a Letter to a Friend in London* and signed at end “C. M.” is only a bookseller's fraud, compiled from the *Wonders* by some hack (who has not even taken the trouble to imitate its style) and printed in 1693.

The *Wonders* was reprinted at Salem in 1861 (with Calef's *More Wonders*), by Mr. S. P. Fowler, in a volume called *Salem Witchcraft*; but, alas, from the abridged “third edition” and with serious further abridgment. In 1862

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

the first London edition was embodied in a volume of John Russell Smith's *Library of Old Authors* (cf. p. 149, note 1); and in 1866 the work was again reprinted, and with much more exactness, ¹⁰¹ as

no. V. of the *Historical Series* of W. Elliot Woodward (Roxbury, Mass.), being again coupled with Calef's *More Wonders* (forming nos. VI., VII., of the same series) under a common title, *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, and a common editor, S. G. Drake, who contributes elaborate introductions and notes. An alleged reprint by J. Smith, London, 1834 (and again by H. Howell in 1840), as an addition to Baxter's, *Certainty of the World of Spirits* is not Mather's *Wonders* at all, but only the witchcraft pages of his *Magnalia*.

Notes

[99]. See pp. 194–195.

[100]. That this London edition was printed, not from a manuscript copy, but from the printed Boston edition, broken up for the compositors, is clear to any printer who compares the two. See, for details, a paragraph in the N. Y. *Nation* for November 5, 1908 (LXXXVII. 435), or the descriptive note of G. F. Black in the New York Library's *List of Works relating to Witchcraft in the United States* (*Bulletin*, 1908, XII. 666). All extant copies of the Boston edition seem to have the title–page date “1693” (an alleged exception proves to be a myth); and this probably means that till January, at least, the book was withheld from circulation. As to all the early editions, see Moore, *Notes on the Bibliography of Witchcraft in Massachusetts* (American Antiquarian Society, *Proceedings*, n. s., V.), and the New York Library's *List*, as above.

[101]. The type being set from the first London edition, but the proofs read by the Boston one. (See Drake's preface, p. vii, and his postscript, p. 247.)

THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD

The Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations As well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils. Accompany'd with

I. Some Accounts of the Grievous Molestations, by Doemons and Witchcrafts, which have lately annoy'd the Country; and the Trials of some eminent Malefactors Executed upon occasion thereof: with several Remarkable Curiosities therein occurring.

II. Some Counsils, Directing a due Improvement of the terrible things, lately done, by the Unusual and Amazing Range of Evil Spirits, in Our Neighbourhood: and the methods to prevent the Wrongs which those Evil Angels may intend against all sorts of people among us; especially in Accusations of the Innocent.

III. Some Conjectures upon the great Events, likely to befall the World in General, and New-England in Particular; as also upon the Advances of the time, when we shall see Better Dayes.

IV. A short Narrative of a late Outrage committed by a knot of Witches in Swedeland, very much Resembling, and so far Explaining, That under which our parts of America have laboured!

V. The Devil Discovered: In a Brief Discourse upon those Temptations, which are the more Ordinary Devices of the Wicked One.

By Cotton Mather.

Boston, Printed, by Benjamin Harris for Sam. Phillips 1693. ¹⁰²

Published by the Special Command of His Excellency, the Governour of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England. ¹⁰³

Notes

[102]. Title–page of original.

[103]. Reverse of title–page. Governor Sir William Phips. We have just read, indeed, his own assertion (p. 197, above) that he had “put a stop to the printing of any discourses one way or other,” and this may explain why, though this book was complete in October, it was not published before January, as well as why, when it did appear, it thus bore the express sanction of the governor. As to the suggestion of Upham and Moore that not Phips but Stoughton may be here meant, see p. 194, note 6.

The Author's Defence.

'Tis , as I remember, the Learned Scribonius, ¹⁰⁴ who Reports, that One of his Acquaintance, devoutly making his Prayers on the behalf of a Person molested by Evil Spirits, received from those Evil Spirits an horrible Blow over the Face: And I may my self Expect not few or small Buffetings from Evil Spirits, for the Endeavours wherewith I am now going to Encounter them. I am far from Insensible, That at this Extraordinary Time of the Devils Coming down in Great Wrath upon us, there are too many Tongues and Hearts thereby Set on Fire of Hell; that the various Opinions about the Witchcrafts which of Later Time have Troubled us, are maintained by some with so much Cloudy Fury, as if they could never be sufficiently Stated, unless written in the Liquor wherewith Witches use to write their Covenants; and that he who becomes an Author at such a Time, had need be Fenced with Iron, and the Staff of a Spear. The unaccountable Frowardness, Asperity, Untreatableness, and Inconsistency of many persons, every Day gives a Visible Exposition of that passage, *An Evil Spirit from the Lord came upon Saul*; and Illustration of that Story, *There met him two Possessed with Devils, exceeding Fierce, so that no man might pass by that way*. To send abroad a Book, among such Readers, were a very unadvised Thing, if a man had not such Reasons to give, as I can bring, for such an Undertaking. Briefly, I hope it cannot be said, They are all so; No, I hope the Body of this People, are yet in such a Temper, as to be capable of Applying their Thoughts, to make a Right Use of the Stupendous and prodigious Things that are happening among us: and because I was concern'd, when I saw that no Abler Hand Emittid any Essayes to Engage the Minds of this People in such Holy, Pious, Fruitful Improvements, as God would have to be made of His Amazing Dispensations now upon us, Therefore it is, that One of the Least among the Children of New–England, has here done, what is done. None, but the Father, who sees in Secret, knows the Heart–breaking Exercises, wherewith I have Composed what is now going to be Exposed, Lest I should in any One Thing miss of Doing my Designed Service for His Glory, and for His People; But I am now somewhat comfortably Assured of His favourable Acceptance; and, I will not Fear; what can a Satan do unto me!

Having Performed Something of what God Required, in labouring to suit His Words unto His Works, at this Day among us, and therewithal handled a Theme that has been sometimes counted not unworthy the Pen, even of a King, it will easily be perceived, that some subordinate Ends have been considered in these Endeavours.

I have indeed set my self to Countermine the whole Plot of the Devil against New–England, ¹⁰⁵ in every Branch of it, as far as one of my Darkness can comprehend such a Work of Darkness. I may add, that I have herein also aimed at the Information and Satisfaction of Good men in another Countrey, a Thousand Leagues off, where I have, it may be, More, or however, more Considerable Friends, than in My Own; ¹⁰⁶ And I do what I can to have that Countrey, now as well as always, in the best Terms with My Own. But while I am doing these things, I have been driven a little to do something likewise for My self; I mean, by taking off the false Reports and hard Censures about my Opinion in these matters, the Parters Portion, which my pursuit of Peace has procured me among the Keen. My hitherto Unvaried Thoughts are here Published; and, I believe, they will be owned by most of the Ministers of God in these Colonies; nor can amends be well made me, for the wrong done me, by other sorts of Representations.

In fine, For the Dogmatical part of my Discourse, I want no Defence; for the Historical part of it, I have a very Great One. The Lieutenant–Governour of New–England, having perused it, has done me the Honour of giving me a Shield, ¹⁰⁷ under the Umbrage whereof I now dare to walk Abroad.

Letter

Reverend and Dear Sir,

You Very much Gratify'd me, as well as put a kind Respect upon me, when you put into my hands, Your Elaborate and most seasonable Discourse, entituled, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. And having now Perused so fruitful and happy a Composure, upon such a Subject, at this Juncture of Time, and considering the Place that I Hold in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, still Labouring and Proceeding in the Trial of the persons Accused and Convicted for Witchcraft, I find that I am more nearly and highly concerned than as a meer Ordinary Reader, to Express my Obligation and Thankfulness to you for so great Pains; and cannot but hold my self many ways bound, even to the utmost of what is proper for me, in my present Publick Capacity, to declare my Singular Approbation thereof. Such is Your Design, most plainly expressed throughout the whole; such Your Zeal for God, Your Enmity to Satan and his Kingdom, Your Faithfulness and Compassion to this poor people; Such the Vigour, but yet great Temper of your Spirit; Such your Instruction and Counsel, your Care of Truth, Your Wisdom and Dexterity in allaying and moderating that among us, which needs it; Such your Clear Discerning of Divine Providences and Periods, now running on apace towards their Glorious Issues in the World; and finally, Such your Good News of The Shortness of the Devils Time, That all Good Men must needs Desire the making of this your Dis course Publick to the World; and will greatly Rejoyce that the Spirit of the Lord has thus Enabled you to Lift up a Standard against the Infernal Enemy, that hath been Coming in like a Flood upon us. I do therefore make it my particular and Earnest Request unto you, that as soon as may be, you will Commit the same unto the Press accordingly. I am,

Your Assured Friend,

William Stoughton .

I Live by Neighbours that force me to produce these Undeserved Lines. But now, as when Mr. Wilson,¹⁰⁸ beholding a great Muster of Souldiers, had it by a Gentleman then present said unto him, “Sir, I'll tell you a great Thing: here is a mighty Body of People; and there is not Seven of them all but what Loves Mr. Wilson;” that Gracious Man presently and pleasantly Reply'd, “Sir, I'll tell you as good a thing as that; here is a mighty Body of People, and there is not so much as One among them all, but Mr. Wilson Loves him.” Somewhat so: 'Tis possible that among this Body of People there may be few that Love the Writer of this Book; but give me leave to boast so far, there is not one among all this Body of People, whom this Mather would not Study to Serve, as well as to Love. With such a Spirit of Love, is the Book now before us written: I appeal to all this World; and if this World will deny me the Right of acknowledging so much, I Appeal to the Other, that it is Not written with an Evil Spirit: for which cause I shall not wonder, if Evil Spirits be Exasperated by what is Written, as the Sadducees doubtless were with what was Discoursed in the Days of our Saviour. I only Demand the Justice, that others Read it, with the same Spirit where—with I writ it.¹⁰⁹

But I shall no longer detain my Reader, from His expected entertainment, in a Brief Account of the Trials which have passed upon some of the Malefactors Lately Executed at Salem, for the Witchcrafts whereof they stood Convicted. For my own part, I was not Present at any of Them;¹¹⁰ nor ever Had I any personal prejudice at the persons thus brought upon the Stage; much less at the Surviving Relations of those persons, with and for whom I would be as Hearty a mourner as any man Living in the World: The Lord Comfort them! But having

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Received a Command so to do, ¹¹¹ I can do no other than shortly Relate the Chief Matters of fact, which occur'd in the Trials of some that were Executed, in an Abridgment collected out of the Court–Papers, on this occasion put into my Hands. ¹¹² You are to take the Truth, just as it was; and the Truth will hurt no good man. There might have been more of these, if my Book would not thereby have been swollen too big; and if some other worthy hands did not perhaps intend something further in these Collections; ¹¹³ for which cause I have only singled out Four or Five, which may serve to Illustrate the way of dealing, wherein Witchcrafts use to be concerned; and I Report matters not as an Advocate but as an Historian.

They were some of the Gracious Words inserted in the Advice, which many of the Neighbouring Ministers did this Summer humbly lay before our Honorable Judges, “We cannot but with all thankfulness acknowledge the success which the Merciful God has given unto the Sedulous and Assiduous endeavours of Our Honourable Rulers, to detect the abominable Witchcrafts which have been committed in the Country; Humbly Praying that the discovery of those mysterious and mischievous wickednesses, may be perfected.” ¹¹⁴ If in the midst of the many Dissatisfactions among us, the publication of these Trials may promote such a pious Thankfulness unto God, for Justice being so far executed among us, I shall Re joyce that God is Glorified; and pray that no wrong steps of ours may ever sully any of His Glorious Works. ¹¹⁵

Notes

[104] Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius, a Hessian scholar, is best known in the literature of witchcraft as the chief advocate of the water ordeal (see p. 21, above) for the detection of witches. This story is told on ff. 82–83 of his *Physiologia Sagarum* (Marburg, 1588 — the full title is *De Sagarum Natura et Potestate, deque his recte cognoscendis et puniendis Physiologia*), and in English by Baxter, *Worlds of Spirits*, p. 104.

[105] As to this “plot of the Devil,” see Mather's own words (*Wonders*, pp. 16–19, 25, not here reprinted): “we have been advised... that a Malefactor, accused of Witchcraft as well as Murder, and Executed in this place more than Forty Years ago, did then give Notice of An Horrible Plot against the Country by Witchcraft, and a Foundation of Witchcraft then laid, which if it were not seasonably discovered would probably Blow up, and pull down all the Churches in the Country.” “We have now with Horror,” he adds, “seen the Discovery of such a Witchcraft!” and from the confessions at Salem he learns that “at prodigious Witch–Meetings the Wretches have proceeded so far as to Concert and Consult the Methods of Rooting out the Christian Religion from this Country” and setting up instead of it a “Diabolism.” Not even this is all: “it may be fear'd that, in the Horrible Tempest which is now upon ourselves, the design of the Devil is to sink that Happy Settlement of Government wherewith Almighty God has graciously enclined Their Majesties to favour us.”

[106] It is of England, of course, that he speaks.

[107] As to Lieutenant–Governor Stoughton, head of the court which had tried the witch cases, see above, p. 183 and note 2, and pp. 196–201. His “shield” means the following letter.

[108] Doubtless the Rev. John Wilson (d. 1667), the first minister of Boston.

[109] There now follow the miscellaneous matters described in the introduction, making up more than half of his volume.

[110] He must at least have been present at some of the examinations (like those described by Lawson) preceding the trials; for in his *Diary* (I. 151), commending the judges, he adds, “and my Compassion, upon the Sight of their Difficulties, raised by my Journeyes to Salem, the chief Seat of these diabolical Vexations, caused mee yett more to do so.” From attending the trials he had excused himself (see the letter mentioned on p. 194, note 5) on the score of ill health.

[111] From the governor; see above, p. 194, and p. 250.

[112] See introduction.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[113] Meaning, doubtless, Hale and Noyes. See p. 206, above.

[114] This is the second paragraph in the reply of the ministers of Boston, June 15, 1692, to the request of the governor and Council for advice. (See p. 194, above.) It was drawn up by Cotton Mather himself.

[115] What next follows, very cleverly ensuring a friendly attitude toward the Salem court, is an account of the English witch–trial of 1664 before Sir Matthew Hale. It is abridged from the well–known booklet (*A Tryal of Witches at the Assizes held at Bury St. Edmonds*, etc.) published at London in 1682, which had been a guide to the Salem judges (see p. 416, below).

I. The Tryal of G. B. ¹¹⁶ At a Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held in Salem, 1692.

Glad should I have been, if I had never known the Name of this man; or never had this occasion to mention so much as the first Letters of hisName. ¹¹⁷ But the Government requiring some Account of his Trial to be Inserted in this Book, it becomes me with all Obedience to submit unto the Order.

I. This G. B. was indicted for Witch–crafts, and in the Prosecution of the Charge against him, he was Accused by five or six of the Bewitched, as the Author of their Miseries; he was Accused by eight of the Confessing Witches, as being an Head Actor at some of their Hellish Rendezvouzes, and one who had the promise of being a King in Satans Kingdom, now going to be Erected: he was Accused by nine persons for extraordinary Lifting, and such Feats of Strength, as could not be done without a Diabolical Assistance. And for other such Things he was Accused, until about Thirty Testimonies were brought in against him; nor were these judg'd the half of what might have been considered for his Conviction: however they were enough to fix the Character of a Witch upon him according to the Rules of Reasoning, by the JudiciousGaule, ¹¹⁸ in that Case directed.

II. The Court being sensible, that the Testimonies of the Parties Bewitched use to have a Room among the Suspicions or Presumptions, brought in against one Indicted for Witchcraft, there were now heard the Testimonies of several Persons, who were most notoriously Bewitched, and every day Tortured by Invisible Hands, and these now all charged the Spectres of G. B. to have a share in their Torments. At the Examination of this G. B. the Bewitched People were grievously harassed with Preternatural Mischiefs, which could not possibly be Dissembled; and they still ascribed it unto the Endeavours of G. B. to kill them. And now upon his Trial, one of the Bewitched Persons testify'd, That in her Agonies, a little Black hair'd man came to her, saying his Name was B. and bidding her set her hand unto a Book which he show'd unto her; and bragging that he was a Conjuror, above the ordinary Rank of Witches; That he often persecuted her with the offer of that Book, saying, She should be well, and need fear no body, if she would but Sign it; but he inflicted cruel Pains and Hurts upon her, because of her Denying so to do. The Testimonies of the other Sufferers concurred with these; and it was Remarkable, that whereas Biting was one of the ways which the Witches used for the vexing of the Sufferers, when they cry'd out of G. B. biting them, the print of the Teeth would be seen on the Flesh of the Complainers, and just such a sett of Teeth as G. B's would then appear upon them, which could be distinguished from those of some other mens. Others of them testify'd, That in their Torments, G. B. tempted them to go unto a Sacrament, unto which they perceived him with a sound of Trumpet Summoning of other Witches, who quickly after the Sound would come from all Quarters unto the Rendezvouz. One of them falling into a kind of Trance, afterwards affirmed, That G. B. had carried her into a very high Mountain, where he show'd her mighty and glorious Kingdoms, and said, He would give them all to her, if she would write in his Book; but she told him, They were none of his to give; and refused the motions, enduring of much misery for that Refusal.

It cost the Court a wonderful deal of Trouble, to hear the Testimonies of the Sufferers; for when they were going to give in their Depositions, they would for a long time be taken with fitts, that made them incapable of saying any thing. The Chief Judge asked the prisoner, who he thought hindred these witnesses from giving their testimonies? and he answered, He supposed it was the Divil. That Honourable person then reply'd, How comes the Divil so loathe to have any Testimony born against you? Which cast him into very great confusion.

III. It has been a frequent thing for the Bewitched people to be entertained with Apparitions of Ghosts of murdered people, at the same time that the Spectres of the witches trouble them. These Ghosts do always affright the Beholders more than all the other spectral Representations; and when they exhibit themselves, they cry out, of being Murdered by the witchcrafts or other violences of the persons who are then in spectre present. It is further considerable, that once or twice, these Apparitions have been seen by others at the very same time that they have shewn them selves to the Bewitched; and seldom have there been these Apparitions but when something unusual and suspected had attended the Death of the party thus Appearing. Some that have bin accused by these Apparitions, accosting of the Bewitched People, who had never heard a word of any such persons ever being in

the world, have upon a fair examination freely and fully confessed the murders of those very persons, altho' these also did not know how the Apparitions had complained of them. Accordingly several of the Bewitched had given in their Testimony, that they had been troubled with the Apparitions of two women, who said that they were G. B's two wives, and that he had been the Death of them; and that the Magistrates must be told of it, before whom if B. upon his trial deny'd it, they did not know but that they should appear again in the Court. Now, G. B. had been infamous for the Barbarous usage of his two successive wives, all the Country over. Moreover, It was testify'd, the spectre of G. B. threatenng of the sufferers told them, he had killed (besides others) Mrs. Lawson and her Daughter Ann. ¹¹⁹ And it was noted, That these were the vertuous wife and Daughter of one at whom this G. B. might have a prejudice for his being serviceable at Salem–village, from whence himself had in Ill Terms removed some years before: and that when they dy'd, which was long since, there were some odd circumstances about them, which made some of the Attendants there suspect something of witchcraft, tho' none Imagined from what Quarter it should come.

Well, G. B. being now upon his Triall, one of the Bewitched persons was cast into Horror at the Ghosts of B's two deceased wives then appearing before him, and crying for Vengeance against him. Hereupon several of the Bewitched persons were successively called in, who all not knowing what the former had seen and said, concurred in their Horror of the Apparition, which they affirmed that he had before him. But he, tho' much appalled, utterly deny'd that he discerned any thing of it; nor was it any part of his Conviction.

IV. Judicious Writers have assigned it a great place in the Conviction of witches, when persons are Impeached by other Notorious witches, to be as Ill as themselves; especially, if the persons have been much noted for neglecting the Worship of God. Now, as there might have been Testimonies Enough of G. B's Antipathy to Prayer and the other Ordinances of God, tho' by his profession singularly obliged there–unto; so, there now came in against the prisoner the Testimonies of several persons, who confessed their own having been Horrible Witches, and ever since their confessions had been themselves terribly Tortured by the Devils and other Witches, even like the other Sufferers; and therein undergone the pains of many Deaths for their Confessions.

These now Testify'd, that G. B. had been at Witch–meetings with them; and that he was the Person who had Seduc'd and Compell'd them into the snares of Witchcraft: That he promised them Fine Cloaths, for doing it; that he brought Poppets to them, and thorns to stick into those Poppets, for the afflicting of other People; And that he exhorted them, with the rest of the Crue, to bewitch all Salem–Village, but be sure to do it Gradually, if they would prevail in what they did.

When the Lancashire Witches ¹²⁰ were condemn'd, I don't Remember that there was any considerable further Evidence, than that of the Bewitched, and then that of some that confessed. We see so much already against G. B. But this being indeed not Enough, there were other things to render what had already been produced credible.

V. A famous Divine ¹²¹ recites this among the Convictions of a Witch; The Testimony of the Party Bewitched, whether Pining or Dying; together with the Joint Oathes of Sufficient Persons that have seen certain Prodigious Pranks or Feats wrought by the party Accused. Now God had been pleased so to leave this G. B. that he had ensnared himself by several Instances, which he had formerly given of a Preternatural strength, and which were now produced against him. He was a very Puny man; ¹²² yet he had often done things beyond the strength of a Giant. A Gun of about seven foot barrel, and so heavy that strong men could not steadily hold it out with both hands; there were several Testimonies, given in by Persons of Credit and Honour, that he made nothing of taking up such a Gun behind the Lock, with but one hand, and holding it out like a Pistol, at Arms–end. G. B. in his Vindication was so foolish as to say, That an Indian was there, and held it out at the same time: Whereas, none of the Spectators ever saw any such Indian; but they suppos'd the Black man (as the Witches call the Devil; and they generally say he resembles an Indian) might give him that Assistance. There was Evidence likewise brought in, that he made nothing of Taking up whole Barrels fill'd with Malasses or Cider, in very Disadvantagious Postures, and Carrying of them through the Difficuldest Places out of a Canoo to the Shore.

Yea, there were Two Testimonies that G. B. with only putting the Fore–Finger of his Right hand into the Muzzel of an heavy Gun, a Fowling–piece of about six or seven foot Barrel, did Lift up the Gun, and hold it out at Arms end; a Gun which the Deponents though strong men could not with both hands Lift up, and hold out at the Butt end, as is usual. Indeed, one of these Witnesses was over perswaded by some persons to be out of the way upon G. B's Trial; but he came afterwards with sorrow for his withdraw, and gave in his Testimony: Nor were either of these Witnesses made use of as evidences in the Trial.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

VI. There came in several Testimonies relating to the Domestick Affayrs of G. B. which had a very hard Aspect upon him; and not only prov'd him a very ill man; but also confirmed the Belief of the Character, which had been already fastned on him.

'Twas testified, That keeping his two Successive Wives in a strange kind of Slavery, he would when he came home from abroad pretend to tell the Talk which any had with them; That he has brought them to the point of Death, by his Harsh Dealings with his Wives, and then made the People about him to promise that in Case Death should happen, they would say nothing of it; That he used all means to make his Wives Write, Sign, Seal, and Swear a Covenant, never to Reveal any of his Secrets; That his Wives had privately complained unto the Neighbours about frightful Apparitions of Evil Spirits, with which their House was sometimes infested; and that many such things have been Whispered among the Neighbourhood. There were also some other Testimonies, relating to the Death of People, whereby the Consciences of an Impartial Jury were convinced that G. B. had Bewitched the persons mentioned in the Complaints. But I am forced to omit several passages, in this, as well as in all the succeeding Trials, because the Scribes who took Notice of them, have not Supplied me.

VII. One Mr. Ruck, Brother in Law to this G. B., Testify'd, that G. B. and he himself, and his Sister, who was G. B's Wife, going out for Two or three Miles to gather Straw–Berries, Ruck with his Sister the Wife of G. B. Rode home very Softly, with G. B. on Foot in their Company. G. B. stept aside a little into the Bushes; Whereupon they Halted and Halloo'd for him. He not answering, they went away homewards, with a Quickened pace, without any expectation of seeing him in a considerable while; and yet when they were got near home, to their Astonishment they found him on foot with them, having a Basket of Straw–Berries. G. B. immediately then fell to chiding his Wife, on the account of what she had been speaking to her Brother, of him, on the Road: which when they wondred at, he said, He knew their thoughts. Ruck being startled at that, made some Reply, intimating that the Devil himself did not know so far; but G. B. answered, My God makes known your Thoughts unto me. The prisoner now at the Barr had nothing to answer, unto what was thus Witnessed against him, that was worth considering. Only he said, Ruck and his Wife left a Man with him, when they left him. Which Ruck now affirm'd to be false; and when the Court asked G. B. What the Man's Name was? his countenance was much altered; nor could he say, who 'twas. But the Court began to think, that he then step'd aside, only that by the assistance of the Black Man, he might put on his Invisibility, and in that Fascinating Mist, gratifie his own Jealous humour, to hear what they said of him. Which trick of rendring themselves Invisible, our Witches do in their confessions pretend that they sometimes are Masters of; and it is the more credible, because there is Demonstration that they often render many other things utterly Invisible.

VIII. Faltring, Faulty, unconstant, and contrary Answers upon Judicial and deliberate examination, are counted some unlucky symptoms of guilt, in all crimes, Especially in Witchcrafts. ¹²³ Now there never was a prisoner more Eminent for them, than G. B. both at his Examination and on his Trial. His Tergiversations, Contradictions, and Falsehoods, were very sensible: he had little to say, but that he had heard some things that he could not prove, Reflecting upon the Reputation of some of the witnesses. Only he gave in a paper to the Jury; wherein, altho' he had many times before granted, not only that there are Witches, but also that the present sufferings of the Countrey are the Effect of horrible Witchcrafts, yet he now goes to evince it, That there neither are, nor ever were Witches, that having made a compact with the Divel, Can send a Divel to Torment other people at a distance. This paper was Transcribed outof Ady, ¹²⁴ which the Court presently ¹²⁵ knew, as soon as they heard it. But he said, he had taken none of it out of any Book; for which, his evasion afterwards was, that a Gentleman gave him the discourse in a manuscript, from whence he Transcribed it.

IX. The Jury brought him in guilty: But when he came to Dy, he utterly deny'd the Fact, whereof he had been thus convicted. ¹²⁶

Notes

[116] The Rev. George Burroughs, the most notable of the victims at Salem. A graduate of Harvard in the class of 1670, he preached in Maine for some years, and in 1680 became pastor at Salem Village, where he fell heir to a parish quarrel, and, becoming involved in it, found it wise to remove in 1683 — Deodat Lawson succeeding him. Burroughs returned to Maine, and was a pastor there at Wells, when his accusation by the “afflicted” at Salem caused his arrest. He was brought back to Salem on May 4, committed on May 9, tried on August 5, executed on August 19. As to his story see especially Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, Sibley, *Harvard Graduates* (II. 323–334), Moore, “Notes on the Bibliography of Witchcraft in Massachusetts” (in *American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings*, n. s., V.), pp. 270–273, but, first of all, the mentions of Calef, reprinted below (pp. 301, 360–365, 378–379).

[117] It is not improbable that Mather had already begun to find himself blamed for his harsh words as to Burroughs. On August 5, the day of his trial, he had written to a friend: “Our Good God is working of Miracles. Five Witches were Lately Executed, impudently demanding of God a Miraculous Vindication of their Innocency. Immediately upon this, Our God Miraculously sent in Five Andover–Witches, who made a most ample, surprising, amazing Confession, of all their Villainies and declared the Five newly executed to have been of their Company; discovering many more; but all agreeing in Burroughs being their Ringleader, who, I suppose, this day receives his Trial at Salem, whither a Vast Concourse of people is gone; My Father this morning among the Rest.”

[118] John Gaule, rector of Great Stoughton, in Huntingdonshire, was the first to oppose openly the witch–finder Hopkins, and wrote a little book, *Select Cases of Conscience touching Witches and Witchcrafts* (London, 1646), to lay bare his outrages and suggest saner methods. (See Notestein, *Witchcraft in England*, pp. 186–187, 236–237.) His rules for the detection of witches are published (though not without serious garbling) earlier in Mather's volume.

[119] The wife and the daughter of Deodat Lawson; see p. 148.

[120] *I. e.*, those tried and executed in 1612, and famous through the *Discoverie* of Potts (London, 1613), which Mather seems here to use, and the play of Shadwell.

[121] John Gaule again: this is the fifth of his “more certain” signs. (*Select Cases*, p. 82.)

[122] But see, on the contrary, page 301.

[123] He is quoting John Gaule — the first of his “more certain” signs (*Select Cases*, pp. 80–81).

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[124] Thomas Ady, *A Candle in the Dark* (London, 1656) — reprinted in 1661 as *A Perfect Discovery of Witches*. In neither edition are precisely these words to be found; but their substance occurs often. How bold and thoroughgoing a skeptic is Ady, and why Mather counts it answer enough that the passage was taken from his book, may be guessed from his opening sentence in which he gives “The Reason of the Book”: “The Grand Error of these latter Ages is ascribing power to Witches, and by foolish imagination of mens brains, without grounds in the Scriptures, wrongfull killing of the innocent under the name of Witches.” “When one Mr. Burroughs, a Clergyman, who some few years since was hang'd in New-England as a Wizzard, stood upon his Tryal,” wrote Dr. Hutchinson in 1718 in the book that was to end the controversy (*Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft*, p. xv), “he pull'd out of his Pocket a Leaf that he had got of Mr. Ady's Book, to prove that the Scripture Witchcrafts were not like ours: And as that Defence was not able to save him, I humbly offer my Book as an Argument on the Behalf of all such miserable People.”

[125] “Presently” then meant “at once.”

[126] For details as to his execution see above, p. 177 , and below, pp. 360–361. Before accepting in perfect faith Mather's account of his trial, one should weigh not only the comments of Calef (see pp. 378–380, below) and the severer criticisms of Upham (*Salem Witchcraft and Cotton Mather*) but the extant records (*Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 109–128; Mass. Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, 1860–1862, pp. 31–37; indictment, Calef, p. 113).

II. The Tryal of Bridget Bishop, ¹²⁷ alias Oliver, At the Court of Oyer and Terminer Held at Salem, June, 2, 1692.

I. She was Indicted for Bewitching of several persons in the Neighbourhood, the Indictment being drawn up, according to the Form in such Cases usual. And pleading, Not Guilty, there were brought in several persons, who had long undergone many kinds of Miseries, which were preternaturally Inflicted, and generally ascribed unto an horrible Witchcraft. There was little Occasion to prove the Witchcraft, it being Evident and Notorious to all Beholders. Now to fix the Witchcraft on the Prisoner at the Bar, the first thing used, was the Testimony of the Bewitched; whereof several Testify'd, That the Shape of the Prisoner did oftentimes very grievously pinch them, choak them, Bite them, and Afflict them; urging them to write their Names in a Book, which the said Spectre called, Ours. One of them did further Testify, that it was the Shape of this Prisoner, with another, which one Day took her from her Wheel, and carrying her to the River side, threatned there to Drown her, if she did not Sign to the Book mentioned: which yet she refused. Others of them did also Testify, that the said Shape did in her Threats brag to them that she had been the Death of sundry persons, then by her Named; that she had Ridden a man then likewise Named. Another Testify'd the Apparition of Ghosts unto the Spectre of Bishop, crying out, You Murdered us! About the Truth whereof, there was in the matter of Fact but too much Suspicion.

II. It was Testify'd, That at the Examination of the Prisoner before the Magistrates, the Bewitched were extreemly Tortured. If she did but cast her Eyes on them, they were presently struck down; and this in such a manner as there could be no Collusion in the Business. But upon the Touch of her Hand upon them, when they lay in their Swoons, they would immediately Revive; and not upon the Touch of any ones else. Moreover, upon some Special Actions of her Body, as the shaking of her Head, or the Turning of her Eyes, they presently and painfully fell into the like postures. And many of the like Accidents now fell out, while she was at the Bar. One at the same time testifying, That she said, She could not be Troubled to see the Afflicted thus Tormented.

III. There was Testimony likewise brought in, that a man striking once at the place, where a Bewitched person said, the Shape of this Bishop stood, the Bewitched cried out, that he had Tore her Coat, in the place then particularly specify'd; and the Womans Coat was found to be Torn in that very place.

IV. One Deliverance Hobbs, who had Confessed her being a Witch, was now Tormented by the Spectres, for her Confession. And she now Testify'd, That this Bishop tempted her to Sign the Book again, and to Deny what she had Confess'd. She affirmed, that it was the Shape of this Prisoner, which whipped her with Iron Rods, to compel her thereunto. And she affirmed, that this Bishop was at a General Meeting of the Witches, in a Field at Salem–Village, and there partook of a Diabolical Sacrament in Bread and Wine then Administred!

V. To render it further Unquestionable, that the prisoner at the Bar was the Person truly charged in *this* Witchcraft, there were produced many Evidences of *other* Witchcrafts, by her perpetrated. For Instance, John Cook testify'd, that about five or six years ago, One morning, about Sun–Rise, he was in his Chamber assaulted by the Shape of this prisoner: which Look'd on him, grin'd at him, and very much hurt him with a Blow on the side of the Head: and that on the same day, about Noon, the same Shape walked in the Room where he was, and an Apple strangely flew out of his Hand, into the Lap of his Mother, six or eight foot from him.

VI. Samuel Gray testify'd, That about fourteen years ago, he wak'd on a Night, and saw the Room where he lay full of Light; and that he then saw plainly a Woman between the Cradle and the Bed–side, which look'd upon him. He Rose, and it vanished; tho' he found the Doors all fast. Looking out at the Entry–Door, he saw the same Woman, in the same Garb again; and said, In Gods Name, what do you come for? He went to Bed, and had the same Woman again assaulting him. The Child in the Cradle gave a great schreech, and the Woman Disappeared. It was long before the Child could be quieted; and tho' it were a very likely thriving Child, yet from this time it pined away, and after divers months dy'd in a sad Condition. He knew not Bishop, nor her Name; but when he saw her after this, he knew by her Countenance, and Apparel, and all Circumstances, that it was the Apparition of this Bishop which had thus troubled him.

VII. John Bly and his Wife testify'd, that he bought a sow of Edward Bishop, the Husband of the prisoner; and

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

was to pay the price agreed, unto another person. This Prisoner being Angry that she was thus hindred from fingring the money, Quarrell'd with Bly. Soon after which, the Sow was taken with strange Fits, Jumping, Leaping, and knocking her head against the Fence; she seem'd Blind and Deaf, and would neither eat nor be suck'd. Whereupon a neighbour said, she believed the Creature was Over-Looked; and sundry other circumstances concurred, which made the Deponents Believe that Bishop had Bewitched it.

VIII. Richard Coman testify'd, that eight years ago, as he lay Awake in his Bed, with a Light Burning in the Room, he was annoy'd with the Apparition of this Bishop, and of two more that were strangers to him, who came and oppressed him so, that he could neither stir himself, nor wake any one else, and that he was the night after molested again in the like manner; the said Bishop taking him by the Throat, and pulling him almost out of the Bed. His kinsman offer'd for this cause to lodge with him; and that Night, as they were Awake, Discoursing together, this Coman was once more visited by the Guests which had formerly been so troublesome; his kinsman being at the same time strook speechless and unable to move Hand or Foot. He had laid his sword by him, which these unhappy spectres did strive much to wrest from him; only he held too fast for them. He then grew able to call the People of his house; but altho' they heard him, yet they had not power to speak or stir; until at last, one of the people crying out, what's the matter? the spectres all vanished.

IX. Samuel Shattock testify'd, That in the Year 1680, this Bridget Bishop often came to his house upon such frivolous and foolish errands, that they suspected she came indeed with a purpose of mischief. Presently whereupon his eldest child, which was of as promising Health and Sense as any child of its Age, began to droop exceedingly; and the oftener that Bishop came to the House, the worse grew the Child. As the Child would be standing at the Door, he would be thrown and bruised against the Stones, by an Invisible Hand, and in like sort knock his Face against the sides of the House, and bruise it after a miserable manner. Afterwards this Bishop would bring him things to Dy, whereof he could not Imagine any use; and when she paid him a piece of Money, the Purse and Money were unaccountably conveyed out of a Lock'd box, and never seen more. The Child was immediately hereupon taken with terrible fits, whereof his Friends thought he would have dyed: indeed he did almost nothing but cry and Sleep for several Months together; and at length his understanding was utterly taken away. Among other Symptoms of an Inchantment upon him, one was, that there was a Board in the Garden, whereon he would walk; and all the invitations in the world could never fetch him off. About Seventeen or Eighteen years after, there came a Stranger to Shattocks House, who seeing the Child, said, "This poor Child is Bewitched; and you have a Neighbour living not far off, who is a Witch." He added, "Your Neighbour has had a falling out with your Wife; and she said in her Heart, your Wife is a proud Woman, and she would bring down her Pride in this Child." He then Remembred, that Bishop had parted from his Wife in muttering and menacing Terms, a little before the Child was taken Ill. The abovesaid Stranger would needs carry the Bewitched Boy with him to Bishops House, on pretence of buying a pot of Cyder. The Woman Entertained him in furious manner; and flew also upon the Boy, scratching his Face till the Blood came; and saying, "Thou Rogue, what, dost thou bring this Fellow here to plague me?" Now it seems the Man had said, before he went, that he would fetch Blood of *her*. Ever after the Boy was follow'd with grievous Fits, which the Doctors themselves generally ascribed unto Witchcraft; and wherein he would be thrown still into the Fire or the Water, if he were not constantly look'd after; and it was verily believed that Bishop was the cause of it.

X. John Louder testify'd, that upon some little controversy with Bishop about her fowles, going well to Bed, he did awake in the Night by moonlight, and did see clearly the likeness of thisoman grievously oppressing him; in which miserable condition she held him, unable to help him self, till near Day. He told Bishop of this; but she deny'd it, and threatned him very much. Quickly after this, being at home on a Lords day, with the doors shutt about him, he saw a Black Pig approach him; at which he going to kick, it vanished away. Immediately after, sitting down, he saw a Black thing Jump in at the Window, and come and stand before him. The Body was like that of a Monkey, the Feet like a Cocks, but the Face much like a mans. He being so extreemly affrighted, that he could not speak, this Monster spoke to him, and said, "I am a Messenger sent unto you, for I understand that you are in some Trouble of Mind, and if you will be ruled by me, you shall want for nothing in this world." Whereupon he endeavoured to clap his hands upon it; but he could feel no substance, and it jumped out of the window again; but immediately came in by the Porch, though the Doors were shut, and said, "You had better take my Counsel!" He then struck at it with a stick, but struck only the Groundsel, and broke the Stick. The Arm with which he struck was presently Disenabled, and it vanished away. He presently went out at the Back-Door, and

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

spied this Bishop, in her Orchard, going toward her House; but he had not power to set one foot forward unto her. Whereupon returning into the House, he was immediately accosted by the Monster he had seen before; which Goblin was now going to Fly at him; whereat he cry'd out, "The whole Armour of God be between me and you!" So it sprang back, and flew over the Apple Tree, shaking many Apples off the Tree, in its flying over. At its Leap, it flung Dirt with its Feet against the Stomach of the Man; whereon he was then struck Dumb, and so continued for three Days together. Upon the producing of this Testimony, Bishop deny'd that she knew this Deponent: yet their two Orchards joined, and they had often had their Little Quarrels for some years together.

XI. William Stacy Testifyed, That receiving Money of this Bishop, for work done by him, he was gone but a matter of Three Rods from her, and looking for his money, found it unaccountably gone from him. Some time after, Bishop asked him, whether his Father would grind her grist for her? He demanded why? she Reply'd, "Because Folks count me a Witch." He answered, "No Question, but he will grind it for you." Being then gone about six Rods from her, with a small Load in his Cart, suddenly the Off-wheel slump't and sunk down into an Hole upon plain ground, so that the Deponent was forced to get help for the Recovering of the wheel. But stepping Back to look for the Hole which might give him this disaster, there was none at all to be found. Some time after, he was waked in the Night; but it seem'd as Light as Day, and he perfectly saw the shape of this Bishop in the Room, Troubling of him; but upon her going out, all was Dark again. He charg'd Bishop afterwards with it, and she deny'd it not; but was very angry. Quickly after, this Deponent having been threaten'd by Bishop, as he was in a dark Night going to the Barn, he was very suddenly taken or lifted from the ground, and thrown against a stone wall; After that, he was again hoisted up and thrown down a Bank, at the end of his House. After this again, passing by this Bishop, his Horse with a small load, striving to Draw, all his Gears flew to pieces, and the Cart fell down; and this deponent going then to lift a Bag of corn, of about two Bushels, could not budge it with all his might.

Many other pranks of this Bishops this Deponent was Ready to testify. He also testify'd, that he verily Believed, the said Bishop was the Instrument of his Daughter Priscilla's Death; of which suspicion, pregnant Reasons were assigned.

XII. To Crown all, John Bly and William Bly Testify'd, That being Employ'd by Bridget Bishop, to help take down the Cellar-wall of the old House, wherein she formerly Lived, they did in Holes of the said old Wall find several Poppets, ¹²⁸ made up of Rags and Hogs Brussels, with Headless Pins in them, the Points being outward. Whereof she could give no Account unto the Court, that was Reasonable or Tolerable.

XIII. One thing that made against the Prisoner was, her being evidently convicted of Gross Lying in the Court, several Times, while she was making her Plea. But besides this, a Jury of Women found a preternatural Teat upon her Body, ¹²⁹ but upon a second search, within Three or four hours, there was no such thing to be seen. There was also an account of other people whom this woman had afflicted. And there might have been many more, if they had been enquired for. But there was no need of them.

XIV. There was one very strange thing more, with which the Court was newly Entertained. As this Woman was, under a Guard, passing by the Great and Spacious Meeting-House of Salem, she gave a Look towards the House. And immediately a Dæmon Invisibly Entering the Meeting-house, Tore down a part of it; so that tho' there were no person to be seen there, yet the people at the Noise running in, found a Board, which was strongly fastned with several Nails, transported unto another quarter of the House.

Notes

[127] As to Bridget Bishop see also pp. 249, 356, below.

She was of Salem Village, where she kept a sort of wayside tavern, but had long lived in the town, and still held property there. She was the first witch to be tried (June 2) and executed (June 10) — perhaps because she had so long been under suspicion. The records of her case are printed in *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 135–172.

[128] Supposed, of course, by her accusers to be such “images” as witches were alleged to make of their victims, for the sake of torturing them by proxy. (See above, p. 163, note 1, p. 219, and below, p. 440, note 1.)

[129] See below, p. 436, and note 1.

III. The Tryal of Susanna Martin, ¹³⁰ At the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 29, 1692.

I. Susanna Martin, pleading Not Guilty to the Indictment of Witchcraft brought in against her, there were produced the evidences of many persons very sensibly and grievously Bewitched; who all complained of the prisoner at the Bar, as the person whom they Believed the cause of their Miseries. And now, as well as in the other Trials, there was an extraordinary endeavour by Witchcrafts, with Cruel and Frequent Fits, to hinder the poor sufferers from giving in their complaints; which the Court was forced with much patience to obtain, by much waiting and watching for it.

II. There was now also an Account given, of what passed at her first examination before the Magistrates. The cast of her eye then striking the Afflicted People to the ground, whether they saw that Cast or no; there were these among other passages between the Magistrates and the Examinee.

Magistrate.

Pray, what ails these People?

Martin.

I don't know.

Magistrate.

But what do you think ails them?

Martin.

I don't desire to spend my Judgment upon it.

Magistrate.

Don't you think they are Bewitch'd?

Martin.

No, I do not think they are.

Magistrate.

Tell us your thoughts about them then.

Martin.

No, my thoughts are my own when they are in, but when they are out, they are anothers. Their Master —
Magistrate.

Their Master? who do you think is their Master?

Martin.

If they be dealing in the Black Art, you may know as well as I.
Magistrate.

Well, what have you done towards this?

Martin.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Nothing at all.

Magistrate.

Why, tis you or your Appearance.

Martin.

I cannot help it.

Magistrate.

Is it not Your Master? How comes your Appearance to hurt these?

Martin.

How do I know? He that appeared in the shape of Samuel, a Glorify'd Saint, may Appear in any ones shape.

It was then also noted in her, as in others like her, that if the Afflicted went to approach her, they were flung down to the Ground. And, when she was asked the Reason of it, she said, "I cannot tell; it may be, the Devil bears me more Malice than another."

III. The Court accounted themselves Alarum'd by these things, to Enquire further into the Conversation of the Prisoner; and see what there might occur, to render these Accusations further credible. Whereupon, John Allen, of Salisbury, testify'd, That he refusing, because of the weakness of his Oxen, to Cart some Staves, at the request of this Martin, she was displeas'd at it; and said, "It had been as good that he had; for his Oxen should never do him much more Service." Whereupon this Deponent said, "Dost thou threaten me, thou old Witch? I'll throw thee into the Brook": Which to avoid, she flew over the Bridge, and escaped. But, as he was going home, one of his Oxen Tired, so that he was forced to Unyoke him, that he might get him home. He then put his Oxen, with many more, upon Salisbury Beach, where Cattle did use to get Flesh. In a few days, all the Oxen upon the Beach were found by their Tracks, to have run unto the mouth of Merrimack-River, and not returned; but the next day they were found come ashore upon Plum-Island. They that sought them used all imaginable gentleness, but they would still run away with a violence that seem'd wholly Diabolical, till they came near the mouth of Merrimack-River; when they ran right into the Sea, swimming as far as they could be seen. One of them then swam back again, with a swiftness amazing to the Beholders, who stood ready to receive him, and help up his Tired Carcass: But the Beast ran furiously up into the Island, and from thence, through the Marishes, up into Newbury Town, and so up into the Woods; and there after a while found near Amesbury. So that, of Fourteen good Oxen, there was only this saved: the rest were all cast up, some in one place, and some in another, Drowned.

IV. John Atkinson Testify'd, That he Exchanged a Cow with a Son of Susanna Martins, whereat she muttered, and was unwilling he should have it. Going to Receive this Cow, tho' he Hamstring'd her, and Halter'd her, she of a Tame Creature grew so mad, that they could scarce get her along. She broke all the Ropes that were fastned unto her, and though she were Ty'd fast unto a Tree, yet she made her Escape, and gave them such further Trouble, as they could ascribe to no cause but Witchcraft.

V. Bernard Peache testify'd, That being in Bed on a Lords-day Night, he heard a scrabbling at the Window, whereat he then saw Susanna Martin come in, and jump down upon the Floor. She took hold of this Deponents Feet, and drawing his Body up into an Heap, she lay upon him near Two Hours; in all which time he could neither speak nor stirr. At length, when he could begin to move, he laid hold on her Hand, and pulling it up to his mouth, he bit three of her Fingers, as he judged, unto the Bone. Whereupon she went from the Chamber, down the Stairs, out at the Door. This Deponent there-upon called unto the people of the House, to advise them of what pass'd; and he himself did follow her. The people saw her not; but there being a Bucket at the Left-hand of the Door, there was a drop of Blood found on it; and several more drops of Blood upon the Snow newly fallen abroad. There was likewise the print of her two Feet just without the Threshold; but no more sign of any Footing further off.

At another time this Deponent was desired by the Prisoner, to come unto an Husking of Corn, at her House; and she said, If he did not come, it were better that he did! He went not; but the Night following, Susanna Martin, as he judged, and another came towards him. One of them said, "Here he is!" but he having a Quarter-staff, made a Blow at them. The Roof of the Barn broke his Blow; but following them to the Window, he made another Blow

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

at them, and struck them down; yet they got up, and got out, and he saw no more of them.

About this time, there was a Rumour about the Town, that Martin had a Broken Head; but the Deponent could say nothing to that.

The said Peache also testify'd the Bewitching of Cattle to Death, upon Martin's Discontents.

VI. Robert Downer testified, That this Prisoner being some years ago prosecuted at Court for a Witch, ¹³¹ he then said unto her, He believed she was a Witch. Whereat she being dissatisfied, said, That some Shee-Devil would Shortly fetch him away! Which words were heard by others, as well as himself. The Night following, as he lay in his Bed, there came in at the Window the likeness of a Cat, which Flew upon him, took fast hold of his Throat, lay on him a considerable while, and almost killed him. At length he remembered what Susanna Martin had threatned the Day before; and with much striving he cryed out, "Avoid, thou Shee-Devil! In the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Avoid!" Whereupon it left him, leap'd on the Floor, and Flew out at the Window.

And there also came in several Testimonies, that before ever Downer spoke a word of this Accident, Susanna Martin and her Family had related, How this Downer had been Handled!

VII. John Kembal testified, that Susanna Martin, upon a Causeless Disgust, had threatned him, about a certain Cow of his, That she should never do him any more Good: and it came to pass accordingly. For soon after the Cow was found stark Dead on the dry Ground, without any Distemper to be discerned upon her. Upon which he was followed with a strange Death upon more of his Cattle, whereof he lost in One Spring to the value of Thirty Pounds. But the said John Kembal had a further Testimony to give in against the Prisoner which was truly admirable.

Being desirous to furnish himself with a Dog, he applied himself to buy one of this Martin, who had a Bitch with Whelps in her House. But she not letting him have his Choice, he said, he would supply himself then at one Blezdels. Having mark'd a puppy which he lik'd at Blezdels, he met George Martin, the Husband of the prisoner, going by, who asked him, Whether he would not have one of his Wives Puppies? and he answered, No. The same Day, one Edmund Eliot, being at Martins House, heard George Martin relate, where this Kembal had been, and what he had said. Whereupon Susanna Martin replied, "If I live, I'll give him Puppies enough!" Within a few Dayes after, this Kembal coming out of the Woods, there arose a little Black Cloud in the N.W. and Kembal immediately felt a Force upon him, which made him not able to avoid running upon the stumps of Trees, that were before him, albeit he had a broad, plain Cart way, before him; but tho' he had his Ax also on his Shoulder to endanger him in his Falls, he could not forbear going out of his way to tumble over them. When he came below the Meeting-House, there appeared unto him a little thing like a Puppy, of a Darkish Colour; and it shot backwards and forwards between his Legs. He had the Courage to use all possible Endeavours of Cutting it with his Ax; but he could not Hit it; the Puppy gave a jump from him, and went, as to him it seem'd, into the Ground. Going a little further, there appeared unto him a Black Puppy, somewhat bigger than the first, but as Black as a Cole. Its motions were quicker than those of his Ax; it Flew at his Belly, and away; then at his Throat; so, over his Shoulder one way, and then over his Shoulder another way. His heart now began to fail him, and he thought the Dog would have Tore his Throat out. But he recovered himself, and called upon God in his Distress; and Naming the Name of Jesus Christ, it Vanished away at once. The Deponent Spoke not one Word of these Accidents, for fear of affrighting his wife. But the next Morning, Edmond Eliot going into Martins House, this woman asked him where Kembal was? He Replied, At home, a bed, for ought he knew. She returned, "They say, he was frighted last Night." Eliot asked, "With what?" She answered, "With Puppies." Eliot asked, Where she heard of it, for he had heard nothing of it? She rejoined, "About the Town." Altho' Kembal had mentioned the Matter to no Creature Living.

VIII. William Brown testify'd, that Heaven having blessed him with a most Pious and prudent wife, this wife of his one day mett with Susanna Martin; but when she approach'd just unto her, Martin vanished out of sight, and left her extremely affrighted. After which time, the said Martin often appear'd unto her, giving her no little trouble; and when she did come, she was visited with Birds that sorely peck't and Prick'd her; and sometimes a Bunch, like a pullets egg, would Rise in her throat, ready to Choak her, till she cry'd out, "Witch, you shan't choak me!" While this good Woman was in this Extremity, the Church appointed a Day of Prayer, on her behalf; whereupon her Trouble ceas'd; she saw not Martin as formerly; and the Church, instead of their Fast, gave Thanks for her Deliverance. But a considerable while after, she being Summoned to give in some Evidence at the Court,

III. The Tryal of Susanna Martin, 130 At the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Sal^{er}th, June

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

against this Martin, quickly thereupon this Martin came behind her, while she was milking her Cow, and said unto her, “For thy defaming me at Court, I'll make thee the miserablest Creature in the World.” Soon after which, she fell into a strange kind of Distemper, and became horribly Frantick, and uncapable of any Reasonable Action; the Physicians declaring, that her Distemper was preternatural, and that some Devil had certainly Bewitched her; and in that Condition she now remained.

IX. Sarah Atkinson testify'd, That Susanna Martin came from Amesbury to their House at Newbury, in an extraordinary Season, when it was not fit for any one to Travel. She came (as she said unto Atkinson) all that long way on Foot. She brag'd and show'd how dry she was; nor could it be perceived that so much as the Soles of her Shoes were wet. Atkinson was amazed at it; and professed, that she should her self have been wet up to the knees, if she had then came so far; but Martin reply'd, She scorn'd to be Drabbled! It was noted, that this Testimony upon her Trial cast her in a very singular Confusion.

X. John Pressy testify'd, That being one Evening very unaccountably Bewildred, near a field of Martins, and several times, as one under an Enchantment, returning to the place he had left, at length he saw a marvellous Light, about the Bigness of an Half-Bushel, near two Rod out of the way. He went, and struck at it with a Stick, and laid it on with all his might. He gave it near forty blows; and felt it a palpable substance. But going from it, his Heels were struck up, and he was laid with his Back on the Ground, Sliding, as he thought, into a Pit; from whence he recover'd, by taking hold on the Bush; altho' afterwards he could find no such Pit in the place. Having, after his Recovery, gone five or six Rod, he saw Susanna Martin standing on his Left-hand, as the Light had done before; but they changed no words with one another. He could scarce find his House in his Return; but at length he got home, extreemly affrighted. The next day, it was upon Enquiry understood, that Martin was in a miserable condition by pains and hurts that were upon her.

It was further testify'd by this Deponent, That after he had given in some Evidence against Susanna Martin, many years ago, she gave him foul words about it; and said, He should never prosper more; particularly, That he should never have more than two Cows; that tho' he were never so likely to have more, yet he should never have them. And that from that very Day to this, namely for Twenty Years together, he could never exceed that Number; but some strange thing or other still prevented his having of any more.

XI. Jervis Ring testified, that about seven years ago, he was oftentimes and grievously Oppressed in the Night, but saw not who Troubled him, until at last he, Lying perfectly Awake, plainly saw Susanna Martin approach him. She came to him, and forceably Bit him by the Finger; so that the Print of the Bite is now so long after to be seen upon him.

XII. But besides all of these Evidences, there was a most wonderful Account of one Joseph Ring, produced on this Occasion.

This man has been strangely carried about by Dæmons, from one Witch-Meeting to another, for near two years together; and for one Quarter of this Time, they have made him and kept him Dumb, tho' he is now again able to speak. There was one T. H. ¹³² who having, as tis judged, a Design of engaging this Joseph Ring in a Snare of Devillism, contrived a wile, to bring this Ring two Shillings in Debt unto him.

Afterwards, this poor man would be visited with unknown shapes, and this T. H. sometimes among them; which would force him away with them, unto unknown Places, where he saw meetings, Feastings, Dancings; and after his Return, wherein they hurried him along thro' the Air, he gave Demonstrations to the Neighbours, that he had indeed been so transported. When he was brought unto these Hellish meetings, one of the First things they still ¹³³ did unto him, was to give him a knock on the Back, whereupon he was ever as if Bound with Chains, uncapable of Stirring out of the place, till they should Release him. He related, that there often came to him a man, who presented him a Book, whereto he would have him set his Hand; promising to him, that he should then have even what he would; and presenting him with all the Delectable Things, persons, and places, that he could imagine. But he refusing to subscribe, the business would end with dreadful Shapes, Noises and Screeches, which almost scared him out of his witts. Once with the Book, there was a Pen offered him, and an Inkhorn with Liquor in it, that seemed like Blood: but he never toucht it.

This man did now affirm, that he saw the Prisoner at several of those Hellish Rendezvouzes.

Note, This Woman was one of the most Impudent, Scurrilous, wicked creatures in the world; and she did now throughout her whole Trial discover herself to be such an one. Yet when she was asked, what she had to say for her self? her Cheef Plea was, That she had Led a most virtuous and Holy Life!

Notes

[130] Of Amesbury. She too had been long accused. For the trial records see *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 193–233. She was executed on July 19.

[131] In 1669. She was then bound over to the Superior Court, but was discharged without trial. (Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts*, II., ch. I., as published from an earlier draft, with notes by W. F. Poole, in *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXIV.)

[132] Thomas Hardy, of Great Island, near Portsmouth. See *Records*, I. 216.

[133] Always.

IV. The Trial of Elizabeth How, ¹³⁴ at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, June 30, 1692.

I. Elizabeth How pleading Not Guilty to the Indictment of Witchcrafts, then charged upon her, the Court, according to the usual proceeding of the Courts in England, in such Cases, began with hearing the Depositions of Several Afflicted People, who were grievously Tortured by sensible and evident Witchcrafts, and all complained of the Prisoner, as the cause of their Trouble. It was also found that the Sufferers were not able to bear her Look, as likewise, that in their greatest Swoons, they distinguished her Touch from other peoples, being thereby raised out of them.

And there was other Testimony of people to whom the shape of this How gave trouble Nine or Ten years ago.

II. It has been a most usual thing for the Bewitched persons, at the same time that the Spectres representing the Witches Troubled them, to be visited with Apparitions of Ghosts, pretending to have bin Murdered by the Witches then represented. And sometimes the confessions of the witches afterwards acknowledged those very Murders, which these Apparitions charged upon them; altho' they had never heard what Informations had been given by the Sufferers.

There were such Apparitions of Ghosts testified by some of the present Sufferers, and the Ghosts affirmed that this How had Murdered them: which things were Fear'd but not prov'd.

III. This How had made some Attempts of Joyning to the Church, at Ipswich, several years ago; but she was deny'd an Admission into that Holy Society, partly through a suspicion of witchcraft, then urged against her. And there now came in Testimony, of Preternatural Mischiefs, presently befalling some that had been Instrumental to Debar her from the Communion, whereupon she was Intruding.

IV. There was a particular Deposition of Joseph Safford, That his Wife had conceived an extream Aversion to this How, on the Reports of her Witchcrafts: but How one day, taking her by the hand, and saying, "I believe you are not Ignorant of the great Scandal that I ly under, by an evil Report Raised upon me," She immediately, unreasonably, and unperswadably, even like one Enchanted, began to take this Womans part. How being soon after propounded, as desiring an Admission to the Table of the Lord, some of the pious Brethren were unsatisfy'd about her. The Elders appointed a Meeting to hear Matters objected against her; and no Arguments in the world could hinder this Goodwife Safford from going to the Lecture. She did indeed promise, with much ado, that she would not go to the Church-Meeting, yet she could not refrain going thither also. How's Affayrs there were so Canvased, that she came off rather Guilty than Cleared; nevertheless Goodwife Safford could not forbear taking her by the Hand, and saying, "Tho' you are Condemned before men, you are Justify'd before God." She was quickly taken in a very strange manner, Frantick, Raving, Raging and Crying out, "Goody How must come into the Church; she is a precious Saint; and tho' she be Condemned before Men, she is Justify'd before God." So she continued for the space of two or three Hours; and then fell into a Trance. But coming to her self, she cry'd out, "Ha! I was mistaken"; and afterwards again repeated, "Ha! I was mistaken!" Being asked by a stander by, "Wherein?" She replied, "I thought Goody How had been a Precious Saint of God, but now I see she is a Witch. She has Bewitched me, and my Child, and we shall never be well, till there be Testimony for her, that she may be taken into the Church." And How said afterwards, that she was very Sorry to see Safford at the Church-Meeting mentioned. Safford after this declared herself to be afflicted by the Shape of How; and from that Shape she endured many Miseries.

V. John How, Brother to the Husband of the prisoner testified, that he refusing to accompany the prisoner unto her Examination, as was by her desired, immediately some of his Cattle were Bewitched to Death, Leaping three or four foot high, turning about, Squeaking, Falling, and Dying, at once; and going to cut off an Ear, for an use that might as well per haps have been Omitted, ¹³⁵ the Hand wherein he held his knife was taken very Numb, and so it remained, and full of Pain, for several Dayes; being not well at this very Time. And he suspected this prisoner for the Author of it.

VI. Nehemiah Abbot testify'd, that unusual and mischievous Accidents would befall his cattle, whenever he had

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

any Difference with this Prisoner. Once, Particularly, she wished his Oxe Choaked; and within a Little while that Oxe was Choaked with a Turnip in his Throat. At another time, refusing to lend his horse, at the Request of her Daughter, the horse was in a Preternatural manner abused. And several other Odd Things of that kind were testify'd.

VII. There came in Testimony, that one goodwife Sherwin, upon some Difference with How, was Bewitched, and that she Dy'd, Charging this How of having an Hand in her Death. And that other People had their Barrels of Drink unaccountably mischieved, spoilt, and spilt, upon their Displeasing of her.

The things in themselves were Trivial; but there being such a Course of them, it made them the more to be considered. Among others, Martha Wood gave her Testimony, that a Little after her Father had been employ'd in gathering an Account of Howes Conversation, they once and again Lost Great Quantities of Drink out of their Vessels, in such a manner, as they could ascribe to nothing but Witchcraft. As also, that How giving her some Apples, when she had eaten of them she was taken with a very strange kind of a maze, insomuch that she knew not what she said or did.

VIII. There was Likewise a cluster of Depositions, that one Isaac Cummings refusing to lend his Mare unto the Husband of this How, the mare was within a Day or two taken in a strange condition. The Beast seemed much Abused; being Bruised, as if she had been Running over the Rocks, and marked where the Bridle went, as if burnt with a Red hot Bridle. Moreover, one using a Pipe of Tobacco for the Cure of the Beast, a blew Flame issued out of her, took hold of her Hair, and not only Spread and Burnt on her, but it also flew upwards towards the Roof of the Barn, and had like to have set the Barn on Fire. And the Mare dy'd very suddenly.

IX. Timothy Perley and his Wife Testify'd, not only that unaccountable Mischiefs befel their Cattle, upon their having of Differences with this Prisoner: but also, that they had a Daughter destroy'd by Witchcrafts; which Daughter still charged How as the cause of her Affliction; and it was noted, that she would be struck down, whenever How were spoken of. She was often endeavoured to be Thrown into the Fire, and into the Water, in her strange Fits: tho' her Father had Corrected her for Charging How with Bewitching her, yet (as was testify'd by others also) she said, she was sure of it, and must dy standing to it. Accordingly she Charged How to the very Death; and said, Tho' How could Afflict and Torment her Body, yet she could not Hurt her Soul: and, That the Truth of this matter would appear, when she should be Dead and Gone.

X. Francis Lane testify'd, That being hired by the Husband of this How to get him a parcel of Posts and Rails, this Lane hired John Pearly to assist him. This Prisoner then told Lane, that she believed the Posts and Rails would not do, because John Perley helped him; but that if he had got them alone, without John Pearlies help, they might have done well enough. When James How came to receive his Posts and Rails of Lane, How taking them up by the ends, they, tho' good and sound, yet unaccountably broke off, so that Lane was forced to get Thirty or Forty more. And this Prisoner being informed of it, she said, she told him so before; because Pearly help'd about them.

XI. Afterwards there came in the Confessions of several other (penitent) Witches, which affirmed this How to be one of those, who with them had been baptized by the Devil in the River at Newbery–Falls: before which, he made them there kneel down by the Brink of the River and Worship him.

Notes

[134]. Of Ipswich. For the touching story of her trial and of the loyalty of her blind husband and her daughters, see especially Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 216–223, and, in the *Historical Collections* of the Topsfield Historical Society, XIII. (1908), the study on “Topsfield in the Witchcraft Delusion,” by Mrs. Towne and Miss Clark. In the same volume (pp. 107–126) Mr. G. F. Dow has published the records of her case more completely than has Woodward in *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (II. 69–94). She was executed on July 19.

[135]. What this purpose may have been does not appear in the evidence: John How testifies merely that a neighbor who had laughed at him for thinking the sow bewitched told him to cut off her ear, “the which I did.” It was doubtless to burn it, as a means to detect the witch. So, Perkins and Gaule say, in England it was a practice to burn the thing bewitched; and so at New Haven, in 1657, Thomas Mullener cut off the tail and ear of a pig and threw them into the fire to find out the witch (*Records of the Colony of New Haven*, II. 224). The belief was that the person who then first came to the fire was the witch (see below, p.411).

V. The Trial of Martha Carrier, ¹³⁶ at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Held by Adjournment at Salem, August 2, 1692.

I. Martha Carrier was Indicted for the Bewitching of certain Persons, according to the Form usual in such Cases. Pleading Not Guilty, to her Indictment, there were First brought in a considerable number of the Bewitched Persons; who not only made the Court sensible of an horrid Witchcraft committed upon them, but also deposed, That it was Martha Carrier, or her Shape, that Grievously Tormented them, by Biting, Pricking, Pinching, and Choaking of them. It was further deposed, that while this Carrier was on her Examination, before the Magistrates, the Poor People were so Tortured that every one expected their Death upon the very Spott; but that upon the binding of Carrier they were eased. Moreover the Look of Carrier then laid the Afflicted People for Dead; and her Touch, if her Eye at the same Time were off them, raised them again. Which things were also now seen upon her Trial. And it was Testified, that upon the mention of some having their Necks twisted almost round, by the Shape of this Carrier, she replied, “Its no matter, tho' their Necks had been twisted quite off.”

II. Before the Trial of this prisoner, several of her own Children had frankly and fully confessed, not only that they were Witches themselves, but that this their Mother had made them so. This Confession they made with great shows of Repentance, and with much Demonstration of Truth. They Related Place, Time, Occasion; they gave an account of Journeyes, Meetings, and Mischiefs by them performed; and were very credible in what they said. Nevertheless, this Evidence was not produced against the Prisoner at the Bar, inasmuch as there was other Evidence enough to proceed upon.

III. Benjamin Abbot gave in his Testimony, that last March was a twelve month, this Carrier was very Angry with him, upon laying out some Land, near her Husbands: Her Expressions in this Anger, were, That she would stick as close to Abbot, as the Bark stuck to the Tree, and that he should Repent of it afore seven years came to an end, so as Doctor Prescott should never cure him. These words were heard by others, besides Abbot himself; who also heard her say, She would hold his Nose as close to the Grindstone, as ever it was held since his Name was Abbot. Presently after this, he was taken with a swelling in his Foot, and then with a pain in his side, and exceedingly Tormented. It bred into a sore, which was Lanced by Doctor Prescott, and several Gallons of Corruption ran out of it. For six weeks it continued very bad; and then another sore bred in his Groin, which was also Lanc'd by Doctor Prescott. Another Sore then bred in his Groin, which was likewise Cut, and put him to very great Misery. He was brought unto Deaths Door, and so remained until Carrier was taken, and carried away by the Constable; from which very day, he began to mend, and so grew better every day, and is well ever since.

Sarah Abbot also, his Wife, testify'd, that her Husband was not only all this while Afflicted in his Body, but also that strange, extraordinary and unaccountable Calamities befel his Cattel; their Death being such as they could guess at no Natural Reason for.

IV. Allin Toothaker testify'd, That Richard, the Son of Martha Carrier, having some Difference with him, pull'd him down by the Hair of the Head. When he Rose again, he was going to strike at Richard Carrier; but fell down flat on his Back to the ground, and had not power to stir hand or foot, until he told Carrier he yielded; and then he saw the Shape of Martha Carrier go off his Breast.

This Toothaker had Received a Wound in the Wars; and he now testify'd, that Martha Carrier told him, He should never be Cured. Just afore the Apprehending of Carrier, he could thrust a knitting Needle into his Wound, four Inches Deep; but presently after her being Siezed, he was thoroughly Healed.

He further testify'd, That when Carrier and he sometimes were at variance, she would clap her hands at him, and say, He should get nothing by it; Whereupon he several times lost his Cattle, by strange Deaths, whereof no Natural Causes could be given.

V. John Rogger also testified, That upon the threatning words of this malicious Carrier, his Cattle would be strangely Bewitched; as was more particularly then described.

VI. Samuel Preston testify'd, that about two years ago, having some Difference with Martha Carrier, he lost a Cow in a strange Preternatural unusual manner; and about a month after this, the said Carrier, having again some

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Difference with him, she told him, He had lately lost a Cow, and it should not be long before he Lost another! which accordingly came to Pass; for he had a Thriving and well-kept Cow, which without any known cause quickly fell down and Dy'd.

VII. Phebe Chandler testify'd, that about a Fortnight before the apprehension of Martha Carrier, on a Lords-Day, while the Psalm was singing, in the Church, this Carrier then took her by the shoulder and shaking her, asked her, where she Lived? she made her no Answer, although as Carrier, who lived next door to her Fathers House, could not in reason but know who she was. Quickly after this, as she was at several times crossing the Fields, she heard a voice, that she took to be Martha Carriers, and it seem'd as if it was over her Head. The voice told her, she should within two or three days be Poisoned. Accordingly, within such a Little time, One Half of her Right Hand became greatly swollen, and very painful; as also part of her Face; whereof she can give no account how it came. It continued very Bad for some dayes; and several times since, she has had a great pain in her Breast; and been so siezed on her Legs, that she has hardly been able to go. She added that lately, going well to the House of God, Richard, the Son of Martha Carrier, Look'd very earnestly upon her, and immediately her hand, which had formerly been poisoned, as is abovesaid, began to pain her greatly, and she had a strange Burning at her stomach; but was then struck deaf, so that she could not hear any of the prayer, or singing, till the two or three last words of the Psalme.

VIII. One Foster, who confessed her own Share in the Witchcraft for which the Prisoner stood indicted, affirm'd, That she had seen the Prisoner at some of their Witch-Meetings, and that it was this Carrier, who perswaded her to be a Witch. She confessed, That the Devil carry'd them on a Pole, to a Witch-Meeting; but the Pole broke, and she hanging about Carriers Neck, they both fell down, and she then Received an Hurt by the Fall, whereof she was not at this very time Recovered.

IX. One Lacy, who likewise confessed her share in this Witchcraft, now Testify'd, That she and the Prisoner were once Bodily present at a Witch-meeting in Salem-Village; and that she knew the Prisoner to be a Witch, and to have been at a Diabolical Sacrament, and that the Prisoner was the undoing of her and her Children, by Enticing them into the Snare of the Devil.

X. Another Lacy, who also Confessed her share in this Witchcraft, now Testify'd, That the Prisoner was at the Witch-Meeting, in Salem Village, where they had Bread and Wine Administred unto them.

XI. In the Time of this Prisoner's Trial, one Susanna Shelden in open Court had her Hands Unaccountably Ty'd together with a Wheel-band, so fast that without Cutting it could not be Loosed: It was done by a Spectre; and the Sufferer affirm'd, it was the Prisoners.

Memorandum. This Rampant Hag, Martha Carrier, was the Person, of whom the Confessions of the Witches, and of her own Children among the rest, agreed, That the Devil had promised her, she should be Queen of Hell.

Having thus far done the Service imposed upon me, I will further pursue it, by relating a few of those Matchless Curiosities, with which the Witchcraft now upon us has entertained us. And I shall Report nothing but with Good Authority, and what I would Invite all my Readers to examine, while tis yet Fresh and New, that if there be found any mistake, it may be as willingly Retracted, as it was unwillingly Committed.

Notes

[136] Of Andover. She was executed, like Burroughs, on August 19, the day when Mather himself was present and said “all died by a righteous sentence” (Sewall, *Diary*, I. 363). “All of them,” says Judge Sewall, “said they were innocent, Carrier and all.” Important for her case are, beside the *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (II. 54–68, 198–199), the documents preserved by Hutchinson (*Massachusetts*, II., ch. I., and the draft edited by Poole in *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXIV.). They are reprinted in Abbot's *History of Andover* (Andover, 1829), and Mrs. Bailey, in her *Historical Sketches of Andover* (Boston, 1880) has added others and told the story in detail (pp. 194–237). On Goodwife Carrier and her Andover neighbors see also pp. 180–182, 363, 371–375, 418–421.

The First Curiositie.

I. Tis very Remarkable to see what an Impious and Impudent Imitation of Divine Things is Apishly affected by the Devil, in several of those matters, whereof the Confessions of our Witches and the Afflictions of our Sufferers have informed us.

That Reverend and Excellent Person, Mr. John Higginson, ¹³⁷ in My Conversation with him, Once invited me to this Reflection; That the Indians which came from far to settle about Mexico, were in their Progress to that Settlement, under a Conduct of the Devil, very strangely Emulating what the Blessed God gave to Israel in the Wilderness.

Acosta ¹³⁸ is our Author for it, that the Devil in their Idol Vitzlipultzli governed that mighty Nation. He commanded them to leave their Country, promising to make them Lords over all the Provinces possessed by Six other Nations of Indians, and give them a Land abounding with all precious things. They went forth, carrying their Idol with them, in a Coffin of Reeds, supported by Four of their Principal Priests; with whom he still Discoursed, in secret, Revealing to them the Successes, and Accidents of their way. He advised them, when to March, and where to Stay, and without his Commandment they moved not. The first thing they did, wherever they came, was to Erect a Tabernacle, for their False God; which they set always in the midst of their Camp, and there placed the Ark upon an Altar. When they, Tired with pains, talked of proceeding no further in their Journey, than a certain pleasant Stage, whereto they were arrived, this Devil in one night horribly kill'd them that had started this Talk, by pulling out their Hearts. And so they passed on, till they came to Mexico.

The Devil which then thus imitated what was in the Church of the Old Testament, now among Us would Imitate the Affayrs of the Church in the New. The Witches do say, that they form themselves much after the manner of Congregational Churches; and that they have a Baptism and a Supper, and Officers among them, abominably Resembling those of our Lord.

But there are many more of these Bloody Imitations, if the Confessions of the Witches are to be Received; which I confess, ought to be but with very much of Caution.

What is their striking down with a fierce Look? What is their making of the Afflicted Rise, with a touch of their Hand? What is their Transportation thro' the Air? What is their Travelling in Spirit, while their Body is cast into a Trance? What is their causing of Cattle to run mad and perish? What is their Entering their Names in a Book? What is their coming together from all parts, at the Sound of a Trumpet? What is their Appearing sometimes Cloathed with Light or Fire upon them? What is their Covering of themselves and their Instruments with Invisibility? But a Blasphemous Imitation of certain Things recorded about our Saviour, or His Prophets, or the Saints in the Kingdom of God.

Notes

[137] Senior minister at Salem Town. See also p. 248, note 2, and pp. 398, 399–402.

[138] It is the Spanish Jesuit, Joseph Acosta, who in his *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (bk. VII., ch. 4) relates this. Mather seems to have used the English version of Grimston (London, 1604), paraphrasing and abridging after a free fashion and inserting from the following chapter what is in his last two sentences.

A Second Curiositie.

II. In all the Witchcraft which now Grievously Vexes us, I know not whether any thing be more Unaccountable, than the Trick which the Witches have, to render themselves and their Tools Invisible. Witchcraft seems to be the Skill of Applying the Plastic Spirit of the World ¹³⁹ unto some unlawful purposes, by means of a Confederacy with Evil Spirits. Yet one would wonder how the Evil Spirits themselves can do some things: especially at Invisibilizing of the Grossest Bodies. I can tell the Name of an Ancient Author, who pretends to show the way, how a man may come to walk about Invisible, and I can tell the Name of another Ancient Author, who pretends to Explode that way. But I will not speak too plainly, Lest I should unawares Poison some of my Readers, as the Pious Hemingius did one of his Pupils, when he only by way of Diversion recited a Spell, which, they had said, would cure Agues. ¹⁴⁰ This much I will say; The notion of procuring Invisibility, by any Natural Expedient yet known, is, I Believe, a meer Plinyism; How far it may be obtained by a Magical Sacrament, is best known to the Dangerous Knaves that have Try'd it. But our Witches do seem to have got the Knack: and this is one of the Things, that make me think, Witchcraft will not be fully understood, until the Day when there shall not be one Witch in the World.

There are certain people very Dogmatical about these matters; but I'll give them only these Three Bones to Pick.

First, One of our Bewitched people was cruelly assaulted by a Spectre, that, she said, ran at her with a Spindle: tho' no body else in the Room, could see either the Spectre or the Spindle. At last, in her miseries, giving a Snatch at the Spectre, she pull'd the Spindle away; and it was no sooner got into her hand, but the other people then present beheld, that it was indeed a Real, Proper, Iron Spindle, belonging they knew to whom; which when they Lock'd up very safe, it was nevertheless by Dæmons unaccountably stole away, to do further mischief.

Secondly, Another of our Bewitched People was haunted with a most abusive Spectre, which came to her, she said, with a Sheet about her. After she had undergone a deal of Teaze, from the Annoyances of the Spectre, she gave a Violent Snatch at the Sheet that was upon it; wherefrom she tore a Corner, which in her Hand immediately became Visible to a Roomful of Spectators; a Palpable Corner of a Sheet. Her Father, who was now holding her, Catch'd that he might Keep what his Daughter had so strangely Seized, but the unseen Spectre had like to have pull'd his Hand off, by Endeavouring to wrest it from him; however he still held it, and I suppose has it still to show; it being but a few Hours ago, namely about the Beginning of this October, that this Accident happened; in the family of one Pitman, at Manchester.

Thirdly, A young man, delaying to procure Testimonials for his Parents, who being under confinement on Suspicion of Witchcraft, required him to do that Service for them, was quickly pursued with odd Inconveniences. But once above the Rest, an Officer going to put his Brand on the Horns of some Cows, belonging to these people, which tho' he had Siez'd for some of their Debts, yet he was willing to leave in their Possession, for the Subsistence of the poor Family; this young man help'd in holding the Cows to be thus Branded. The three first Cows he held well enough; but when the hot Brand was clap't upon the Fourth, he winc'd and shrunk at such a rate, as that he could hold the Cow no longer. Being afterwards Examined about it, he Confessed, That at that very Instant when the Brand entred the Cows Horn, exactly the like burning Brand was clap'd upon his own Thigh; where he has Exposed the Lasting Marks of it, unto such as asked to see them.

Unriddle these Things, — *Et Eris mihi magnus Apollo.* ¹⁴¹

Notes

[139] This phrase shows the influence of Ralph Cudworth (see his *Intellectual System*, bk. I., ch. III., §37) and through him of Cambridge Platonism — whose demonology (*e. g.*, Cudworth, bk. I., ch. V., at end) must also be remembered here.

[140] It is the great Danish theologian Nicholas Hemming (Niels Hemmingsen) who tells this story of himself in his *Admonitio de Superstitionibus Magicis vitandis* (Copenhagen, 1575), fol. C2 verso.

[141] “And thou shalt be to me a great Apollo” — *i. e.*, a great revealer of mysteries. For their unriddling see p. 370, below.

A Third Curiositie.

III. If a Drop of Innocent Blood should be shed, in the Prosecution of the Witchcrafts among us, how unhappy are we! For which cause, I cannot express my self in better terms, than those of a most Worthy Person, who lives near the present Center of these things. ¹⁴² “The Mind of God in these matters, is to be carefully look'd into, with due Circumspection, that Satan deceive us not with his Devices, who transforms himself into an Angel of Light, and may pretend Justice and yet intend Mischief.” But on the other side, if the Storm of Justice do now fall only on the Heads of those Guilty Witches and Wretches which have defiled our Land, How Happy!

The Execution of some that have lately Dyed has been immediately attended with a strange Deliverance of some, that had lain for many years in a most sad Condition, under they knew not whose Evil Hands. As I am abundantly satisfy'd, That many of the Self–Murders committed here, have been the effects of a Cruel and Bloody Witchcraft, letting fly Dæmons upon the miserable Seneca's; ¹⁴³ thus, it has been admirable unto me to see, how a Devillish Witchcraft, sending Devils upon them, has driven many poor people to Despair, and persecuted their minds with such Buzzes ¹⁴⁴ of Atheism and Blasphemy, as has made them even run Distracted with Terrors: and some long Bow'd down under such a Spirit of Infirmity, have been marvelously Recovered upon the Death of the Witches.

One Whetford particularly ten years ago, challenging of Bridget Bishop (whose Trial you have had) with Stealing of a Spoon, Bishop threatned her very direfully: presently after this was Whetford in the Night, and in her Bed, visited by Bishop, with one Parker, who making the Room Light at their coming in, there discoursed of several mischiefs they would inflict upon her. At last, they pull'd her out, and carried her unto the Sea–side, there to drown her; but she calling upon God, they left her, tho' not without Expressions of their Fury. From that very Time, this poor Whetford was utterly spoilt, and grew a Tempted, Froward, Crazyed sort of a Woman; a vexation to her self, and all about her; and many ways unreasonable. In this Distraction she lay, till those women were Apprehended, by the Authority; then she began to mend; and upon their Execution, was presently and perfectly Recovered, from the ten years madness that had been upon her.

Notes

[142]. It has been suggested that this means the Rev. John Higginson, the venerable senior minister at Salem, whose hesitation as to the proceedings may be inferred from Brattle's words (p. 184, above) — and from all else we know. See below, p. 398.

[143]. The philosopher Seneca, it will be remembered, was an advocate of suicide and ended his own life thus.

[144]. Whisperings.

A Fourth Curiositie.

IV. 'Tis a thousand pitties, that we should permit our Eyes to be so Blood–shot with passions, as to loose the sight of many wonderful Things, wherein the Wisdom and Justice of God, would be Glorify'd. Some of those Things, are the frequent Apparitions of Ghosts, whereby many Old Murders among us, come to be considered. And, among many Instances of this kind, I will single out one, which concerned a poor man, lately Prest unto Death, because of his Refusing to Plead for hisLife. ¹⁴⁵ I shall make an Extract of a Letter, which was written to my Honourable Friend, Samuel Sewal, Esq., ¹⁴⁶ by Mr. Putman, ¹⁴⁷ to this purpose;

The Last Night my Daughter Ann was grievously Tormented by Witches, Threatning that she should be Pressed to Death, before Giles Cory. But thro' the Goodness of a Gracious God, she had at last a little Respite. Whereupon there appeared unto her (she said) a man in a Winding Sheet; who told her that Giles Cory had Murdered him, by Pressing him to Death with his Feet; but that the Devil there appeared unto him, and Covenanted with him, and promised him, He should not be Hanged. The Apparition said, God Hardened his Heart, that he should not hearken to the Advice of the Court, and so Dy an easy Death; because as it said, “It must be done to him as he has done to me.” The Apparition also said, That Giles Cory was carry'd to the Court for this, and that the Jury had found the Murder, and that her Father knew the man, and the thing was done before she was born. Now Sir, This is not a little strange to us; that no body should Remember these things, all the while that Giles Cory was in Prison, and so often before the Court. For all people now Remember very well, (and the Records of the Court also mention it,) That about Seventeen Years ago, Giles Cory kept a man in his House, that was almost a Natural Fool: which Man Dy'd suddenly. A Jury was Impannel'd upon him, among whom was Dr. Zorobabel Endicot; ¹⁴⁸ who found the man bruised to Death, and having clodders of Blood about his Heart. The Jury, whereof several are yet alive, brought in the man Murdered; but as if some Enchantment had hindred the Prosecution of the Matter, the Court Proceeded not against Giles Cory, tho' it cost him a great deal of Mony to get off.

Thus the Story.

The Reverend and Worthy Author, having at the Direction of His Excellency the Governour, so far Obliged the Publick, as to give some Account of the Sufferings brought upon the Countrey by Witchcraft; and of the Trials which have passed upon several Executed for the Same:

Upon Perusal thereof, We find the Matters of Fact and Evidence, Truly reported. And a Prospect given, of the Methods of Conviction, used in the Proceedings of the Court at Salem.

Boston Octob 11. 1692 .

William Stoughton Samuel Sewall .

Notes

[145]. As to the case of Giles Corey see below, pp. 366–367.

[146]. Judge Sewall, of the court.

[147]. Thomas Putnam, of Salem Village, whose wife and daughter played so large a part as accusers.

[148]. Of Salem Village. A son of John Endicott, the first governor of the Bay colony, and himself much honored as a physician.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

**FROM “MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD,” BY ROBERT
CALEF, 1700**

INTRODUCTION

Of Robert Calef almost nothing is known except what can be learned from his book. There has even been doubt as to whether, of the two Robert Calefs known to us in Boston at this time, the writer was the father or the son. In 1692, the time of the Salem witchcraft, the father's age was 44, the son's 18.¹⁴⁹ It is unlikely that anybody would have thought of the son but for a note copied into one of the memorandum-books of Dr. Jeremy Belknap (1744–1798).¹⁵⁰ This note, of unknown source reads: “Robert Calef, author of ‘More Wonders of the Invisible World,’ printed at London in 1700, was a native of England; a young man of good sense, and free from superstition; a merchant in Boston. He was furnished with materials for his work by Mr. Brattle, of Cambridge; and his brother, of Boston; and other gentlemen, who were opposed to the Salem proceedings. — E. P.” The writer speaks as if with knowledge; and that so sound a historian as Dr. Belknap should have copied the note speaks for its worth. Able scholars have by it been led to ascribe the book to the younger Robert; but more careful study seems to show the objections insuperable. The author never adds “Jr.” to his name, as a son would have done, and as seems to have been the younger Robert's custom.¹⁵¹ He never pleads youth, even when most apologetic; and, what weighs more, his indignant foes, seeking all ways to discredit him, never hint at such a thing. His matter and style have in them nothing of boyishness; and once, in words suggestive of a migrant and a man of years, he speaks (p. 297, below) of “sound Reason, which is what I have been long seeking for in this Country in vain.” Most serious of all, his handwriting seems that found in documents clearly the elder Calef's, and is that of a mature and even by 1700 that of an aging man; while that of the younger Robert was in 1719–1722 still firm and flexible — and notably different.¹⁵²

Robert Calef the elder came to America at some time before 1688. He was a cloth-merchant, and doubtless a maker as well as a seller of cloths.¹⁵³ Of his eight children the eldest was, in 1692, a physician in Ipswich. What led to the writing of *More Wonders* he has himself told us in his book. It remains only to testify to the care and exactness which all comparison of his work with the records seems to show, and to remark that to a student of the literature of witchcraft it is evident that his reading is larger than he cares to parade. Though he clearly belonged to the popular party, this is as likely to be a result as a cause — it is probably neither — of his feeling on the subject of the witch superstition; and that he had else any grievance against the Mathers or their colleagues there is no reason to think.

His book, though completed in 1697, was not printed till 1700, and then in London. In June, 1698, Cotton Mather records in his diary that “a sort of a Sadducee in this town” “hath written a Volumn of invented and notorious lies”; “this Volumn,” he adds, “hee is, as I understand, sending to England, that it may be printed there.” Why it found no printer in New England can be guessed; the storm it raised when it appeared in print is well known. President Increase Mather “ordered the wicked book to be burnt in the college yard,”¹⁵⁴ and his son's diary is eloquent with vexation.

“Some Years ago,” runs his entry of November 15, 1700, “a very wicked sort of a Sadducee in this Town, raking together a crue of Libels, which he had written at several Times, (especially relating to the *Wonders of the Invisible World* which have been among us) wherein I am the cheef Butt of his malice, (tho' many other better Servants of the Lord are also most maliciously abused by him:) he sent this vile Volume to London to be published. Now, tho' I had often and often cried unto the Lord, that the Cup of this Man's abominable Bundle of Lies, written on purpose, with a Quil under a special Energy and Management of Satan, to damnify my precious Opportunities of Glorifying my Lord Jesus Christ, might pass from me; Yett, in this point, the Lord has denied my Request: the Book is printed, and the Impression is this week arrived here.”

It was even felt necessary to print a reply; but the two Mathers held it beneath them to plead in their own vindication. It fell to their parishioners. “My pious neighbours are so provoked,” writes Cotton Mather (December 4), “at the diabolical Wickedness of the Man who has published a Volume of Libels against my Father and myself, that they sett apart whole Dayes of Prayer, to complain unto God against him.” The outcome of their communings together was a pamphlet called *Some Few Remarks upon a Scandalous Book against the Gospel and*

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Ministry of New England, written by one Robert Calef. It was signed by seven, one of them John Goodwin; but the materials were furnished by their pastors. It aimed however at their personal exculpation, and has small interest for the public story. ¹⁵⁵

The doughty merchant survived the storm. In 1702–1704 he served his townsmen as an overseer of the poor, in 1707 was chosen an assessor, in 1710 a tithingman. It was perhaps about this time that he retired to Roxbury, where in 1707 he had bought a place and where he was a selectman of the town when, in 1719, death found him. There, in the old burial ground just opposite his home, a stone still testifies that “Here lyes buried the body of Mr. Robert Calef, aged seventy–one years, died April the Thirteenth, 1719.” ¹⁵⁶

Calef's book has been five times reprinted: in 1796, at Salem, by William Carlton (12^o, pp. 318); again at Salem, in 1823, a mere reimpression, with the addition, from the court files, of Giles Corey's examination (12^o, pp. 312); in Boston, 1828 (24^o, pp. 333), again a reimpression; at Salem, 1861, edited by Mr. S. P. Fowler, with Cotton Mather's *Wonders*, in his volume *Salem Witchcraft* (see p. 207); and, more faithfully, in 1866 at Roxbury, as nos. VI., VII., of Woodward's *Historical Series*, under the editorship of S. G. Drake (see pp. 207–208). The present text follows the original edition (1700), but corrects it by the list of *Errata* to be found in the copy (once Cotton Mather's) possessed by the Massachusetts Historical Society. ¹⁵⁷

Notes

[149]. S. G. Drake, in the introduction to his edition of Calef, would make his age 14; but the genealogist of the family, Mr. Matthew A. Stickney, says 18. Yet Mr. Stickney urges the father's authorship (*N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXX. 461; XLIX. 224). He died in 1894, leaving this genealogy, alas, unpublished, and his heirs decline to let it be consulted.

[150]. Mass. Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, 1858, p. 288.

[151]. Thus in 1706 “Robt. Calef, Junr.,” was chosen a clerk of the market (*Boston Record Commissioners' Reports*, VIII. 36); thus in 1708 “Robert Calef, junr.” becomes a constable (*id.*, VIII. 45), and gains permission to erect a house (*id.*, XI. 68, XXIX. 187); thus, too, in that year (see plate) he signs himself “Ro. Calfe Jnr”; thus in 1710 “Robert Calfe, Jr.,” appears on the rolls of the Artillery Company (*N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXXVIII. 341); and it is after his father's death that (see plate) in 1719 to a receipted account, in 1721 to his will, in 1722 to the release of a mortgage, he signed “Rob Calfe”, “Ro: Calfe”, “Robert Calfe” (see the last two in Drake's *Witchcraft Delusion*, II. xxii, xxiv).

[152]. From the author of *More Wonders* we have two unquestionable autographs: (1) his marginalia of 1695 on Cotton Mather's paper (see below, p. 306, note 1) and (2) a letter of 1700 presenting a copy of his book to the Earl of Bellomont, then governor of Massachusetts and New York. A page of the former is to be photographed in the Massachusetts Historical Society's *Proceedings* for 1913–1914; and the latter (now in the New York Public Library) is reproduced in full in the *Memorial History of Boston* (II. 168). Specimens of both are given in our own plate; and to these are added (1) the signature “Robert Calef” from the report of two appraisers, October 30, 1693; (2) the signature “Robt. Calef” from the verdict of a Boston coroner's jury, January 15, 1696; (3) the same signature, with a line or two of text in the same hand, from the decision of two arbitrators (Boston, July 29, 1697); and (4) the last lines and the signature of a paper drawn by “Robt. Calef” as a selectman of Roxbury in March, 1717 (?). That all six specimens are in the same hand, and in a hand different from the younger Calef's, will hardly be questioned. Is not the older Robert, too, more likely than the younger to have been an appraiser in 1693, a coroner's juror in 1696, and an arbiter in 1697? And (though Calef and Calfe were undoubtedly pronounced alike or nearly so) is it not less probable that the author of *More Wonders* changed the habitual spelling of his signature than that a younger Robert, if not the author, should thus have distinguished his identity from his father's? What arguments led the genealogist Stickney to ascribe the book to the father cannot now be learned: the “full statement of the reasons” promised by him to the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register* (see XXX. 461) was, like his genealogy, never published. But, from an article on “Robert Calef” by Mr. W. S. Harris in the *Granite Monthly* for 1907 (XXXIX. 157–163), and from correspondence with its author, it is learned that another student of the Calef pedigree (Mr. W. W. Lunt, of Hingham, Mass.) has reached that result by a comparison of handwritings. Mr. Harris, it should be added, quotes the Rev. John Kelly as saying in a funeral sermon (1808) for Judge John Calfe (b. 1740) of Hampstead, N. H., that the latter's ancestor (who was the elder Calef, not the younger) was the author of the book.

[153]. In 1701 Cotton Mather calls him “the Weaver (though he presumes to call himself Merchant)” (*Some*

Few Remarks, p. 35).

[154]. Eliot, *Biographical Dictionary* (1809), s. v. “Calef.”

[155]. Let any who would know the contents of the excessively rare little booklet turn to the works of Upham and Poole mentioned on p. 91; and in his *Diary* (I. 383–384) Mather narrates how the book was compiled. The *More Wonders* it describes as “a Libellous Book lately come into this Countrey... which is writ (with what help we know not) by one Robert Calef, who presumes to call himself Merchant of Boston.” “It was highly rejoicing to us,” add the writers, “when we heard that our Booksellers were so well acquainted with the Integrity of our Pastors, as that not one of them could admit of any of those Libels to be vended in their shops.” Pp. 34–50 of its seventy–one pages are taken up by a letter of Cotton Mather to the authors. It was perhaps a passage in Mather's letter that led “E. P.” to think Robert Calef a “young man”; for those words, in italics and with capital initials, stare from a sentence so obscure that to a hasty glance Calef, instead of Mather himself, might easily seem to be meant.

[156]. For these and other personal details see Drake's memoir, in his ed. of Calef, and his *History and Antiquities of Boston*, pp. 529, 531; *Boston Record Commissioners' Reports*, I. 156, 160, VII. 210, 218, 225, 229, VIII. 24, 26, 31, 33, 41, 43, 75, IX. 179, 195, XI. 145; *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 652; F. S. Drake, *The Town of Roxbury* (Boston, 1905), pp. 102, 140–149; *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XIV. 52; and the above–cited article of W. S. Harris, which has a photograph of the gravestone. From these mentions will be learned also the name of his wife, Mary, and of the two of his eight children who were born (1688, 1691) after his coming to Boston. It will be learned, too, that in 1692 he was a constable, in 1694 hayward and fenceviewer, in 1697 a surveyor of highways, in 1698 a clerk of the market. At least it is to “Robert Calef,” not to “Robert Calef, Jr.,” that the records award these offices. And it is perhaps to be noticed that while the name of “Robert Calef” is often preceded by “Mr.,” that title does not appear before that of “Robert Calef, Jr.”

[157]. See Drake's ed., III. 223.

MORE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD

More Wonders of the Invisible World: Or, The Wonders of the Invisible World, Display'd in Five Parts.

Part I. An Account of the Sufferings of Margaret Rule, Written by the Reverend Mr. C. M.

P. II. Several Letters to the Author, etc. And his Reply relating to Witchcraft.

P. III. The Differences between the Inhabitants of Salem Village, and Mr. Parris their Minister, in New-England.

P. IV. Letters of a Gentleman uninterested, Endeavouring to prove the received Opinions about Witchcraft to be Orthodox. With short Essays to their Answers.

P. V. A short Historical Accou[n]t of Matters of Fact in that Affair.

To which is added, A Postscript relating to a Book intituled, The Life of Sir William Phips.

Collected by Robert Calef, Merchant, of Boston in New-England. Licensed and Entred according to Order. London: Printed for Nath. Hillar, at the Princes-Arms, in Leaden-Hall-street, over against St. Mary-Ax, and Joseph Collyer, at the Golden-Bible, on London-Bridge. 1700. ¹⁵⁸

Notes

[158]. Title–page of original.

**The Epistle to the Reader, And more especially to the Noble Bereans ¹⁵⁹ of
this Age, wherever Residing.**

Gentlemen,

You that are freed from the Slavery of a corrupt Education; and that in spite of human Precepts, Examples and Presidents, ¹⁶⁰ can hearken to the Dictates of Scripture and Reason:

For your sakes I am content, that these Collections of mine, as also my Sentiments should be exposed to publick view; In hopes that having well considered, and compared them with Scripture, you will see reason, as I do, to question a belief so prevalent (as that here treated of) as also the practice flowing from thence; they standing as nearly connext as cause and effect; it being found wholly impracticable, to extirpate the latter without first curing the former.

And if the Buffoon or Satyirical will be exercising their Talents, or if the Biggots wilfully and blindly reject the Testimonies of their own Reason, and more sure word, it is no more than what I expected from them.

But you Gentlemen, I doubt not, are willing to Distinguish between Truth and Error, and if this may be any furtherance to you herein, I shall not miss my Aim.

But if you find the contrary, and that my belief herein is any way Heterodox, I shall be thankful for the Information to any Learned or Reverend Person, or others, that shall take that pains to inform me better by Scripture, or sound Reason, which is what I have been long seeking for in this Country in vain.

In a time when not only England in particular, but almost all Europe had been labouring against the Usurpations of Tyranny and Slavery, The English America has not been behind in a share in the Common calamities; more especially New-England has met not only with such calamities as are common to the rest, but with several aggravations enhancing such Afflictions, by the Devastations and Cruelties of the Barbarous Indians in their Eastern borders, etc.

But this is not all, they have been harrast (on many accounts) by a more dreadful Enemy, as will herein appear to the considerate.

P. 66. ¹⁶¹ Were it as we are told in *Wonders of the Invisible World*, that the Devils were walking about our Streets with lengthned Chains making a dreadful noise in our Ears, and Brimstone, even without a Metaphor, was making a horrid and a hellish stench in our Nostrils,

P. 49. And that the Devil exhibiting himself ordinarily as a black-Man, ¹⁶² had decoy'd a fearful knot of Proud, Froward, Ignorant, Envious and Malitious Creatures, to list themselves in his horrid Service, by entering their Names in a Book tendered unto them; and that they have had their Meetings and Sacraments, and associated themselves to destroy the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in these parts of the World; having each of them their Spectres, or Devils Commissionated by them, and representing of them, to be the Engines of their Malice, by these wicked Spectres siezing poor People about the Country with various and bloody Torments. And of those evidently preternatural Torments some to[o] have died. And that they have bewitched some even so far, as to make them self destroyers, and others in many Towns here and there languish'd under their evil hands. The People thus afflicted miserably scratch'd and bitten; and that the same Invisible Furies did stick Pins in them, and scald them, distort and disjoint them, with a Thousand other Plagues; and sometimes drag them out of their Chambers, and carry them over Trees and Hills Miles together, many of them being tempted to sign the Devils Laws.

P. 7[0]. These furies whereof several have killed more People perhaps than would serve to make a Village. ¹⁶³

If this be the true state of the Afflictions of this Country, it is very deplorable, and beyond all other outward Calamities miserable. But if on the other side, the Matter be as others do understand it, That the Devil has been too hard for us by his Temptations, signs, and lying Wonders, with the help of pernicious notions, formerly imbibed and professed; together with the Accusations of a parcel of possessed, distracted, or lying Wenches, accusing their Innocent Neighbours, pretending they see their Spectres (*i. e.*) Devils in their likeness Afflicting of

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

them, and that God in righteous Judgment (after Men had ascribed his Power to Witches, of Commissionating Devils to do these things) may have given them over to strong delusions to believe lyes, etc. And to let loose the Devils of Envy, Hatred, Pride, Cruelty, and Malice against each other; yet still disguised under the Mask of Zeal for God, and left them to the branding one another with the odious Name of Witch; and upon the Accusation of those above mentioned, Brother to Accuse and Prosecute Brother, Children their Parents, Pastors and Teachers their immediate Flock unto death; Shepherds becoming Wolves, Wise Men Infatuated; People hauled to Prisons, with a bloody noise pursuing to, and insulting over, the (true) Sufferers at Execution, while some are fleeing from that call'd Justice, Justice it self fleeing before such Accusations, when once it did but begin to refrain further proceedings, and to question such Practises, some making their Escape out of Prisons, rather than by an obstinate Defence of their Innocency, to run so apparent hazard of their Lives; Estates seized, Families of Children and others left to the Mercy of the Wilderness (not to mention here the Numbers prescribed, ¹⁶⁴ dead in Prisons, or Executed, etc.)

All which Tragedies, tho begun in one Town, or rather by one Parish, has Plague-like spread more than through that Country. And by its Eccho giving a brand of Infamy to this whole Country, throughout the World,

If this were the Miserable case of this Country in the time thereof, and that the Devil had so far prevailed upon us in our Sentiments and Actions, as to draw us from so much as looking into the Scriptures for our guidance in these pretended Intricacies, leading us to a trusting in blind guides, such as the corrupt practices of some other Countries, or the bloody Experiments of Bodin, and such other Authors — Then tho our Case be most miserable, yet it must be said of New-England, Thou has destroyed thy self, and brought this greatest of Miseries upon thee.

And now whether the Witches (such as have made a compact by Explicit Covenant with the Devil, having thereby obtained a power to Commissionate him) have been the cause of our miseries,

Or whether a Zeal governed by blindness and passion, and led by president, has not herein precipitated us into far greater wickedness (if not Witchcrafts) than any have been yet proved against those that suffered,

To be able to distinguish aright in this matter, to which of these two to refer our Miseries is the present Work. As to the former, I know of no sober Man, much less Reverend Christian, that being ask'd dares affirm and abide by it, that Witches have that power; viz. to Commissionate Devils to kill and destroy. And as to the latter, it were well if there were not too much of truth in it, which remains to be demonstrated.

But here it will be said, what need of Raking in the Coals that lay buried in oblivion. We cannot recall those to Life again that have suffered, supposing it were unjustly; it tends but to the exposing the Actors, as if they had proceeded irregularly.

Truly I take this to be just as the Devil would have it, so much to fear disobliging men, as not to endeavour to detect his Wiles, that so he may the sooner, and with the greater Advantages set the same on foot again (either here or else where) so dragging us through the Pond twice by the same Cat. ¹⁶⁵ And if Reports do not (herein) deceive us, much the same has been acting this present year in Scotland. ¹⁶⁶ And what Kingdom or Country is it, that has not had their bloody fits and turns at it. And if this is such a catching disease, and so universal, I presume I need make no Apology for my Endeavours to prevent, as far as in my power, any more such bloody Victims or Sacrifices; tho indeed I had rather any other would have undertaken so offensive, tho necessary a task; yet all things weighed, I had rather thus Expose my self to Censure, than that it should be wholly omitted. Were the notions in question innocent and harmless, respecting the Glory of God, and well being of Men, I should not have engaged in them, but finding them in my esteem so intollerably destructive of both, This together with my being by Warrant called before the Justices, in my own Just Vindication, I took it to be a call from God, to my Power, ¹⁶⁷ to Vindicate his Truths, against the Pagan and Popish Assertions, which are so prevalent; for tho Christians in general do own the Scriptures to be their only Rule of Faith and Doctrine, yet these Notions will tell us, that the Scriptures have not sufficiently, nor at all described the crime of Witchcraft, whereby the culpable might be detected, tho it be positive in the Command to punish it by Death; hence the World has been from time to time perplexed in the prosecution of the several Diabolical mediums of Heathenish and Popish Invention, to detect an Imaginary Crime (not but that there are Witches, such as the Law of God describes) which has produced a deluge of Blood; hereby rendering the Commands of God not only void but dangerous.

So also they own Gods Providence and Government of the World, and that Tempests and Storms, Afflictions and Diseases, are of his sending; yet these Notions tell us, that the Devil has the power of all these, and can perform them when commission'd by a Witch thereto, and that he has a power at the Witches call to act and do,

The Epistle to the Reader, And more especially to the Noble Bereans 159 of this Age, wherever Resid^g.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

without and against the course of Nature, and all natural causes, in afflicting and killing of Innocents; and this is that so many have died for.

Also it is generally believed, that if any Man has strength, it is from God the Almighty Being: But these notions will tell us, that the Devil can make one Man as strong as many, which was one of the best proofs, as it was counted, against Mr. Burroughs the Minister; ¹⁶⁸ tho his contemporaries in the Schools during his Minority could have testified, that his strength was then as much superiour to theirs as ever (setting aside incredible Romances) it was discovered to be since. Thus rendring the power of God, and his providence of none Effect.

These are some of the destructive notions of this Age, and however the asserters of them seem sometimes to value themselves much upon sheltring their Neighbours from Spectral Accusations, They may deserve as much thanks as that Tyrant, that having industriously obtained an unintelligible charge against his Subjects, in matters wherein it was impossible they should be Guilty, having thereby their lives in his power, yet suffers them of his meer Grace to live, and will be call'd gracious Lord.

It were too Icarian ¹⁶⁹ a task for one unfurnish'd with necessary learning, and Library, to give any Just account, from whence so great delusions have sprung, and so long continued. Yet as an Essay from those scraps of reading that I have had opportunity of, it will be no great venture to say, that Signs and Lying Wonders have been one principal cause. ¹⁷⁰

It is written of Justin Martyr, who lived in the second Century, that he was before his conversion a great Philosopher; first in the way of the Stoicks, and after of the Peripateticks, after that of the Pythagorean, and after that of the Platonists sects; and after all proved of Eminent use in the Church of Christ; Yet a certain Author speaking of one Apollonius Tyaneus ¹⁷¹ has these words, “That the most Orthodox themselves began to deem him vested with power sufficient for a Deity; which occasioned that so strange a doubt from Justin Martyr, as cited by the learned Gregory, Fol. 37., ¹⁷² etc. If God be the Creator and Lord of the World, how comes it to pass that Apollonius his Telisms, ¹⁷³ have so much over-ruled the course of things! for we see that they also have stilled the Waves of the Sea, and the raging of the Winds, and prevailed against the Noisome Flies, and Incursions of wild Beasts,” etc. If so Eminent and Early a Christian were by these false shews in such doubt, it is the less wonder in our depraved times, to meet with what is Equivalent thereto: Besides this a certain Author informs me, that “Julian (afterwards called the Apostate) being instructed in the Philosophy and Disciplines of the Heathen, by Libarius ¹⁷⁴ his Tutor, by this means he came to love Philosophy better than the Gospel, and so by degrees turn'd from Christianity to Heathenism.”

This same Julian did, when Apostate, forbid that Christians should be instructed in the Discipline of the Gentiles, which (it seems) Socrates a Writer of the Ecclesiastical History, does acknowledge to be by the singular Providence of God; Christians having then begun to degenerate from the Gospel, and to betake themselves to Heathenish learning. And in the *Mercury* for the Month of February, 1695, there is this Account, “That the Christian Doctors conversing much with the writings of the Heathen, for the gaining of Eloquence, A Counsel ¹⁷⁵ was held at Carthage, which forbad the reading of the Books of the Gentiles.”

From all which it may be easily perceived, that in the Primitive times of Christianity, when not only many Heathen of the Vulgar, but also many learn'd Men and Philosophers had imbraced the Christian Faith, they still retained a love to their Heathen-learning, which as one observes being transplanted into a Christian soile, soon proved productive of pernicious weeds, which over-ran the face of the Church, hence it was so deformed as the Reformation found it.

Among other pernicious Weeds arising from this Root, the Doctrine of the power of Devils and Witchcraft as it is now, and long has been understood, is not the least; the Fables of Homer, Virgil, Horace and Ovid, etc., being for the Elegancy of their Language retained then (and so are to this day) in the schools, have not only introduced, but established such Doctrines to the poisoning the Christian World. A certain Author Expresses it thus, “that as the Christian Schools at first brought Men from Heathenism to the Gospel, so these Schools carry Men from the Gospel to Heathenism, as to their great perfection,” and Mr. I. M. ¹⁷⁶ in his *Remarkable Providences*, gives an account that (as he calls it) an Old Counsel ¹⁷⁷ did Anathematize all those that believed such power of the Devils, accounting it a Damnable Doctrine. But as other Evils did afterwards increase in the Church (partly by such Education) so this insensibly grew up with them, tho not to that degree, as that any Counsel ¹⁷⁸ I have ever heard or Read of has to this day taken off those Anathema's; yet after this the Church so far declined, that Witchcraft became a Principal Ecclesiastical Engine (as also that of Heresie was) to root up all that stood in their way; and

The Epistle to the Reader, And more especially to the Noble Bereans 159 of this Age, wherever Resid^g.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

besides the ways of Tryal that we have still in practice, they invented some, which were peculiar to themselves; which when ever they were minded to improve against any Orthodox believer, they could easily make Effectual: That Deluge of Blood which that ScarletWhore ¹⁷⁹ has to answer for, shed under this notion, how amazing is it.

The first in England that I have read of, of any note since the Reformation, that asserts this Doctrine, is the famous Mr. Perkins, ¹⁸⁰ he (as also Mr. Gaul, ¹⁸¹ and Mr. Bernard, ¹⁸² etc. seems all of them to have undertaken one Task, they) taking notice of the Multiplicity of irregular ways to try them by, invented by Heathen and Papists, made it their business and main work herein to oppose such as they saw to be pernicious. And if they did not look more narrowly into it, but followed the first, *viz.* Mr. Perkins whose Education (as theirs also) had forestall'd him into such belief, whom they readily followed, it cannot be wondered at: And that they were men liable to Err, and so not to be trusted to as perfect guides, will manifestly appear to him that shall see their several receipts laid down to detect them by their Presumptive and Positive ones. And consider how few of either have any foundation in Scripture or Reason; and how vastly they differ from each other in both, each having his Art by himself, which Forty or an Hundred more may as well imitate, and give theirs, *ad infinitum*, being without all manner of proof.

But tho this be their main design to take off People from those Evil and bloody ways of trial which they speak so much against, Yet this does not hinder to this day, but the same evil ways or as bad are still used to detect them by, and that even among Protestants; and is so far Justified, that a Reverend Person has said lately here, how else shall we detect Witches? And another being urged to prove by Scripture such a sort of Witch as has power to send Devils to kill men, replied, that he did as firmly believe it as any article of his Faith. And that he (the Inquirer) did not go to the Scripture, to learn the Mysteries of his trade or Art. What can be said more to Establish there Heathenish notions and to villifie the Scriptures, our only Rule; and that after we have seen such dire effects thereof, as has threatned the utter Extirpation of this whole Country.

And as to most of the Actors in these Tragedies, tho they are so far from defending their Actions that they will Readily own, that undue steps have been taken, etc., Yet it seems they choose that the same should be Acted over again enforced by their Example, rather than that it should Remain as a Warning to Posterity, wherein they have mist it. So far are they from giving Glory to God, and taking the due shame to themselves.

And now to sum up all in a few words, we have seen a Biggotted Zeal, stirring up a Blind and most Bloody rage, not against Enemies, or Irreligious Profligate Persons, But (in Judgment of Charity, and to view) against as Vertuous and Religious as any they have left behind them in this Country, which have suffered as Evil doers with the utmost extent of rigour (not that so high a Charactor is due to all that Suffered) and this by the Testimony of Vile Varlets as not only were known before, but have been further apparent since by their Manifest Lives, Whordoms, Incest, etc. The Accusations of these, from their Spectral Sight, being the chief Evidence against those that Suffered. In which Accusations they were upheld by both Magistrates and Ministers, so long as they Apprehended themselves in no Danger.

And then tho they could defend neither the Doctrine, nor the Practice, yet none of them have in such a publick manner as the case Requires, testified against either; tho at the same time they could not but be sensible what a Stain and lasting Infamy they have brought upon the whole Country, to the Indangering the future welfair not only of this but of other places, induced by their Example; if not, to an intailing the Guilt of all the Righteous Blood that has been by the same means Shed, by Heathen or Papists, etc., upon themselves, whose deeds they have so far justified, occasioning the great Dishonour and Blasphemy of the Name of God, Scandalizing the Heathen, hardning of Enemies; and as a Natural effect thereof, to the great Increase of Atheism.

I shall conclude only with acquainting the Reader, that of these Collections, the first, containing more Wonders of the Invisible World, I received of a Gentleman, ¹⁸³ who had it of the Authorand communicated it to me, ¹⁸⁴ with his express consent, of which this is a true Copy. ¹⁸⁵ As to the Letters, they are for Substance the same I sent, tho with some small Variation or Addition. Touching the two Letters from a Gentleman, at his request I have forbore naming him. It is great Pity the matters of Fact, and indeed the whole, had not been done by some abler hand better Accomplished and Advantaged with both natural and acquired Judgments, but others not Appearing, I have inforc'd my self to do what is done, my other occasions Will not admit any further Scrutiny therein.

R. C.

Boston in New-England, Aug. 11, 1697.

Letter

Sir,

I now lay before you a very Entertaining Story, a Story which relates yet more Wonders of the Invisible World, ¹⁸⁶ a Story which tells the Remarkable Afflictions and Deliverance of one that had been Prodigiously handled by the Evil Angels. I was my self a daily Eye Witness to a large part of these Occurrences, and there may be produced Scores of Substantial Witnesses to the most of them; yea, I know not of any one Passage of the Story, but what may be sufficiently Attested. I do not Write it with a design of throwing it presently into the Press, but only to preserve the Memory of such Memorable things, the forgetting whereof would neither be pleasing to God, nor useful to Men; as also to give you, with some others of peculiar and obliging Friends, a sight of some Curiosities, and I hope this Apologie will serve to Excuse me, if I mention, as perhaps I may, when I come to a tenth Paragraph in my Writing, ¹⁸⁷ some things which I would have omitted in a farther Publication.

Cotton Mather .

188

Notes

[159]. *I. e.*, to those with open minds: the Bereans are commended (Acts xvii. 11) as “more noble” because “they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.”

[160]. Precedents: this odd spelling was then the current one.

[161]. This page–number and those which follow refer to the pages of Mather's *Wonders* (original edition), from which the substance of these paragraphs is quoted. The passages quoted will be found in Mather's book at pp. 48, 41, 50, of the first London edition, at pp. 95, 80–82, 100, of that of 1862, at pp. 121–122, 102–104, 128, of the American edition of 1866. They do not belong to the pages reprinted in the present volume.

[162]. How Mather conceived this “black man” to look appears from the description he ascribes to Mercy Short (p. 261, above).

[163]. In the original there is here no paragraph, the paragraph beginning after the next sentence with “But, if,” etc.

[164]. “Prescribed,” as then often, for “proscribed,” *i. e.*, condemned to death.

[165]. For a description of the joke, played on boobies, of “dragging through a pond with a cat,” see the Oxford Dictionary, *s. v.* Cat, III. 14, or Grose, *Dictionary of Vulgar Terms*, *s. v.* “Cat–whipping.” “We hope, sir,” said in 1682 the *London Gazette*, “that this Nation will be too wise, to be drawn twice through the same Water by the very same Cat.”

[166]. As Calef is writing in August, 1697, he doubtless has in mind the cases in Renfrewshire, where on June 10 several witches were hanged, then burned, on the Gallow Green of Paisley; a “Relation” then printed recounts “the Diabolical Practices of above Twenty.” Neither the relation nor the tidings of the burning could well have reached America by August 11; but the trials had been notorious for months. In Scotland, however, such things had been constant, as may be seen by the records of the Privy Council. Those of this period are chronicled by Robert Chambers in his *Domestic Annals of Scotland*.

[167]. *I. e.*, to the utmost of my power.

[168]. See pp. 219–220, above.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[169]. *I. e.*, presumptuous, like the venture of Icarus, who flew so high that the sun melted off his wings.

[170]. He is thinking, of course, of such “Remarkables” as those told by the Mathers.

[171]. Apollonius of Tyana, the first-century Pythagorean philosopher and wonder-worker, like Justin Martyr, the second-century apologist of Christianity, is perhaps too well [*unclear*:] to need a footnote.

[172]. Justin Martyr, *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, qu. 24.

[173]. *Telesmata*, talismans, magical devices.

[174]. Libanius.

[175]. Council: the Fourth Council of Carthage, 398 A. D.

[176]. Increase Mather.

[177]. Council: the Spanish Council of Bracara, 561 A. D.

[178]. Council.

[179]. He means the Roman church. Revelation, xvii.

[180]. William Perkins (1558–1602), the eminent Cambridge divine — “our Perkins,” as Increase Mather calls him — whose *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (London, 1608, 1610, and in the many editions of his *Works*) was the highest authority to Puritans.

[181]. John Gaule. See p. 216, note 1.

[182]. Richard Bernard (1567–1641), long minister of Batcombe in Somersetshire. His *Guide to Grand-Jurymen... in cases of Witchcraft* (1627, 1629) was, though credulous and cruel enough, the most mild and cautious of the Puritan monographs. The tiny volume, now very rare, had perhaps never a great circulation (in 1692 Increase Mather declares it, like Gaule's book, “rare to be had”); but its rules for the detection of witches gained much vogue from their adoption by Michael Dalton into his *The Countrey Justice*, the standard manual for the procedure of the lower courts. It is clearly, however, from Bernard's book itself that Cotton Mather has abridged these rules in his *Wonders*; and the book, as well as this extract, was doubtless in the hands of the Salem

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

judges. Increase Mather quotes it often, and by page, and tells us that it “is a solid and a wise treatise.” (*Cases of Conscience*, 1693, p. 18.)

[183]. It has been conjectured that this gentleman may have been one of the two Brattles. In a letter of March 1, 1695 (*More Wonders*, p. 30 — not here reprinted), to a “Mr. B.” (Brattle?) Calef mentions other papers received from Mather through his hands — but to be returned speedily and not copied. He, however, he says, made notes in the margin where he thought it needful. These papers, as it will rejoice all students to learn, have just been identified by Mr. Worthington C. Ford (to whose courtesy the editor owes his knowledge of them) among those in the keeping of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and they will be published in full — both Mather's text and Calef's marginalia (with a facsimile plate) in that society's *Proceedings* for 1913–1914. See also below, p. 388, at end.

[184]. The original has “use”; but this is corrected to “me” in the *Errata* (see p. 295, above).

[185]. A copy, not of the “express consent,” but of the “More Wonders of the Invisible World” — the Margaret Rule story as a whole — to which the letter of Mather introducing it was perhaps attached as a sort of open “letter to the reader.” Between this preface and that letter there intervenes a table of contents, not here reprinted.

[186]. It is, in other words, a supplement to his book thus entitled, as its other name, “Another Brand pluckt out of the Burning,” makes it a supplement to his Mercy Short narrative.

[187]. See his “Sect. 10” (pp. 316–318, below).

[188]. As to this letter see p. 306, note 3 . The Margaret Rule MS. is still preserved in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society; and Poole, who used it for his chapter on witchcraft in the *Memorial History of Boston*, has in a footnote (II. 152) printed a facsimile of the “To bee Return'd unto C. Mather” written on it by its author.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

**ANOTHER BRAND PLUCKT OUT OF THE BURNING, OR, MORE WONDERS
OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD
PART I.**

Section I. The Afflictions of Margaret Rule.

Within these few years there died in the Southern Parts a Christian Indian, who notwithstanding some of his Indian Weakness, had something of a better Character of vertue and Goodness, than many of our People can allow to most of their Countrey–men, that profess the Christian Religion. He had been a Zealous Preacher of the Gospel to his Neighbour–hood, and a sort of Overseer, or Officer, to whose Conduct was owing very much of what good order was maintained among those Proselited Savages: This Man returning home from the Funeral of his Son, was Complemented by an English–Man, expressing Sorrow for his Loss; now, tho' the Indians use, upon the Death of Relations, to be the most Passionate and Outragious Creatures in the World, yet this Converted Indian Handsomely and Chearfully repli'd, “Truly I am sorry, and I am not sorry; I am sorry that I have Buried a dear Son; but I am not sorry that the will of God is done. I know that without the will of God my Son could not have Died, and I know that the will of God is allways just and good, and so I am satisfied.” Immediately upon this, even within a few hours, he fell himself Sick of a Disease that quickly kill'd him; in the time of which Disease he called his Folks about him, earnestly perswading them to be Sincere in their Praying unto God, and beware of the Drunkenness, the Idleness, the Lying, whereby so many of that Nation disgrac'd their Profession of Christianity; adding, that he was ashamed when he thought how little Service he had hitherto done for God; and that if God would prolong his Life he would Labour to do better Service, but that he was fully sure he was now going to the Lord Jesus Christ, who had bought him with his own Precious Blood; and for his part he long'd to Die that he might be with his Glorious Lord; and in the mid'st of such passages he gave up the Ghost, but in such repute, that the English People of good Fashion did not think much of Travelling a great way to his Interment. Lest my Reader do now wonder why I have related this piece of a Story, I will now hasten to abate that Wonder, by telling that whereto this was intended, but for an Introduction: Know then that this remarkable Indian being a little before he Died at work in the Wood making of Tarr, there appeared unto him a Black–Man, of a Terrible aspect, and more than humane Dimensions, threatening bitterly to kill him if he would not promise to leave off Preaching as he did to his Countrey–Men, and promise particularly, that if he Preached any more, he would say nothing of Jesus Christ unto them. The Indian amaz'd, yet had the courage to answer, I will in spite of you go on to Preach Christ more than ever I did, and the God whom I serve will keep me that you shall never hurt me. Hereupon the Apparition abating somewhat of his fierceness, offer'd to the Indian a Book of a considerable thickness and a Pen and Ink, and said, that if he would now set his hand unto that Book, he would require nothing further of him; but the Man refused the motion with indignation, and fell down upon his knees into a Fervent and Pious Prayer unto God for help against the Tempter, whereupon the Dæmon Vanish't.

This is a Story which I would never have tendered unto my Reader, if I had not Receiv'd it from an honest and useful English Man, who is at this time a Preacher of the Gospel to the Indians, ¹⁸⁹ nor would the probable ¹⁹⁰ Truth of it have encouraged me to have tendered it, if this also had not been a fit introduction unto yet a further Narrative.

Sect. 2. 'Twas not much above a year or two, after this Accident (of which no manner of Noise has been made) that there was a Prodigious descent of Devils upon divers places near the Center of this Province, wherein some scores of Mis erable People were Troubled by horrible appearances of a Black–Man, accompanied with Spectres, wearing these and those Humane Shapes, who offer'd them a Book to be by them sign'd, in token of their being Listed for the Service of the Devil, and upon their denying to do it, they wereDragoon'd ¹⁹¹ with a thousand Preternatural Torments, which gave no little terror to the beholders of these unhappy Energuments. ¹⁹² There was one in the North part of Boston seized by the Evil–Angels many Months after the General Storm of the late Inchantments was over, and when the Countrey had long lain pretty quiet, both as to Molestations and Accusations from the *Invisible World*, her Name was Margaret Rule, a Young Woman. She was born of sober and honest Parents, yet Living, but what her own Character was before her Visitation, I can speak with the less confidence of exactness, because I observe that wherever the Devils have been let loose to worry any Poor Creature amongst us, a great part of the Neighbourhood presently set themselves to inquire and relate all the little

Vanities of their Childhood, with such unequal exaggerations, as to make them appear greater Sinners than any whom the Pilate of Hell has not yet Preyed upon: But it is affirm'd, that for about half a year before her Visitation, she was observably improved in the hopeful symptoms of a new Creature; She was become seriously concern'd for the everlasting Salvation of her Soul, and careful to avoid the snares of Evil Company. This Young Woman had never seen the affliction of Mercy Short, whereof a Narrative has been already given, ¹⁹³ and yet about half a year after the glorious and signal deliverance of that poor Damsel, this Margaret fell into an affliction, marvellous, resembling hers in almost all the circumstances of it, indeed the Afflictions were so much alike, that the relation I have given of the one, would almost serve as the full History of the other, this was to that, little more than the second part to the same Tune, indeed Margarets case was in several points less remarkable than Mercies, and in some other things the Entertainment did a little vary.

Sect. 3. 'Twas upon the Lords Day the 10th of September, in the Year 1693, that Margaret Rule, after some hours of previous disturbance in the Publick Assembly, fell into odd Fits, which caused her Friends to carry her home, where her Fits in a few hours grew into a Figure that satisfied the Spectators of their being preternatural; some of the Neighbours were forward enough to suspect the rise of this Mischief in an House hard-by, where lived a Miserable Woman, who had been formerly Imprisoned on the suspicion of Witchcraft, and who had frequently Cured very painfull Hurts by muttering over them certain Charms, which I shall not indanger the Poysoning of my Reader by repeating. This Woman had the Evening before Margaret fell into her Calamities, very bitterly treated her, and threatn'd her; but the hazard of hurting a poor Woman that might be innocent, notwithstanding Surmizes that might have been more strongly grounded than those, caus'd the pious People in the Vicinity to try rather whether incessant Supplication to God alone, might not procure a quicker and safer Ease to the Afflicted, than hasty Prosecution of any suppos'd Criminal, and accordingly that unexceptionable course was all that was ever followed; yea, which I look't on as a token for good, the Afflicted Family was as averse as any of us all to entertain thoughts of any other course.

Sect. 4. The Young Woman was assaulted by Eight cruel Spectres, whereof she imagin'd that she knew three or four, but the rest came still with their Faces cover'd, so that she could never have a distinguishing view of the countenance of those whom she thought she knew; she was very careful of my reiterated charges to forbear blasing the Names, lest any good Person should come to suffer any blast of Reputation thro' the cunning Malice of the great Accuser; nevertheless having since privately named them to my self, I will venture to say this of them, that they are a sort of Wretches who for these many years have gone under as Violent Presumptions of Witchcraft, as perhaps any creatures yet living upon Earth; altho' I am farr from thinking that the Visions of this Young Woman were Evidence enough to prove them so. These cursed Spectres now brought unto her a Book about a Cubet long, a Book Red and thick, but not very broad, and they demanded of her that she would set her Hand to that Book, or touch it at least with her Hand, as a Sign of her becoming a Servant of the Devil; upon her peremptory refusal to do what they asked, they did not after renew the profers of the Book unto her, but instead thereof, they fell to Tormenting of her in a manner too Hellish to be sufficiently described, in those Torments confining her to her Bed, for just Six weeks together.

Sect. 5. Sometimes, but not always, together with the Spectres there look't in upon the Young Woman (according to her account) a short and a Black Man, whom they call'd their Master, a Wight exactly of the same Dimensions and Complexion and voice, with the Divel that has exhibited himself unto other infested People, not only in other parts of this Country but also in other Countrys, even of the European World, as the relation of the Enchantments there inform us, they all profest themselves Vassals of this Devil, and in obedience unto him they address themselves unto various ways of Torturing her; accordingly she was cruelly pinch't with Invisible hands very often in a Day, and the black and blew marks of the pinches became immediately visible unto the standers by. Besides this, when her attendants had left her without so much as one pin about her, that so they might prevent some fear'd inconveniencies; yet she would ever now and then be miserably hurt with Pins which were found stuck into her Neck, Back and Arms, however, the Wounds made by the Pins would in a few minutes ordinarily be cured; she would also be strangely distorted in her Joynts, and thrown into such exorbitant Convulsions as were astonishing unto the Spectators in General; They that could behold the doleful condition of the poor Family without sensible compassions, might have Intrals indeed, but I am sure they could have no true Bowels in them.

Sect. 6. It were a most Unchristian and uncivil, yea a most unreasonable thing to imagine that the Fitt's of the Young Woman were but meer Impostures: And I believe scarce any, but People of a particular Dirtiness, will

harbour such an Uncharitable Censure; however, because I know not how far the Devil may drive the Imagination of poor Creatures when he has possession of them, that at another time when they are themselves would scorn to Dissemble any thing, I shall now confine my Narrative unto passages, wherein there could be no room left for any Dissimulation. Of these the first that I'll mention shall be this; From the time that Margaret Rule first found herself to be formally besieged by the Spectres untill the Ninth Day following, namely from the Tenth of September to the Eighteenth, she kept an entire Fast, and yet she was unto all appearance as Fresh, as Lively, as Hearty, at the Nine Days End, as before they began; in all this time, tho' she had a very eager Hunger upon her Stomach, yet if any refreshment were brought unto her, her Teeth would be set, and she would be thrown into many Miseries, Indeed once or twice or so in all this time, her Tormentors permitted her to swallow a Mouthful of somewhat that might encrease her Miseries, whereof a Spoonful of Rum was the most considerable; but otherwise, as I said, her Fast unto the Ninth day was very extream and rigid: However, afterwards there scarce passed a day wherein she had not liberty to take something or other for her Sustentation, And I must add this further, that this business of her Fast was carried so, that it was impossible to be dissembled without a Combination of Multitudes of People unacquainted with one another to support the Juggle, but he that can imagine such a thing of a Neighbourhood so fill'd with Vertuous People is a base man, I cannot call him any other.

Sect. 7. But if the Sufferings of this Young Woman were not Imposture, yet might they not be pure Distemper? I will not here inquire of our Saducees, what sort of Distemper 'tis shall stick the Body full of Pins, without any Hand that could be seen to stick them; or whether all the Pin-makers in the World would be willing to be Evaporated into certain ill habits of Body producing a Distemper, but of the Distemper my Reader shall be Judge when I have told him something further of those unusual Sufferings. I do believe that the Evil Angels do often take Advantage from Natural Distempers in the Children of Men to annoy them with such further Mischiefs as we call preternatural. The Malignant Vapours and Humours of our Diseased Bodies may be used by Devils thereinto insinuating as engine of the Execution of their Malice upon those Bodies; and perhaps for this reason one Sex may suffer more Troubles of some kinds from the Invisible World than the other, as well as for that reason for which the Old Serpent made where he did his first Address. But I Pray what will you say to this, Margaret Rule would sometimes have her Jaws forcibly pulled open, whereupon something Invisible would be poured down her Throat; we all saw her swallow, and yet we saw her try all she could by Spitting, Coughing and Shrieking, ¹⁹⁴ that she might not swallow, but one time the standers by plainly saw something of that odd Liquor it self on the outside of her Neck; She cried out of it as of Scalding Brimstone poured into her, and the whole House would Immediately scent so hot of Brimstone that we were scarce able to endure it, whereof there are scores of Witnesses; but the Young Woman her self would be so monstrously Inflam'd that it would have broke a Heart of Stone to have seen her Agonies. This was a thing that several times happen'd and several times when her Mouth was thus pull'd open, the standers by clapping their Hands close thereupon the distresses that otherwise followed would be diverted. Moreover there was a whitish powder to us Invisible somtimes cast upon the Eyes of this Young Woman, whereby her Eyes would be extreemly incommoded, but one time some of this Powder was fallen actually Visible upon her Cheek, from whence the People in the Room wiped it with their Handkerchiefs, and somtimes the Young Woman would also be so bitterly scorched with the unseen Sulphur thrown upon her, that very sensible Blisters would be raised upon her Skin, whereto her Friends found it necessary to apply the Oyl's proper for common Burning, but the most of these Hurts would be cured in two or three days at farthest: I think I may without Vanity pretend to have read not a few of the best System's of Physick that have been yet seen in these American Regions, but I must confess that I have never yet learned the Name of the Natural Distemper, whereto these odd symptoms do belong: However I might suggest perhaps many a Natural Medicine, which would be of singular use against many of them.

Sect. 8. But there fell out some other matters far beyond the reach of Natural Distemper: This Margaret Rule once in the middle of the Night Lamented sadly that the Spectres threatned the Drowning of a Young Man in the Neighbourhood, whom she named unto the Company: well it was afterwards found that at that very time this Young Man, having been prest on Board a Man of War then in the Harbour, was out of some dissatisfaction attempting to swim ashoar, and he had been Drowned in the attempt, if a Boat had not seasonably taken him up; it was by computation a minute or two after the Young Womans discourse of the Drowning, that the Young Man took the Water. At another time she told us that the Spectres bragg'd and laughed in her hearing about an exploit

they had lately done, by stealing from a Gentleman his Will soon after he had written it; and within a few hours after she had spoken this there came to me a Gentleman with a private complaint, that having written his Will it was unaccountably gone out of the way, how or where he could not Imagine; and besides all this, there were wonderful Noises every now and then made about the Room, which our People could Ascribe to no other Authors but the Spectres, yea, the Watchers affirm that they heard those fiends clapping of their hands together with an Audibleness, wherein they could not be Imposed upon: And once her Tormentors pull'd her up to the Cieling of the Chamber, and held her there before a very Numerous Company of Spectators, who found it as much as they could all do to pull her down again. There was also another very surprising circumstance about her, agreeable to what we have not only Read in several Histories concerning the Imps that have been Employed in Witchcraft; but also known in some of our own afflicted: We once thought we perceived something stir upon her Pillow at a little distance from her, whereupon one present laying his hand there, he to his horror apprehended that he felt, tho' none could see it, a living Creature, not altogether unlike a Rat, which nimbly escap'd from him: and there were diverse other Persons who were thrown into a great consternation by feeling, as they Judg'd, at other times the same Invisible Animal.

Sect. 9. As it has been with a Thousand other Incharnted People, so it was with Margaret Rule in this particular, that there were several words which her Tormentors would not let her hear, especially the words Pray or Prayer, and yet she could so hear the letters of those words distinctly mentioned as to know what they ment. The standers by were forced sometimes thus in discourse to spell a word to her, but because there were some so ridiculous as to count it a sort of Spell or a Charm for any thus to accommodate themselves to the capacity of the Sufferer, little of this kind was done. But that which was more singular in this matter, was that she could not use these words in those penetrating discourses, wherewith she would sometimes address the Spectres that were about her. She would sometimes for a long while together apply herself to the Spectres, whom she supposed the Witches, with such Exhortations to Repentance as would have melted an Heart of Adamant to have heard them; her strains of Expression and Argument were truly Extraordinary; A person perhaps of the best Education and Experience and of Attainments much beyond hers could not have exceeded them: nevertheless when she came to these Words God, Lord, Christ, Good, Repent, and some other such, her Mouth could not utter them, whereupon she would somtimes in an Angry Parenthesis complain of their Wickedness in stopping that Word, but she would then go on with some other Terms that would serve to tell what she ment. And I believe that if the most suspicious Person in the world had beheld all the Circumstances of this matter, he would have said it could not have been dissembled.

Sect. 10. Not only in the Swedish, but also in the Salem Witchcraft the Incharnted People have talked much of a White Spirit from whence they received marvellous Assistancess in their Miseries; what lately befel Mercy Short from the Communications of such a Spirit, hath been the just Wonder of us all, but by such a Spirit was Margaret Rule now also visited. She says that she could never see his Face; but that she had a frequent view of his bright, Shining and Glorious Garments; he stood by her Bed-side continually heartning and comforting of her and counselling her to maintain her Faith and hope in God, and never comply with the temptations of her Adversaries; she says he told her, that God had permitted her Afflictions to befall her for the everlasting and unspeakable good of her own Soul, and for the good of many others, and for his own Immortal Glory, and that she should therefore be of good Chear and be assured of a speedy deliverance; And the wonderful resolution of mind wherewith she encountered her Afflictions were but agreeable to such expectations. Moreover a Minister ¹⁹⁵ having one Day with some Importunity Prayed for the deliverance of this Young Woman, and pleaded that she belong'd to his Flock and charge; he had so far a right unto her as that he was to do the part of a Minister of our Lord for the bringing of her home unto God; only now the Devil hindred him in doing that which he had a right thus to do, and whereas He had a better Title unto her to bring her home to God than the Divel could have unto her to carry her away from the Lord, he therefore humbly applied himself unto God, who alone could right this matter, with a suit that she might be rescued out of Satans Hands; Immediatly upon this, tho' she heard nothing of this transaction she began to call that Minister her Father, and that was the Name whereby she every day before all sorts of People distinguished him: the occasion of it she says was this, the white Spirit presently upon this transaction did after this manner speak to her, “Margaret, you now are to take notice that” (such a Man) “is your Father, God has given you to him, do you from this time look upon him as your Father, obey him, regard him as your Father, follow his Counsels and you shall do well”; And tho' there was one passage more, which I do as little know what to make of as any of the Rest, I am now going to relate it; more than three times have I seen it fulfilled in the Deliverance of

Inchanted and Possesst Persons, whom the Providence of God has cast into my way, that their Deliverance could not be obtained before the third Fast kept for them, and the third day still obtain'd the Deliverance, altho' I have thought of beseeching of the Lord thrice, when buffeted by Satan, yet I must earnestly Intreat all my Readers to beware of any superstitious conceits upon the Number Three; if our God will hear us upon once Praying and Fasting before him 'tis well, and if he will not vouchsafe his Mercy upon our thrice doing so, yet we must not be so discouraged as to throw by our Devotion but if the Sovereign Grace of our God will in any particular Instances count our Patience enough tryed when we have Solemnly waited upon him for any determinate Number of times, who shall say to him, what doest thou, and if there shall be any Number of Instances, wherein this Grace of our God has exactly holden the same course, it may have a room in our humble Observations, I hope, without any Superstition; I say then that after Margaret Rule had been more than five weeks in her Miseries, this White Spirit said unto her, "Well this day such a Man" (whom he named ¹⁹⁶) "has kept a third day for your deliverance, now be of good cheer you shall speedily be delivered." I inquired whether what had been said of that Man were true, and I gained exact and certain Information that it was precisely so, but I doubt lest in relating this Passage that I have used more openness than a Friend should be treated with, and for that cause I have concealed several of the most memorable things that have occurred not only in this but in some former Histories, altho indeed I am not so well satisfied about the true nature of this white Spirit, as to count that I can do a Friend much Honour by reporting what notice this white Spirit may have thus taken of him.

Sect. 11. On the last day of the Week her Tormentors as she thought and said, approaching towards her, would be forced still to recoil and retire as unaccountably unable to meddle with her, and they would retire to the Fire side with their Poppets; but going to stick Pins into those Poppets, they could not (according to their visions) make the Pins to enter, she insulted over them with a very Proper derision, daring them now to do their worst, whilst she had the satisfaction to see their Black Master strike them and kick them, like an Overseer of so many Negro's, to make them to do their work, and renew the marks of his vengeance on them, when they failed of doing of it. At last being as it were tired with their ineffectual Attempts to mortifie her they furiously said, "Well you shant be the last." And after a pause they added, "Go, and the Devil go with you, we can do no more"; whereupon they flew out of the Room and she returning perfectly to her self most affectionately gave thanks to God for her deliverance; her Tormentors left her extream weak and faint, and overwhelmed with Vapours, which would not only cause her sometimes to Swoon away, but also now and then for a little while discompose the reasonableness of her Thoughts; Nevertheless her former troubles returned not, but we are now waiting to see the good effects of those troubles upon the Souls of all concern'd. And now I suppose that some of our Learned witlings of the Coffee-House, for fear lest these proofs of an Invisible-world should spoil some of their sport, will endeavour to turn them all into sport, for which Buffoonary their only pretence will be, they cant understand how such things as these could be done, whereas indeed he that is but Philosopher enough to have read but one Little Treatise, Published in the Year 1656 by no other Man than the Chyrurgion of an Army, ¹⁹⁷ or but one Chap. of Helmont, ¹⁹⁸ which I will not quote at this time too particularly, may give a far more intelligible account of these Appearances than most of these Blades can give why and how their Tobacco makes 'em Spit; or which way the flame of their Candle becomes illuminating. As for that cavil, the world would be undone if the Devils could have such power as they seem to have in several of our stories, it may be Answered that as to many things the Lying Devils have only known them to be done, and then pretended unto the doing of those things, but the true and best Answer is, that by these things we only see what the Devils could have powers to do, if the great God should give them those powers, whereas now our Histories affords a Glorious Evidence for the being of a God, the World would indeed be undone, and horribly undone, if these Devils, who now and then get liberty to play some very mischievous pranks, were not under a daily restraint of some Almighty Superior from doing more of such Mischiefs. Wherefore instead of all Apish flouts and jeers at Histories, which have such undoubted confirmation, as that no Man that has breeding enough to regard the Common Laws of Humane Society, will offer to doubt of 'em, it becomes us rather to adore the Goodness of God, who does not permit such things every day to befall us all, as he sometimes did permit to befall some few of our miserable Neighbours.

Sect. 12. And what, after all my unwearied Cares and Pains, to rescue the Miserable from the Lions and Bears of Hell, which had siezed them, and after all my Studies to disappoint the Devils in their designs to confound my Neighbourhood, must I be driven to the necessity of an Apologie? Truly the hard representations wherewith some Ill Men have reviled my conduct, and the Countenance which other Men have given to these representations,

oblige me to give Mankind some account of my Behaviour; No Christian can, I say none but evil workers can criminate my visiting such of my poor flock as have at any time fallen under the terrible and sensible molestations of Evil–Angels; let their Afflictions have been what they will, I could not have answered it unto my Glorious Lord, if I had withheld my just Counsels and Comforts from them; and if I have also with some exactness observ'd the methods of the Invisible–World, when they have thus become observable, I have been but a Servant of Mankind in doing so; yea no less a Person than the Venerable Baxter has more than once or twice in the most Publick manner invited Mankind to thank me for that Service. ¹⁹⁹ I have not been insensible of a greater danger attending me in this fulfilment of my Ministry, than if I had been to take Ten Thousand steps over a Rocky Mountain fill'd with Rattle–Snakes, but I have consider'd, he that is wise will observe things, and the Surprising Explication and confirmation of the biggest part of the Bible, which I have seen given in these things, has abundantly paid me for observing them. Now in my visiting of the Miserable, I was always of this opinion that we were Ignorant of what Powers the Devils might have to do their mischiefs in the shapes of some that had never been explicitly engaged in Diabolical Confederacies, and that therefore tho' many Witchcrafts had been fairly detected on Enquiries provoked and begun by Spectral Exhibitions, yet we could not easily be too jealous ²⁰⁰ of the Snares laid for us in the devices of Satan; the World knows how many Pages I have Composed and Published, and particular Gentlemen in the Government know how many Letters I have written to prevent the excessive Credit of Spectral Accusations, wherefore I have still charged the Afflicted that they should Cry out of no body for Afflicting of 'em. But that if this might be any Advantage they might privately tell their minds to some one Person of discretion enough to make no ill use of their communications, accordingly there has been this effect of it, that the Name of No one good Person in the World ever came under any blemish by means of any Afflicted Person that fell under my particular cognisance, yea no one Man, Woman or Child ever came into any trouble for the sake of any that were Afflicted after I had once begun to look after'em; how often have I had this thrown into my dish, that many years ago I had an opportunity to have brought forth such People as have in the late storm of Witchcraft been complain'd of, but that I smother'd all, and after that storm was rais'd at Salem, I did myself offer to provide Meat, Drink and Lodging for no less than Six of the Afflicted, that so an Experiment might be made, whether Prayer with Fasting upon the removal of the distressed might not put a Period to the trouble then rising, without giving the Civil Authority the trouble of prosecuting those things which nothing but a Conscientious regard unto the cries of Miserable Families, could have overcome the Reluctancies of the Honourable Judges to meddle with; In short I do humbly but freely affirm it, there is not that Man living in this World who has been more desirous than the poor Man I to shelter my Neighbours from the Inconveniencies of Spectral Outcries, yea I am very jealous I have done so much that way as to Sin in what I have done, such have been the Cowardize and Fearfulness whereunto my regard unto the dissatisfactions of other People has precipitated me. I know a Man in the World, who has thought he has been able to Convict some such Witches as ought to Dye, but his respect unto the Publick Peace has caused him rather to try whether He could not renew them by Repentance: And as I have been Studious to defeat the Devils of their expectations to set people together by the Ears, thus, I have also checked and quell'd those forbidden curiosities, which would have given the devil an invitation to have tarried amongst us, when I have seen wonderful Snares laid for Curious People, by the secret and future things discovered from the Mouths of Damsels possess'd with a Spirit of divination; Indeed I can recollect but one thing wherein there could be given so much as a Shadow of Reason for Exceptions, and that is my allowing of so many to come and see those that were Afflicted, now for that I have this to say, that I have almost a Thousand times intreated the Friends of the Miserable, that they would not permit the Intrusion of any Company, but such as by Prayers or other ways might be helpful to them; Nevertheless I have not absolutely forbid all Company from coming to your Haunted Chambers, partly because the Calamities of the Families were such as required the Assistance of many Friends; partly because I have been willing that there should be disinterested Witnesses of all sorts, to confute the Calumnies of such as would say all was but Imposture; and partly because I saw God had Sanctified the Spectacle of the Miseries on the Afflicted unto the Souls of many that were Spectators, and it is a very Glorious thing that I have now to mention — The Devils have with most horrendous operations broke in upon our Neighbourhood, and God has at such a rate over–ruled all the Fury and Malice of those Devils, that all the Afflicted have not only been Delivered, but I hope also savingly brought home unto God, and the Reputation of no one good Person in the World has been damaged, but instead thereof the Souls of many, especially of the rising Generation, have been thereby awaken'd unto some acquaintance with Religion; our young People who

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

belonged unto the Praying Meetings, of both Sexes, a part would ordinarily spend whole Nights by the whole Weeks together in Prayers and Psalms upon these occasions, in which Devotions the Devils could get nothing but like Fools a Scourge for their own Backs, and some scores of other young People, who were strangers to real Piety, were now struck with the lively demonstrations of Hell evidently set forth before their Eyes, when they saw Persons cruelly Frighted, wounded and Starved by Devils and Scalded with burning Brimstone, and yet so preserved in this tortured estate as that at the end of one Months wretchedness they were as able still to undergo another, so that of these also it might now be said, Behold they Pray in the whole — The Devil got just nothing; but God got praises, Christ got Subjects, the Holy Spirit got Temples, the Church got Addition, and the Souls of Men got everlasting Benefits; I am not so vain as to say that any Wisdome or Vertue of mine did contribute unto this good order of things: But I am so just, as to say I did not hinder this Good. When therefore there have been those that pickt up little incoherent scraps and bits of my Discourses in this faithful discharge of my Ministry, and so traversted ²⁰¹ 'em intheir abusive Pamphlets, ²⁰² as to perswade the Town that I was their common Enemy in those very points, wherein, if in any one thing whatsoever, I have sensibly approved my self as true a Servant unto 'em as possibly I could, tho my Life and Soul had been at Stake for it, Yea to do like Satan himself, by sly, base, unpretending Insinuations, as if I wore not the Modesty and Gravity which became a Minister of the Gospel, I could not but think my self unkindly dealt withal, and the neglects of others to do me justice in this affair has caused me to conclude this Narrative with complaints in another hearing of such Monstrous Injuries. ²⁰³

Notes

[189]. Very probably his uncle, the Rev. John Cotton (1640–1699), who had formerly preached in Martha's Vineyard (1664–1667) and had there learned the Indian tongue, and who now, at Plymouth, continued to preach to Indians as well as whites. In his life of Eliot and in bk. VI. of his *Magnalia* Mather relates much more of the Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard and of the witchcrafts there.

[190] Provable, demonstrable.

[191] See p. 189, note 2.

[192] Energumens: *i.e.*, demoniacs.

[193] See pp. 255 ff., above.

[194] Hawking? The word is unknown to the dictionaries.

[195] Mather himself, of course.

[196] Again there can be little doubt that the writer means himself.

[197] Who this “Chirurgion” was and what his treatise, is a puzzle — as it was perhaps meant to be. Balthasar Timäus von Guldenklee (1600–1667), physician to the Elector of Brandenburg, had earned his nobility by healing the Swedish army of the pest in 1637, and in his *Casus Medicinales* has a passage on diseases ascribed to witchcraft; but it does not appear that this work was published before 1662. Antonius Deusing (1612–1666), physician to the Stadholder of Friesland, published in 1656 a treatise on this subject; but it does not appear that he was ever an army surgeon.

[198] Doubtless the elder, Jan Baptista van Helmont (1577–1644), the eminent but visionary Flemish physician; and the “one Chap.” that on “Recepta injecta” in his *Tractatus de Morbis* — though he goes into the subject as fully in paragraphs 87–152 of his *De Magnetica Vulnerum Curatione*.

[199] Notably in his own book on *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (London, 1691) and in the preface which he wrote for the London edition of Mather's *Memorable Providences*, published in that year.

[200] Suspicious.

[201] Travestied.

[202] See p. 332, below.

[203] The story of Margaret Rule is told again in Mather's *Diary* (I. 171 ff.) and in a way that throws fresh light on his relation to the case.

“About a Week after the Beginning of September, being sollicitous to do some further Service, for the Name of God, I took a Journey to Salem. There, I not only sought a further Supply of my Furniture for my Church–History, but also endeavoured, that the complete History of the late Witchcrafts and Possessions might not bee lost. I judg'd that the Preservacion of that History might in a while bee a singular Benefit unto the Church, and unto the World, which made mee sollicitous about it. Moreover, I was willing to preach the Word of God unto the numerous Congregation at Salem; which I did, on both Parts of the Sabbath, not only with a most glorious Assistence of Heaven, but also with some Assurance of Good thereby to bee done among the People. But I had one singular Unhappiness, which befel mee, in this Journey. I had largely written three Discourses, which I designed both to preach at Salem, and hereafter to print. These Notes were before the Sabbath stolen from mee, with such Circumstances, that I am somewhat satisfied, The Spectres, or Agents in the invisible World, were the Robbers. This Diaster had like to have disturbed my Designs for the Sabbath; but God helped mee to remember a great part of what I had written, and to deliver also many other Things, which else I had not now made use of. So that the Divel gott nothing!

“Among other things which entertained mee at Salem, one was, a Discourse with one Mrs. Carver, who had been strangely visited with some shining Spirits, which were good Angels, in her opinion of them.

“She intimated several things unto mee whereof some were to be kept secret. Shee also told mee, That a new Storm of Witchcraft would fall upon the Countrey, to chastise the Iniquity that was used in the wilful Smothering and Covering of the Last; and that many fierce Opposites to the Discovery of that Witchcraft would bee thereby convinced.

“Unto my Surprise, when I came home, I found one of my Neighbours horribly arrested by evil Spirits. I then beg'd of God, that Hee would help mee wisely to discharge my Duty upon this occasion, and avoid gratifying of the evil Angels in any of their Expectations. I did then concern myself to use and gett as much Prayer as I could for the afflicted young Woman; and at the same time, to forbid, either her from accusing any of her Neighbours, or others from enquiring any thing of her. Nevertheless, a wicked Man wrote a most lying Libel to revile my Conduct in these matters; which drove mee to the Blessed God, with my Supplications that Hee would wonderfully protect mee, as well from unreasonable Men acted by the Divels, as from the Divels themselves. I did at first, it may bee, too much resent the Injuries of that Libel; but God brought good out of it; it occasioned the Multiplication of my Prayers before Him; it very much promoted the Works of Humiliation and Mortification in my Soul. Indeed, the Divel made that Libel an Occasion of those Paroxysms in the Town, that would have exceedingly gratify'd him, if God had not helped mee to forgive and forgett the Injuries done unto mee, and to bee deaf unto the Sollicitations of those that would have had mee so to have resented the Injuries of some few Persons, as to have deserted the Lecture at the Old Meeting house.

“When the afflicted young woman had undergone six Weeks of præternatural Calamities and when God had helped mee to keep just three Dayes of Prayer on her behalf, I had the Pleasure of seeing the same Success, which I used to have, on my third Fast, for such possessed People, as have been cast into my cares. God gave her a glorious Deliverance; The remarkable Circumstances whereof, I have more fully related, in an History of the whole Business.

“As for my missing Notes, the possessed young Woman, of her own Accord, enquir'd whether I missed them not? Shee told mee, the Spectres brag'd in her hearing, that they had rob't mee of them; shee added, Bee n't

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

concern'd; for they confess, they can't keep them awayes from you; you shall have them all brought you again. (They were Notes on Ps. 119. 19 and Ps. 90. 12 and Hag. 1. 7, 9. I was tender of them and often pray'd unto God, that they might bee return'd.) On the fifth of October following, every Leaf of my Notes again came into my Hands, tho' they were in eighteen separate Quarters of Sheets. They were found drop't here and there, about the Streets of Lyn; but how they came to bee so drop't I cannot imagine; and I as much wonder at the Exactness of their Præservation."

And under October 10th he adds: "On this Day, I also visited a possessed young Woman in the Neighbourhood, whose Distresses were not the least occasion of my being thus before the Lord. I wrestled with God for her: and among other things, I pleaded, that God had made it my Office and Business to engage my Neighbours in the Service of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that this young Woman had expressed her Compliance with my Invitations unto that Service; only that the evil Spirits now hindred her from doing what shee had vowd: and therefore that I had a sort of Right to demand her Deliverance from these invading Divels, and to demand such a Liberty for her as might make her capable of glorifying my Glorious Lord; which I did accordingly. In the close of this Day, a wonderful Spirit, in White and bright Raiment, with a Face unseene, appeared unto this young woman, and bid her count mee her Father, and regard mee and obey mee, as her Father; for hee said, the Lord had given her to mee; and she should now within a few Dayes bee delivered. It proved, accordingly."

And again in December (p. 178): "And one memorable Providence, I must not forgett. A young Woman being arrested, possessed, afflicted by evil Angels, her Tormentors made my Image or Picture to appear before her, and then made themselves Masters of her Tongue so far, that she began in her Fits to complain that I threatened her and molested her, tho' when shee came out of them, shee own'd, that they could not so much as make my dead Shape do her any Harm, and that they putt a Force upon her Tongue in her Exclamations. Her greatest Out-cries when shee was herself, were, for my poor Prayers to be concerned on her behalf.

"Being hereupon extremely sensible, how much a malicious Town and Land would insult over mee, if such a lying Piece of a Story should fly abroad, that the Divels in my Shape tormented the Neighbourhood, I was putt upon some Agonies, and singular Salleys and Efforts of Soul, in the Resignation of my Name unto the Lord; content that if Hee had no further service for my Name, it should bee torn to pieces with all the Reproches in the world. But I cried unto the Lord as for the Deliverance of my Name, from the Malice of Hell, so for the Deliverance of the young Woman, whom the Powers of Hell had now seized upon. And behold! Without any further Noise, the possessed Person, upon my praying by her, was delivered from her Captivity, on the very same Day that shee fell into it; and the whole Plott of the Divel, to reproach a poor Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, was defeated."

PART II. *A Letter to Mr. C. M.*

Letter

Boston Jan. 11th, 1693.

204*Mr. Cotton Mather,*

Reverend Sir, I finding it needful on many accounts, I here present you with the Copy of that Paper, which has been so much Misrepresented, to the End that what shall be found defective or not fairly Represented, if any such shall appear, they may be set right, which Runs thus.

September the 13th, 1693.

In the Evening when the Sun was withdrawn, giving place to Darkness to succeed, I with some others were drawn by curiosity to see Margaret Rule, and so much the rather because it was reported Mr. M — ²⁰⁵ would be there that Night: Being come to her Fathers House into the Chamber wherein she was in Bed, found her of a healthy countenance of about seventeen Years Old, lying very still, and speaking very little, what she did say seem'd as if she were Light-headed. Then Mr. M — , Father and Son, came up and others with them, in the whole were about 30 or 40 Persons; they being sat, the Father on a Stool, and the Son upon the Bedside by her, the Son began to question her, Margaret Rule, how do you do? then a pause without any answer. *Question*. What, do there a great many Witches sit upon you? *Answer*. Yes. *Q*. Do you not know that there is a hard Master? Then she was in a Fit; He laid his hand upon her Face and Nose, but, as he said, without perceiving Breath; then he brush'd her on the Face with his Glove, and rubb'd her Stomach (her breast not covered with the Bed-cloaths) and bid others do so too, and said it eased her, then she revived. *Q*. Don't you know there is a hard Master? *A*. Yes. *Reply*; Don't serve that hard Master, you know who. *Q*. Do you believe? Then again she was in a Fit, and he again rub'd her Breast, etc. (about this time Margaret Perd an attendant assisted him in rubbing of her. The Afflicted spake angerely to her saying don't you meddle with me, and hastily put away her hand) he wrought his Fingers before her Eyes and asked her if she saw the Witches? *A*. No. *Q*. Do you believe? *A*. Yes. *Q*. Do you believe in you know who? *A*. Yes. *Q*. Would you have other people do so too, to believe in you know who? *A*. Yes. *Q*. Who is it that Afflicts you? *A*. I know not, there is a great many of them (about this time the Father question'd if she knew the Spectres? An attendant said, if she did she would not tell; The Son proceeded) *Q*. You have seen the Black-man, hant ²⁰⁶ you? *A*. No. *Reply*; I hope you never shall. *Q*. You have had a Book offered you, hant you? *A*. No. *Q*. The brushing of you gives you ease, don't it? *A*. Yes. She turn'd her selfe and a little Groan'd. *Q*. Now the Witches Scratch you and Pinch you, and Bite you, don't they? *A*. Yes. Then he put his hand upon her Breast and Belly, *viz.* on the Cloaths over her, and felt a Living thing, as he said, which moved the Father also to feel, and some others; *Q*. Don't you feel the Live thing in the Bed? *A*. No. *Reply*, that is only Fancie. *Q*. the great company of People increase your Torment, don't they? *A*. Yes. The People about were desired to withdraw. One Woman said, I am sure I am no Witch, I will not go; so others, so none withdrew. *Q*. Shall we go to Prayers? Then she lay in a Fit as before. But this time to revive her, they waved a Hat and brushed her Head and Pillow therewith. *Q*. Shall we go to *Pray*, etc. Spelling the Word. *A*. Yes. The Father went to Prayer for perhaps half an Hour, chiefly against the Power of the Devil and Witchcraft, and that God would bring out the Afflictors: during Prayer-time, the Son stood by, and when they thought she was in a Fit, rub'd her and brush'd her as before, and beckned to others to do the like; after Prayer he proceeded; *Q*. You did not hear when we were at Prayer, did you? *A*. Yes. *Q*. You dont hear always, you dont hear sometimes past a Word or two, do you? *A*. No.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Then turning him about said, this is just another Mercy Short: Margaret Perd reply'd, she was not like her in her Fits. *Q.* What does she eat or drink? *A.* Not eat at all; but drink Rum. Then he admonished the young People to take warning, etc. Saying it was a sad thing to be so Tormented by the Devil and his Instruments: A Young–man present in the habit of a Seaman, reply'd this is the Devil all over. Than ²⁰⁷ the Ministers withdrew. Soon after they were gon the Afflicted desired the Women to be gone, saying, that the Company of the Men was not offensive to her, and having hold of the hand of a Young–man, said to have been her Sweet–heart formerly, who was withdrawing; She pull'd him again into his Seat, saying he should not go to Night.

September the 19th, 1693.

This Night I renew'd my Visit, and found her rather of a fresher Countenance than before, about eight Persons present with her, she was in a Fit Screaming and making a Noise: Three or four Persons rub'd and brush'd her with their hands, they said that the brushing did put them away, if they brush'd or rub'd in the right place; therefore they brush'd and rub'd in several places, and said that when they did it in the right place she could fetch her Breath, and by that they knew. She being come to her self was soon in a merry talking Fit. A Young–man came in and ask'd her how she did? She answered very bad, but at present a little better; he soon told her he must be gon and bid her good Night, at which she seem'd troubled, saying, that she liked his Company, and said she would not have him go till she was well; adding, for I shall Die when you are gon. Then she complained they did not put her on a clean Cap, but let her ly so like a Beast, saying, she should lose her Fellows. She said she wondered any People should be so Wicked as to think she was not Afflicted, but to think she Dissembled. A Young–woman answered Yes, if they were to see you in this merry Fit, they would say you Dissembled indeed; She reply'd, Mr. M — said this was her laughing time, she must laugh now: She said Mr. M — had been there this Evening, and she enquired, how long he had been gon? She said, he stay'd alone with her in the room half an Hour, and said that he told her there were some that came for Spies, and to report about Town that she was not Afflicted. That during the said time she had no Fit, that he asked her if she knew how many times he had Prayed for her to Day? And that she answered that she could not tell; and that he replied he had Prayed for her Nine times to Day; the Attendants said that she was sometimes in a Fit that none could open her Joynts, and that there came an Old Iron–jaw'd Woman and try'd, but could not do it; they likewise said, that her Head could not be moved from the Pillow; I try'd to move her head, and found no more difficulty than another Bodies (and so did others) but was not willing to offend by lifting it up, one being reproved for endeavouring it, they saying angrily you will break her Neck; The Attendants said Mr. M — would not go to Prayer with her when People were in the Room, as they did one Night, that Night he felt the Live Creature. Margaret Perd and another said they smelt Brimstone; I and others said we did not smell any; then they said they did not know what it was: This Margaret said, she wish'd she had been here when Mr. M — was here, another Attendant said, if you had been here you might not have been permitted in, for her own Mother was not suffered to be present.

Sir, after the sorest Affliction and greatest blemish to Religion that ever befel this Country, and after most Men began to Fear that some undue steps had been taken, and after His Excellency (with their Majesties Approbation ²⁰⁸ as is said) had put a stop to Executions, and Men began to hope there would never be a return of the like; finding these Accounts to contain in them something extraordinary, I writ them down the same Nights in order to attain the certainty of them, and soon found them so confirmed that I have (besides other Demonstrations) the whole, under the Hands of two Persons are ready to attest the Truth of it; but not satisfied herewith, I shewed them to some of your particular Friends, that so I might have the greater certainty: But was much surprized with the Message you sent me, that I should be Arrested for Slander, and at your calling me one of the worst of Lyars, making it Pulpit news with the Name of Pernicious Libels, etc. This occasion'd my first

Letter.

Letter

September the 29th, 1693.

Reverend Sir,

I having written from the Mouths of several Persons, who affirm they were present with Margaret Rule, the 13th Instant, her Answers and Behaviours, etc. And having shewed it to several of my Friends, as also yours, and understanding you are offended at it; This is to acquaint you, that if you and any one particular Friend, will please to meet me and some other Indifferent Person with me, at Mr. Wilkins, or at Ben. Harris's, ²⁰⁹ you intimating the time, I shall be ready there to read it to you, as also a further Account of proceedings the '19th Instant, which may be needful to prevent Groundless prejudices, and let deserved blame be cast where it ought; From,

Sir, yours in what I may,

R. C.

The effects of which, Sir, (not to mention that long Letter only once read to me) was, you sent me word you would meet me at Mr. Wilkins, but before that Answer, at yours and your Fathers complaint, I was brought before their Majesties Justice, by Warrant, as for Scandalous Libels against your self, and was bound over to Answer at Sessions; I do not remember you then objected against the Truth of what I had wrote, but asserted it was wronged by omissions, which if it were so was past any Power of mine to remedy, having given a faithful account of all that came to my knowledge; And Sir, that you might not be without some Cognisance of the reasons why I took so much pains in it, as also for my own Information, if it might have been, I wrote to you my second Letter to this effect.

Letter

November the 24th, 1693.

Reverend Sir,

Having expected some Weeks, your meeting me at Mr. Wilkins according to what you intimated to Mr. J. M. — ²¹⁰ and the time draw ing near for our meeting elsewhere, I thought it not amiss to give you a Summary of my thoughts in the great concern, which as you say has been agitated with so much heat. That there are Witches is not the doubt, the Scriptures else were in vain, which assign their Punishment to be by Death; But what this Witchcraft is, or wherein it does consist, seems to be the whole difficulty: And as it may be easily demonstrated, that all that bear that Name cannot be justly so accounted, so that some things and Actions not so esteemed by the most, yet upon due examination will be found to merit no better Character.

In your late Book you lay down a brief Synopsis of what has been written on that Subject, by a Triumvirate of as Eminent Men as ever handled it (as you are pleas'd to call them) *Viz.* Mr. Perkins, ²¹¹ Gaule, ²¹² and Bernard ²¹³ consisting of about 30 Tokens to know them by, many of them distinct from, if not thwarting each other: Among all of which I can find but one decisive, *Viz.* That of Mr. Gaule, Head IV. and runs thus; Among the most unhappy Circumstances to convict a Witch, one is a maligning and oppugning the Word, Work, or Worship of God, and by any extraordinary Sign seeking to seduce any from it, see Deu. 13. 1, 2. Mat. 24. 24. Acts. 13. 8, 10. 2 Tim. 3. 8. Do but mark well the places, and for this very property of thus opposing and perverting, they are all there concluded [*unclear* :] and absolute Witches. ²¹⁴

This Head as here laid down and inserted by you, either is a Truth or not; if not, why is it here inserted from one of the Triumvirate, if it be a Truth, as the Scriptures quoted will abundantly testifie, whence is it that it is so little regarded, tho it be the only Head well proved by Scripture, or that the rest of the Triumvirate should so far forget their Work as not to mention it. It were to be unjust to the Memory of those otherwise Wise Men, to suppose them to have any Sinister design; But perhaps the force of a prevailing opinion, together with an Education thereto Suited, might over shadow their Judgments, as being wont to be but too prevalent in many other cases. But if the above be Truth, then the Scripture is full and plain, What is Witchcraft? And if so, what need of his next Head of Hanging of People without as full and clear Evidence as in other Cases? Or what need of the Receipts of the Triumvirate? what need of Praying that the Afflicted may be able to discover who tis that Afflicts them? or what need of Searching for Tet's for the Devil to Suck in his Old Age, or the Experiment of saying the Lords Prayer, etc. Which ²¹⁵ a multitude more practised in some places Superstitiously inclin'd. Other Actions have been practised for easing the Afflicted, less justifiable, if not strongly savouring of Witchcraft it self, *viz.* Fondly Imagining by the Hand, etc., to drive off Spectres, or to knock off Invisible Chains, or by striking in the Air to Wound either the Afflicted or others, etc. I write not this to accuse any, but that all may beware believing, That the Devil's bounds are set, which he cannot pass, That the Devils are so full of Malice, That it cant be added to by Mankind, That where he hath Power, he neither can nor will omit Executing it, That 'tis only the Almighty that sets bounds to his rage, and that only can Commissionate him to hurt or destroy any.

These last, Sir, are such Foundations of Truth, in my esteem, that I cannot but own it to be my duty to ascertain them, when call'd tho' with the hazard of my All: And consequently to detect such as these, That a Witch can Commissionate Devils to Afflict Mortals, That he can at his or the Witches pleasure Assume any Shape, That Hanging or Chaining of Witches can lessen his Power of Afflicting, or restore those that were at a distance Tormented, with many others depending on these; all tending, in my esteem, highly to the Dishonour of God, and the Indangering the well-being of a People, and do further add, that as the Scriptures are full that there is Witchcraft, (*ui sup.*) so 'tis as plain that there are Possessions, and that the Bodies of the Possest have hence been not only Afflicted, but strangely agitated, if not their Tongues improved to foretell futurities, etc. and why not to accuse the Innocent, as bewitching them; having pretence to Divination to gain credence. This being reasonable to be expected, from him who is the Father of Lies, to the end he may thereby involve a Countrey in Blood, Mallice,

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

and Evil, surmising which he greedily seeks after, and so finally lead them from their fear and dependence upon God to fear him, and a supposed Witch thereby attaining his end upon Mankind; and not only so, but Natural Distemper, as has been frequently observed by the Judicious, have so operated as to deceive, more than the Vulgar, as is testified by many Famous Physicians, and others. And as for that proof of Multitudes of Confessions, this Countrey may be by this time thought Competent Judges, what credence we ought to give them, having had such numerous Instances, as also how obtain'd.

And now Sir, if herein be any thing in your esteem valuable, let me intreat you, not to account it the worse for coming from so mean a hand; which however you may have receiv'd Prejudices, etc., Am ready to serve you to my Power; but if you Judge otherwise hereof, you may take your own Methods for my better Information. Who am, Sir, yours to command, in what I may,

R. C. ²¹⁶

In Answer to this last, Sir, you replyed to the Gentleman that presented it, that you had nothing to Prosecute against me; and said as to your Sentiments in your Books, you did not bind any to believe them, and then again renew'd your promise of meeting me, as before, tho' not yet performed. Accordingly, tho' I waited at Sessions, there was none to object ought against me, upon which I was dismissed. This gave me some reason to believe that you intended all should have been forgotten; But instead of that, I find the Coals are fresh blown up, I being supposed to be represented, in a late Manuscript, *More Wonders of the*, etc., as Traversing ²¹⁷ your Discourse in your Faithful discharge of your Duty, etc. And such as see not with the Authors Eyes, rendred Sadducees and Witlins, ²¹⁸ etc., and the Arguments that square not with the Sentiments therein contain'd, Buffoonary; rarely no doubt, agreeing with the Spirit of Christ, and his dealings with an unbelieving Thomas, yet whose infidelity was without compare less excusable, but the Author having resolved long since, to have no more than one single Grain of Patience, with them that deny, ²¹⁹ etc., the Wonder is the less. It must needs be that offences come, but wo to him by whom they come. To vindicate my self therefore from such false Imputations, of Satanlike insinuations, and misrepresenting your Actions, etc., and to vindicate your self, Sir, as much as is in my Power from those Suggestions, said to be Insinuated, as if you wore not the Modesty and Gravity, that becomes a Minister of the Gospel; which it seems, some that never saw the said Narratives, report themo contain; I say, Sir, for these reasons, I here present you with the first Copy that ever was taken, etc. And purpose for a Weeks time to be ready, if you shall intimate your pleasure, to wait upon you, either at the place formerly appointed, or any other that is indifferent to the End; that if there shall appear any defects in that Narrative, they may be amended.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a genuine account of my Sentiments and Actions in this Affair; and do request and pray, that if I err, I may be shewed it from Scripture, or sound Reason, and not by quotations out of Virgil, nor Spanish Rhetorick. For I find the Witlings mentioned, are so far from answering your profound questions, that they cannot so much as pretend to shew a distinction between Witchcraft in the Common notion of it, and Possession; Nor so much as to demonstrate that ever the Jews or primitive Christians did believe, that a Witch could send a Devil to Afflict her Neighbours; but to all these, Sir, (ye being the Salt of the Earth, etc.) I have reason to hope for a Satisfactory Answer to him, who is one that reverences your Person and Office; And am, Sir, yours to Command in what I may,

R. C.

Letter

Boston, January the 15th, 1693/4. Mr. R. C.

Whereas you intimate your desires, that what's not fairly, (I take it for granted you mean truly also,) represented in a Paper you lately sent me, containing a pretended Narrative of a Visit by my Father and self to an Afflicted Young woman, whom we apprehended to be under a Diabolical Possession, might be rectified: I have this to say, as I have often already said, that I do scarcely find any one thing in the whole Paper, whether respecting my Father or self, either fairly or truly represented. Nor can I think that any that know my Parents Circumstances, but must think him deserving a better Character by far, than this Narrative can be thought to give him. When the main design we managed in Visiting the poor Afflicted Creature, was to prevent the Accusations of the Neighbourhood, can it be fairly represented that our design was to draw out such Accusations, which is the representation of the Paper? We have Testimonies of the best Witnesses and in Number not a few, That when we asked Rule whether she thought she knew who Tormented her? the Question was but an Introduction to the Solemn charges which we then largely gave, that she should rather Dye than tell the Names of any whom she might Imagine that she knew. Your Informers have reported the Question, and report nothing of what follows, as essential to the giving of that Question: And can this be termed a piece of fairness? Fair it cannot be, that when Ministers Faithfully and Carefully discharge their Duty to the Miserable in their Flock, little bits, scraps and shreds of their Discourses should be tackt together to make them contemptible, when there shall be no notice of all the Necessary, Seasonable, and Profitable things that occur'd, in those Discourses; And without which, the occasion of the lesser Passages cannot be understood; And yet I am furnished with abundant Evidences, ready to be Sworn, that will positively prove this part of unfairness, by the above mention'd Narrative, to be done both to my Father and self. Again, it seems not fair or reasonable that I should be expos'd, for which your self (not to say some others) might have expos'd me for, if I had not done, *Viz.* for discouraging so much Company from flocking about the Possesst Maid, and yet, as I perswade my self, you cannot but think it to be good advice, to keep much Company from such haunted Chambers; besides the unfairness doth more appear, in that I find nothing repeated of what I said about the advantage, which the Devil takes from too much Observation and Curiosity.

In that several of the Questions in the Paper are so Worded, as to carry in them a presupposal of the things inquired after, to say the best of it is very unfair: But this is not all, the Narrative contains a number of Mistakes and Falshoods; which were they willful and design'd, might justly be termed gross Lies. The representations are far from true, when 'tis affirm'd my Father and self being come into the Room, I began the Discourse; I hope I understand breeding a little better than so: For proof of this, did occasion serve, sundry can depose the contrary.

'Tis no less untrue, that either my Father or self put the Question, how many Witches sit upon you? We always cautiously avoided that expression; It being contrary to our inward belief: All the standers by will (I believe) Swear they did not hear us use it (your Witnesses excepted) and I tremble to think how hardy those woful Creatures must be, to call the Almighty by an Oath, to so false a thing. As false a representation 'tis, that I rub'd Rule's Stomach, her Breast not being covered. The Oath of the nearest Spectators, giving a true account of that matter will prove this to be little less than a gross (if not a doubled) Lie; and to be somewhat plainer, it carries the Face of a Lie contrived on purpose (by them at least, to whom you are beholden for the Narrative) Wickedly and Basely to expose me. For you cannot but know how much this Representation hath contributed, to make People believe a Smutty thing of me; I am far from thinking, but that in your own Conscience you believe, that no indecent Action of that Nature could then be done by me before such observers, had I been so Wicked as to have been inclin'd to what is Base. It looks next to impossible that a reparation should be made me for the wrong done to, I hope, as to any Scandal, an unblemish'd, tho' weak and small Servant of the Church of God. Nor is what follows a less untruth, that 'twas an Attendant and not my self who said, if Rule knows who Afflicts her, yet she wont tell. I therefore spoke it that I might encourage her to continue in that concealment of all Names whatsoever; to this I am able to furnish my self with the Attestation of Sufficient Oaths. 'Tis as far from true, that my

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

apprehension of the Imp, about Rule, was on her Belly, for the Oaths of the Spectators, and even of those that thought they felt it, can testify that 'twas upon the Pillow, at a distance from her Body. As untrue a Representation is that which follows, *Viz.* That it was said unto her, that her not Apprehending of that odd palpable, tho' not visible, Mover was from her Fancy, for I endeavoured to perswade her that it might be but Fancy in others, that there was any such thing at all. Witnesses every way sufficient can be produced for this also. 'Tis falsely represented that my Father felt on the Young–woman after the appearance mentioned, for his hand was never near her; Oath can sufficiently vindicate him. 'Tis very untrue that my Father Prayed for perhaps half an Hour, against the power of the Devil and Witchcraft, and that God would bring out the Afflictors. Witnesses of the best Credit, can depose, that his Prayer was not a quarter of an Hour, and that there was no more than about one clause towards the close of the Prayer, which was of this import; And this clause also was guarded with a singular wariness and modesty, *Viz.* If there were any evil Instruments in this matter God would please to discover them: And that there was more than common reason for that Petition I can satisfie any one that will please to Inquire of me. And strange it is, that a Gentleman that from 18 to 54 hath been an Exemplary Minister of the Gospel; and that besides a station in the Church of God, as considerable as any that his own Country can afford, hath for divers years come off with Honour, in his Application to three Crown'd Heads, and the chiefest Nobility of three Kingdoms, Knows not yet how to make one short Prayer of a quarter of an hour, but in New–England he must be Libell'd for it. There are divers other down–right mistakes, which you have permitted your self, I would hope not knowingly, and with a Malicious design, to be receiver or Compiler of, which I shall now forbear to Animadvert upon. As for the Appendix of the Narrative I do find myself therein Injuriously treated, for the utmost of your proof for what you say of me, amounts to little more than, *viz.* Some People told you, that others told them, that such and such things did pass, but you may assure yourself, that I am not unfurnish'd with Witnesses, that can convict the same. Whereas you would give me to believe the bottom of these your Methods, to be some dissatisfaction about the commonly receiv'd Power of Devils and Witches; I do not only with all freedom offer you the use of any part of my Library, which you may see cause to peruse on that Subject, but also if you and any else, whom you please, will visit me at my Study, yea, or meet me at any other place, less inconvenient than those by you propos'd; I will with all the fairness and calmness in the World dispute the point. I beg of God that he would bestow as many Blessings on you, as ever on myself, and out of a sincere wish, that you may be made yet more capable of these Blessings, I take this occasion to lay before you the faults (not few nor small ones neither) which the Paper contained, you lately sent me in order to be Examined by me. In case you want a true and full Narrative of my Visit, whereof such an indecent Traversty (to say the best) hath been made, I am not unwilling to communicate it, in mean time must take liberty to say, 'Tis scarcely consistent with Common Civility, much less Christian Charity, to offer the Narrative, now with you, for a true one, till you have a truer, or for a full one, till you have a fuller. Your Sincere (tho Injur'd) Friend and Servant,

C. Mather .

The Copy of a Paper Receiv'd with the above Letter.

I do Testifie that I have seen Margaret Rule in her Afflictions from the Invisible World, lifted up from her Bed, wholly by an Invisible force, a great way towards the top of the Room where she lay; in her being so lifted, she had no Assistance from any use of her own Arms or Hands, or any other part of her Body, not so much as her Heels touching her Bed, or resting on any support whatsoever. And I have seen her thus lifted, when not only a strong Person hath thrown his whole weight a cross her to pull her down; but several other Persons have endeavoured, with all their might, to hinder her from being so raised up, which I suppose that several others will testifie as well as my self, when call'd unto it. Witness my Hand,

Samuel Aves.

We can also Testifie to the substance of what is above Written, and have several times seen Margaret Rule so lifted up from her Bed, as that she had no use of her own Lims to help her up, but it was the declared apprehension of us, as well as others that saw it, impossible for any hands, but some of the Invisible World to lift her.

Copia.

Robert Earle. John Wilkins. Dan. Williams .

We whose Names are under-writted do testifie, That one Evening when we were in the Chamber where Margaret Rule then lay, in her late Affliction, we observed her to be, by an Invisible Force, lifted up from the Bed whereon she lay, so as to touch the Garret Floor, while yet neither her Feet, nor any other part of her Body rested either on the Bed, or any other support, but were also by the same force, lifted up from all that was under her, and all this for a considerable while, we judg'd it several Minutes; and it was as much as several of us could do, with all our strength to pull her down. All which happened when there was not only we two in the Chamber, but we suppose ten or a dozen more, whose Names we have forgotten,

Copia.

Thomas Thornton .

William Hudson Testifies to the substance of Thorntons Testimony, to which he also hath set his Hand.

Letter

Boston, Jan. 18, 1693. ²²⁰

Mr. Cotton Mather, Reverend Sir,

Yours of the 15th Instant, I receiv'd yesterday; and soon found I had promised my self too much by it, *Viz*, Either concurrence with, or a denial of those Fundamentals mentioned in mine, of Novem. the 24th, finding this waved by an Invitation to your Library, etc. I thank God I have the Bible, and do Judge that sufficient to demonstrate that cited Head of Mr. Gaule to be a Truth, as also those other Heads mentioned, as the Foundations of Religion. And in my apprehension, if it be asked any Christian, whether God governs the World, and whether it be he only can Commissionate Devils, and such other Fundamentals, He ought to be as ready as in the Question, who made him? (a little Writing certainly might be of more use, to clear up the controverted points, than either looking over many Books in a well furnish'd Library, or than a dispute, if I were qualified for it; the Inconveniencies of Passion being this way best avoided) And am not without hopes that you will yet oblige me so far, as to consider that Letter, and if I Err, to let me see it by Scripture, etc.

Yours, almost the whole of it, is concerning the Narrative I sent to you, and you seem to intimate as if I were giving Characters, Reflections, and Libell's etc. concerning your self and Relations; all which were as far from my thoughts, as ever they were in writing after either your self, or any other Minister. In the front you declare your apprehension to be, that the Afflicted was under a Diabolical Possession, and if so, I see not how it should be occasion'd by any Witchcraft (unless we ascribe that Power to a Witch, which is only the Prerogative of the Almighty, of Sending or Commissionating the Devils to Afflict her.) But to your particular Objections against the Narrative; and to the first my intelligence not giving me any further, I could not insert that I knew not. And it seems improbable that a Question should be put, whether she knew (or rather who they were) and at the same time to charge her, and that upon her Life, not to tell, and if you had done so, I see but little good you could promise your self or others by it, she being Possesst, as also having it inculcated so much to her of Witchcraft. And as to the next Objection about company flocking, etc., I do profess my Ignorance, not knowing what you mean by it. And Sir, that most of the Questions did carry with them a presupposing the things inquired after, is evident, if there were such as those relating to the Black-man and a Book, and about her hearing the Prayer, etc. (related in the said Narrative, which I find no Objection against.) As to that which is said of mentioning your self first discoursing and your hopes that your breeding was better (I doubt it not) nor do I doubt your Father might first apply himself to others; but my intelligence is, that you first spake to the Afflicted or Possessed, for which you had the advantage of a nearer approach. The next two Objections are founded upon mistakes: I find not in the Narrative any such Question, as how many Witches sit upon you? and that her Breast was not covered, in which those material words "with the Bed-Cloaths" are wholly omitted; I am not willing to retort here your own Language upon you; but can tell you, that your own discourse of it publickly, at Sir W.P.'s ²²¹ Table, has much more contributed to, etc. As to the Reply, if she could she would not tell, whether either or both spake it it matters not much. Neither does the Narrative say you felt the live thing on her Belly; tho I omit now to say what further demonstrations there are of it. As to that Reply, that is only her fancy, I find the word "her" added. And as to your Fathers feeling for the live Creature after you had felt it, if it were on the Bed it was not so very far from her. And for the length of his Prayer, possibly your Witnesses might keep a more exact account of the time than those others, and I stand not for a few Minutes. For the rest of the Objections I suppose them of less moment, if less can be (however shall be ready to receive them, those matters of greatest concern I find no Objections against). These being all that yet appear, it may be thought that if the Narrative be not fully exact, it was as near as Memory could bear away; but should be glad to see one more perfect (which yet is not to be expected, seeing none writ at the time). You mention the appendix, by which I understand the Second Visit, and if you be by the possessed belyed (as being half an hour with her alone, excluding her own Mother, and as telling her you had Prayed for her Nine times that day, and that now was her Laughing time, she must Laugh now) I can see no Wonder in it; what can be

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

expected less from the Father of Lies, by whom, you Judge, she was possest.

And besides the above Letter, you were pleased to send me another Paper containing several Testimonies of the Possessed being lifted up, and held a space of several Minutes to the Garret floor, etc., but they omit giving the account, whether after she was down they bound her down: or kept holding her: And relate not how many were to pull her down, which hinders the knowledge what number they must be to be stronger than an Invisible Force. Upon the whole, I suppose you expect I should believe it; and if so, the only advantage gain'd, is that which has been so long controverted between Protestants and Papists, whether Miracles are ceast, will hereby seem to be decided for the latter; it being, for ought I can see, if so, as true a Miracle as for Iron to swim, and that the Devil can work such Miracles.

But Sir, leaving these little disputable things, I do again pray that you would let me have the happiness of your approbation or confutation of that Letter before referred to.

And now, Sir, that the God of all Grace may enable us Zealously to own his Truths, and to follow those things that tend to Peace, and that yourself may be as an useful Instrument in his hand, effectually to ruin the remainders of Heathenish and Popish Superstitions, is the earnest desire and prayer of yours to command, in what I may.

R. C. 222

Notes

[204]. 1694 of our present calendar.

[205]. Mather.

[206]. Haven't, hain't.

[207]. Then.

[208]. The answer to Governor Phips's letter of October 12 (see pp. 196–198, above) was indeed a royal order of January 26 “approving his action in stopping the proceedings against the witches in New England, and directing that in all future proceedings against persons accused of witchcraft or of possession by the devil, all circumspection be used so far as may be without impediment to the ordinary course of justice” — what Frederick the Great would have called “a vague answer — in the Austrian style — that should mean nothing.” It of course did not reach America till after the despatch of Sir William's letter of February 21 (pp. 198–202, above).

[209]. The two Boston booksellers'.

[210]. It is perhaps idle to guess at the identity of this gentleman; but his initials suggest the Rev. Joshua Moodey, whose kindlier attitude toward witches and their defenders may be inferred from his course in the case of Philip English (see pp. 187–188, note), and who, though early in 1693 he returned to Portsmouth, was still often in Boston. Nor may it be forgotten that the initials of the Rev. Increase Mather are by the printer constantly made “J. M.”

[211]. See above, p. 304, note 3.

[212]. See above, p. 216, note 1, and p. 219.

[213]. See above, p. 304, note 5.

[214]. To the end of the paragraph the words are Gaule's. Calef is quoting them, not from Gaule's book, but from Mather's *Wonders*; for Gaule numbers this rule, not IV., but X., and the introductory words (“Among the most unhappy Circumstances to convict a witch, one is”) are not his, but Mather's — and there are other slight departures from Gaule's wording.

[215]. With.

[216]. By a misprint the original has “P. C.”

[217]. Travestyng. See p. 323, above.

[218]. See p. 318, above.

[219]. See p. 123, above.

[220]. 1694 of new style.

[221]. Sir William Phips's.

[222]. Between this letter and the pages of Calef's book which here follow there intervene (1) further letters from him to Mather and to other Boston ministers, on whom he urges his views, (2) a body of documents relating to the controversy between the Rev. Mr. Parris and his disaffected parishioners at Salem Village between the period of the witch-trials and his removal, (3) an epistolary discussion as to the theory of witchcraft between Calef and a Scotsman named Stuart.

PART V.

An Impartial Account of the most Memorable Matters of Fact, touching the supposed Witchcraft in New England.
 223

Mr. Parris had been some years a Minister in Salem–Village, ²²⁴ when this sad Calamity (as a deluge) overflowed them, spreading it self far and near: He was a Gentleman of Liberal Education, and not meeting with any great Encouragement, or Advantage in Merchandizing, to which for some time he apply'd himself, betook himself to the work of the Ministry; this Village being then vacant, he met with so much Encouragement, as to settle in that Capacity among them.

After he had been there about two years, he obtained a Grant from a part of the Town, that the House and Land he Occupied, and which had been Alotted by the whole People to the Ministry, should be and remain to him, etc. as his own Estate in Fee Simple. This occasioned great Divisions both between the Inhabitants themselves, and between a considerable part of them and their said Minister, which Divisions were but as a beginning or Prælude to what immediately followed.

It was the latter end of February 1691, ²²⁵ when divers young Persons belonging to Mr. Parris's Family, and one or more of the Neighbourhood, began to Act, after a strange and unusual manner, viz. as by getting into Holes, and creeping under Chairs and Stools, and to use sundry odd Postures and Antick Gestures, uttering foolish, ridiculous Speeches, which neither they themselves nor any others could make sense of; the Physicians that were called could assign no reason for this; but it seems one of them, ²²⁶ having recourse to the old shift, told them he was afraid they were Bewitched; upon such suggestions, they that were concerned applied themselves to Fasting and Prayer, which was attended not only in their own private Families, but with calling in the help of others.

March the 11th. Mr. Parris invited several Neighbouring Ministers to join with him in keeping a Solemn day of Prayer at his own House; the time of the exercise those Persons were for the most part silent, but after any one Prayer was ended, they would Act and Speak strangely and Ridiculously, yet were such as had been well Educated and of good Behaviour, the one, a Girl of 11 or 12 years old, ²²⁷ would sometimes seem to be in a Convulsion Fit, her Limbs being twisted several ways, and very stiff, but presently her Fit would be over.

A few days before this Solemn day of Prayer, Mr. Parris's Indian Man and Woman ²²⁸ made a Cake of Rye Meal, with the Childrens Water, and Baked it in the Ashes, and as is said, gave it to the Dog; this was done as a means to Discover Witchcraft; ²²⁹ soon after which those ill affected or afflicted Persons named several that they said they saw, when in their Fits, afflicting of them.

The first complain'd of, was the said Indian Woman, named Tituba. She confessed that the Devil urged her to sign a Book, which he presented to her, and also to work Mischief to the Children, etc. She was afterwards Committed to Prison, and lay there till Sold for her Fees. ²³⁰ The account she since gives of it is, that her Master did beat her and otherways abuse her, to make her confess and accuse (such as he call'd) her Sister–Witches, and that whatsoever she said by way of confessing or accusing others, was the effect of such usage; her Master refused to pay her Fees, unless she would stand to what she had said. ²³¹

The Children complained likewise of two other Women, to be the Authors of their Hurt, viz. Sarah Good, who had long been counted a Melancholy or Distracted Woman, and one Osburn, an Old Bed–rid Woman; which two were Persons so ill thought of, that the accusation was the more readily believed; and after Examination before two SalemMagistrates, ²³² were committed:

March the 19th, Mr. Lawson (who had been formerly a Preacher at the said Village) came thither, and hath since set fourth in Print an account of what then passed, about which time, as he saith, they complained of Goodwife Cory, and Goodwife Nurse, Members of the Churches at the Village and at Salem, many others being by that time Accused.

March the 21st, Goodwife Cory was examined before the Magistrates of Salem, at the Meeting House in the Village, a throng of Spectators being present to see the Novelty. Mr. Noyes, one of the Ministers of Salem, began with Prayer, after which the Prisoner being call'd, in order to answer to what should be Alledged against her, she

desired that she might go to Prayer, and was answered by the Magistrates, that they did not come to hear her pray, but to examine her.

The number of the Afflicted were at that time about Ten, *Viz.* Mrs. Pope, Mrs. Putman, Goodwife Bibber, and Goodwife Goodall, Mary Wolcott, Mercy Lewes (at Thomas Putmans) and Dr. Griggs Maid, and three Girls, *Viz.* Elizabeth Parris, Daughter to the Minister, Abigail Williams his Neice, and Ann Putman, which last three were not only the beginners, but were also the chief in these Accusations. These Ten were most of them present at the Examination, and did vehemently accuse her of Afflicting them, by Biting, Pinching, Strangling, etc. And they said, they did in their Fits see her likeness coming to them, and bringing a Book for them to Sign; Mr. Hathorn, a Magistrate of Salem, asked her, why she Afflicted those Children? she said, she did not Afflict them; he asked her, who did then? she said, “I do not know, how should I know?” she said, they were Poor Distracted Creatures, and no heed to be given to what they said; Mr. Hathorn and Mr. Noyes replied that it was the Judgment of all that were there present, that they were bewitched, and only she (the Accused) said they were Distracted: She was Accused by them, that the Black Man Whispered to her in her Ear now (while she was upon Examination) and that she had a Yellow Bird, that did use to Suck between her Fingers, and that the said Bird did Suck now in the Assembly; order being given to look in that place to see if there were any sign, the Girl that pretended to see it said, that it was too late now, for she had removed a Pin, and put it on her head, it was upon search found, that a Pin was there sticking upright. When the Accused had any motion of their Body, Hands or Mouth, the Accusers would cry out, as when she bit her Lip, they would cry out of being bitten, if she grasped one hand with the other, they would cry out of being Pinched by her, and would produce marks, so of the other motions of her Body, as complaining of being Prest, when she lean'd to the seat next her, if she stirred her Feet, they would stamp and cry out of Pain there. After the hearing the said Cory was committed to Salem Prison, and then their crying out of her abated.

March the 24th, Goodwife Nurse was brought before Mr. Hathorn and Mr. Curwin (Magistrates) in the Meeting House. Mr. Hale, Minister of Beverly, began with Prayer, after which she being Accus'd of much the same Crimes made the like an swers, asserting her own Innocence with earnestness. The Accusers were mostly the same, Tho. Putmans Wife, etc. complaining much. The dreadful Shreiking from her and others, was very amazing, which was heard at a great distance; she was also Committed to Prison.

A Child of Sarah Goods was likewise apprehended, being between 4 and 5 years Old. The Accusers said this Child bit them, and would shew such like marks, as those of a small Sett of Teeth upon their Arms; as many of the Afflicted as the Child cast its Eye upon, would complain they were in Torment; which Child they also Committed.

Concerning these that had been hitherto Examined and Committed, it is among other things observed by Mr. Lawson (in Print ²³³) that they were by the Accusers charged to belong to a Company that did muster in Arms, and were reported by them to keep Days of Fast, Thanksgiving and Sacraments; and that those Afflicted (or Accusers) did in the Assembly Cure each others, even with a touch of their Hand, when strangled and otherways tortured, and would endeavour to get to the Afflicted to relieve them thereby (for hitherto they had not used the Experiment of bringing the Accused to touch the Afflicted, in order to their Cure) and could foretel one anothers Fits to be coming, and would say, look to such a one, she will have a Fit presently and so it happened, and that at the same time when the Accused person was present, the Afflicted said they saw her Spectre or likeness in other places of the Meeting House Suckling ²³⁴ of their Familiars.

The said Mr. Lawson being to Preach at the Village, after the Psalm was Sung, Abigail Williams said, “Now stand up and name your Text”; after it was read, she said, “It is a long Text.” Mrs. Pope in the beginning of Sermon said to him, “Now there is enough of that.” In Sermon, he referring to his Doctrine, Abigail Williams said to him, “I know no Doctrine you had, if you did name one I have forgot it.” Ann Putman, an afflicted Girl, said, There was a Yellow Bird sate on his Hat as it hung on the Pin in the Pulpit.

March 31, 1692. Was set apart as a day of Solemn Humiliation at Salem, upon the Account of this Business, on which day Abigail Williams said, That she saw a great number of Persons in the Village at the Administration of a Mock Sacrament, where they had Bread as read as raw Flesh, and red Drink.

April 1. Mercy Lewis affirmed, That she saw a man in white, with whom she went into a Glorious Place, *viz.* In her fits, where was no Light of the Sun, much less of Candles, yet was full of Light and Brightness, with a great Multitude in White Glittering Robes, who Sang the Song in 5. Rev. 9. and the 110 and 149 Psalms; And was

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

grieved that she might tarry no longer in this place. This White Man is said to have appeared several times to others of them, and to have given them notice how long it should be before they should have another Fit.

April the 3d. Being Sacrament Day at the Village, Sarah Cloys, Sister to Goodwife Nurse, a Member to one of the Churches, was (tho' it seems with difficulty prevail'd with to be) present; but being entred the place, and Mr. Parris naming his Text, 6 John, 70. *Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a Devil* (for what cause may rest as a doubt whether upon the account of her Sisters being Committed, or because of the choice of that Text) she rose up and went out, the wind shutting the Door forcibly, gave occasion to some to suppose she went out in Anger, and might occasion a suspicion of her; however she was soon after complain'd of, examin'd and Committed.

April the 11th. By this time the number of the Accused and Accusers being much encreased, was a Publick Examination at Salem, Six of the Magistrates with several Ministers being present; ²³⁵ there appeared several who complain'd against others with hidious clamors and Screechings. Goodwife Proctor was brought thither, being Accused or cryed out against; her Husband coming to attend and assist her, as there might be need, the Accusers cryed out of him also, and that with so much earnestness, that he was Committed with his Wife. About this time besides the Experiment of the Afflicted falling at the sight, etc., they put the Accused upon saying the Lords Prayer, which one among them performed, except in that petition, *Deliver us from Evil*, she exprest it thus, *Deliver us from all Evil*. This was lookt upon as if she Prayed against what she was now justly under, and being put upon it again, and repeating those words, *Hallowed be thy name*, she exprest it, *Hollowed be thy Name*, this was counted a depraving the words, as signifying to make void, and so a Curserather then ²³⁶ a Prayer, upon the whole it was concluded that she also could not say it, etc. Proceeding in this work of examination and Commitment, many were sent to Prison. As an Instance, see the following Mittimus:

To their Majesties Goal-keeper ²³⁷ in Salem .

You are in Their Majesties Names hereby required to take into your care, and safe custody, the Bodies of William Hobs, and Deborah ²³⁸ his Wife, Mary Easty, the Wife of Isaac Easty, and Sarah Wild, the Wife of John Wild, all of Topsfield; and Edward Bishop of Salem–Village, Husbandman, and Sarah his Wife, and Mary Black, a Negro of Lieutenant Nathaniel Putmans of Salem–Village; also Mary English the Wife of Philip English, Merchant in Salem; ²³⁹ who stand charged with High Suspicion of Sundry Acts of Witchcraft, done or committed by them lately upon the Bodies of Ann Putman, Mercy Lewis ²⁴⁰ and Abigail Williams, of Salem–Village, whereby great Hurt and Damage hath been done to the Bodies of the said Persons, [as] according to the complaint of Thomas Putman and John Buxton of Salem–Village, Exhibited Salem, Apr 21, 1692, appears, whom you are to secure in order to their further Examination. Fail not.

John Hathorn , [unclear:] Assistants. Jona. Curwin ,
Dated Salem, April 22, 1692.

To Marshal George Herrick of Salem Essex.

You are in their Majesties Names hereby required to convey the above-named to the Goal at Salem. Fail not.

John Hathorn, [unclear:] Assistants. Jona. Curwin ,
Dated Salem, Apr 22, 1692.

The occasion of Bishops being cry'd out of ²⁴¹ was, he being at an Examination in Salem, when at the Inn an afflicted Indian ²⁴² was very unruly, whom he undertook, and so managed him, that he was very orderly, after which in riding home, in company of him and other Accusers, the Indian fell into a fit, and clapping hold with his Teeth on the back of the Man that rode before him, thereby held himself upon the Horse, but said Bishop striking him with his stick, the Indian soon recovered, and promised he would do so no more; to which Bishop replied, that he doubted not, but he could cure them all, with more to the same effect; immediately after he was parted from them, he was cried out of, etc.

May 14, 1692. Sir William Phips arrived with Commission from Their Majesties to be Governour, pursuant to the New-Charter; which he now brought with him; the Ancient Charter having been vacated by King Charles, and King James (by which they had a power not only to make their own Laws; but also to chuse their own Governour and Officers;) and the Countrey for some years was put under an absolute Commission-Government, till the Revolution, ²⁴³ at which time tho more than two thirds of the People were for reassuming their ancient Government, (to which they had encouragement by His then Royal Highness's Proclamation) yet some that might have been better employed (in another Station) ²⁴⁴ made it their business (by printing, as well as speaking) to their utmost to divert them from such a settlement; and so far prevailed, that for about seven Weeks after the Revolution, here was not so much as a face of any Government; but some few Men upon their own Nomination would be called a Committee of Safety; but at length the Assembly prevailed with those that had been of the Government, to promise that they would reassume; and accordingly a Proclamation was drawn, but before publishing it, it was underwritten, that they would not have it understood that they did reassume Charter-Government; so that between Government and no Government, this Countrey remained till Sir William arrived; Agents being in this time impowered in England, which no doubt did not all of them act according to the Minds or Interests of those that impowered them, which is manifest by their not acting jointly in what was done; so that this place is perhaps a single Instance (even in the best of Reigns) of a Charter not restored after so happy a Revolution.

This settlement by Sir William Phips his being come Governour put an end to all disputes of these things, and being arrived, and having read his Commission, the first thing he exerted his Power in, was said to be his giving Orders that Irons should be put upon those in Prison; for tho for some time after these were Committed, the Accusers ceased to cry out of them; ²⁴⁵ yet now the cry against them was renewed, which occasioned such Order; and tho there was partiality in the executing it (some having taken them off ²⁴⁶ almost as soon as put on) yet the cry of these Accusers against such ceased after this Order. ²⁴⁷

May 24. Mrs. Cary of Charlestown, was Examined and Committed. Her Husband Mr. Nathaniel Cary ²⁴⁸ has given account thereof, as also of her Escape, to this Effect,

I having heard some days, that my Wife was accused of Witchcraft, being much disturbed at it, by advice, we went to Salem-Village, to see if the afflicted did know her; we arrived there, 24 May, it happened to be a day appointed for Examination; accordingly soon after our arrival, Mr. Hathorn and Mr. Curwin, etc., went to the Meeting-house, which was the place appointed for that Work, the Minister began with Prayer, and having taken care to get a convenient place, I observed, that the afflicted were two Girls of about Ten Yearsold, ²⁴⁹ and about two or three other, of about eighteen, one of the Girls talked most, and could discern more than the rest. The Prisoners were called in one by one, and as they came in were cried out of, etc. The Prisoner was

placed about 7 or 8 foot from the Justices, and the Accusers between the Justices and them; the Prisoner was ordered to stand right before the Justices, with an Officer appointed to hold each hand, least they should therewith afflict them, and the Prisoners Eyes must be constantly on the Justices; for if they look'd on the afflicted, they would either fall into their Fits, or cry out of being hurt by them; after Examination of the Prisoners, who it was afflicted these Girls, etc., they were put upon saying the Lords Prayer, as a tryal of their guilt; after the afflicted seem'd to be out of their Fits, they would look steadfastly on some one person, and frequently not speak; and then the Justices said they were struck dumb, and after a little time would speak again; then the Justices said to the Accusers, “which of you will go and touch the Prisoner at the Bar?” then the most courageous would adventure, but before they had made three steps would ordinarily fall down as in a Fit; the Justices ordered that they should be taken up and carried to the Prisoner, that she might touch them; and as soon as they were touched by the accused, the Justices would say, they are well, before I could discern any alteration; by which I observed that the Justices understood the manner of it. Thus far I was only as a Spectator, my Wife also was there part of the time, but no notice taken of her by the afflicted, except once or twice they came to her and asked her name.

But I having an opportunity to Discourse ²⁵⁰ Mr. Hale ²⁵¹ (with whom I had formerly acquaintance) I took his advice, what I had best to do, and desired of him that I might have an opportunity to speak with her that accused my Wife; which he promised should be, I acquainting him that I reposed my trust in him.

Accordingly he came to me after the Examination was over, and told me I had now an opportunity to speak with the said Accuser, *viz.* Abigail Williams, a Girl of 11 or 12 Years old; but that we could not be in private at Mr. Parris's House, as he had promised me; we went therefore into the Alehouse, where an Indian Man attended us, who it seems was one of the afflicted: to him we gave some Cyder, he shewed several Scars, that seemed as if they had been long there, and shewed them as done by Witchcraft, and acquainted us that his Wife, who also was a Slave, was imprison'd for Witchcraft. ²⁵² And now instead of one Accuser, they all came in, who began to tumble down like Swine, and then three Women were called in to attend them. We in the Room were all at a stand, to see who they would cry out of; but in a short time they cried out, Cary; and immediately after a Warrant was sent from the Justices to bring my Wife before them, who were sitting in a Chamber near by, waiting for this.

Being brought before the Justices, her chief accusers were two Girls; my Wife declared to the Justices, that she never had any knowledge of them before that day; she was forced to stand with her Arms stretched out. I did request that I might hold one of her hands, but it was denied me; then she desired me to wipe the Tears from her Eyes, and the Sweat from her Face, which I did; then she desired she might lean her self on me, saying, she should faint.

Justice Hathorn replied, she had strength enough to torment those persons, and she should have strength enough to stand. I speaking something against their cruel proceedings, they commanded me to be silent, or else I should be turned out of the Room. The Indian before mentioned, was also brought in, to be one of her Accusers: being come in, he now (when before the Justices) fell down and tumbled about like a Hog, but said nothing. The Justices asked the Girls, who afflicted the Indian? they answered she (meaning my Wife) and now lay upon him; the Justices ordered her to touch him, in order to his cure, but her head must be turned another way, least instead of curing, she should make him worse, by her looking on him, her hand being guided to take hold of his; but the Indian took hold on her hand, and pulled her down on the Floor, in a barbarous manner; then his hand was taken off, and her hand put on his, and the cure was quickly wrought. I being extremely troubled at their Inhumane dealings, uttered a hasty Speech (That God would take vengeance on them, and desired that God would deliver us out of the hands of unmerciful men.) Then her Mittimus was writ. I did with difficulty and charge obtain the liberty of a Room, but no Beds in it; if there had, could have taken but little rest that Night. She was committed to Boston Prison; but I obtained a Habeas Corpus to remove her to Cambridge Prison,

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

which is in our County of Middlesex. Having been there one Night, next Morning the Jaylor put Irons on her legs (having received such a command) the weight of them was about eight pounds; these Irons and her other Afflictions, soon brought her into Convulsion Fits, so that I thought she would have died that Night. I sent to intreat that the Irons might be taken off, but all intreaties were in vain, if it would have saved her Life, so that in this condition she must continue. The Tryals at Salem coming on, I went thither, to see how things were there managed; and finding that the Spectre–Evidence was there received, together with Idle, if not malicious Stories, against Peoples Lives, I did easily perceive which way the rest would go; for the same Evidence that served for one, would serve for all the rest. I acquainted her with her danger; and that if she were carried to Salem to be tried, I feared she would never return. I did my utmost that she might have her Tryal in our own County, I with several others Petitioning the Judge for it, and were put in hopes of it; but I soon saw so much, that I understood thereby it was not intended, which put me upon consulting the means of her escape; which thro the goodness of God was effected, and she got to Road Island,²⁵³ but soon found her self not safe when there, by reason of the pursuit after her; from thence she went to New–York, along with some others that had escaped their cruel hands; where we found his Excellency Benjamin Fletcher, Esq; Governour, who was very courteous to us. After this some of my Goods were seized in a Friends hands, with whom I had left them, and my self imprisoned by the Sheriff, and kept in Custody half a day, and then dismissed; but to speak of their usage of the Prisoners, and their Inhumanity shewn to them, at the time of their Execution, no sober Christian could bear; they had also tryals of cruel mockings; which is the more, considering what a People for Religion, I mean the profession of it, we have been; those that suffered being many of them Church–Members, and most of them unspotted in their Conversation, till their Adversary the Devil took up this Method for accusing them.

*Per Nathaniel*²⁵⁴ Cary .

May 31. Captain John Aldin²⁵⁵ was Examined at Salem, and Committed to Boston Prison. The Prison–Keeper seeing such a Man Committed, of whom he had a good esteem, was after this the more Compassionate to those that were in Prison on the like account; and did refrain from such hard things to the Prisoners, as before he had used. Mr. Aldin himself has given account of his Examination, in these Words.

An Account how John Aldin, Senior, was dealt with at Salem–Village.

John Aldin Senior, of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, Marriner, on the 28th Day of May, 1692, was sent for by the Magistrates of Salem, in the County of Essex, upon the Accusation of a company of poor distracted, or possessed Creatures or Witches; and being sent by Mr. Stoughton, [256] arrived there the 31st of May, and appeared at Salem–Village, before Mr. Gidney, ²⁵⁷ Mr. Hathorn, and Mr. Curwin.

Those Wenches being present, who plaid their jugling tricks, falling down, crying out, and staring in Peoples Faces; the Magistrates demanded of them several times, who it was of all the People in the Room that hurt them? one of these Accusers pointed several times at one Captain Hill, there present, but spake nothing; the same Accuser had a Man standing at her back to hold her up; he stooped down to her Ear, then she cried out, Aldin, Aldin afflicted her; one of the Magistrates asked her if she had ever seen Aldin, she answered no, he asked her how she knew it was Aldin? She said, the Man told her so.

Then all were ordered to go down into the Street, where a Ring was made; and the same Accuser cried out, “there stands Aldin, a bold fellow with his Hat on before the Judges, he sells Powder and Shot to the Indians and French, and lies with the Indian Squaes, and has Indian Papooses.” Then was Aldin committed to the Marshal's Custody, and his Sword taken from him; for they said he afflicted them with his Sword. After some hours Aldin was sent for to the Meeting–house in the Village before the Magistrates; who required Aldin to stand upon a Chair, to the open view of all the People.

The Accusers cried out that Aldin did pinch them, then, when he stood upon the Chair, in the sight of all the People, a good way distant from them, one of the Magistrates bid the Marshal to hold open Aldin's hands, that he might not pinch those Creatures. Aldin asked them why they should think, that he should come to that Village to afflict those persons that he never knew or saw before? Mr. Gidney bid Aldin confess, and give glory to God; Aldin said he hoped he should give glory to God, and hoped he should never gratifie the Devil; but appealed to all that ever knew him, if they ever suspected him to be such a person, and challenged any one, that could bring in any thing upon their own knowledge, that might give suspicion of his being such an one. Mr. Gidney said he had known Aldin many Years, and had been at Sea with him, and always look'd upon him to be an honest Man, but now he did see cause to alter his judgment: Aldin answered, he was sorry for that, but he hoped God would clear up his Innocency, that he would recall that judgment again, and added that he hoped that he should with Job maintain his Integrity till he died. They bid Aldin look upon the Accusers, which he did, and then they fell down. Aldin asked Mr. Gidney, what Reason there could be given, why Aldin's looking upon *him* did not strike *him* down as well; but no reason was given that I heard. But the Accusers were brought to Aldin to touch them, and this touch they said made them well. Aldin began to speak of the Providence of God in suffering these Creatures to accuse Innocent persons. Mr. Noyes asked Aldin why he would offer to speak of the Providence of God. God by his Providence (said Mr. Noyes) governs the World, and keeps it in peace; and so went on with Discourse, and stopt Aldin's mouth, as to that. Aldin told Mr. Gidney, that he could assure him that there was a lying Spirit in them, for I can assure you that there is not a word of truth in all these say of me. But Aldin was again committed to the Marshal, and his Mittimus written, which was as follows.

Letter

To Mr. John Arnold, Keeper of the Prison in Boston, in the County of Suffolk.

Whereas Captain John Aldin of Boston, Marriner, and Sarah Rice, Wife of Nicholas Rice of Reding, Husbandman, have been this day brought before us, John Hathorn and Jonathan Curwin, Esquires; being accused and suspected of perpetrating divers acts of Witchcraft, contrary to the form of the Statute, in that Case made and provided: These are therefore in Their Majesties, King William and Queen Marys Names, to Will and require you, to take into your Custody, the bodies of the said John Aldin, and Sarah Rice, and them safely keep, until they shall thence be delivered by due course of Law; as you will answer the contrary at your peril; and this shall be your sufficient Warrant. Given under our hands at Salem Village, the 31st of May, in the Fourth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord and Lady, William and Mary, now King and Queen over England, etc., Anno Dom. 1692.

John Hathorn , [*unclear*:] *Assistants*. Jonathan Curwin ,

To Boston Aldin was carried by a Constable, no Bail would be taken for him; but was delivered to the Prison-keeper, where he remained FifteenWeeks, ²⁵⁸ and then observing the manner of Tryals, and Evidence then taken, was at length prevailed with to make his Escape, and being returned, was bound over to Answer at the Superior Court at Boston, the last Tuesday in April, Anno 1693. And was there cleared by Proclamation, none appearing against him.

Per John Aldin .

At Examination, and at other times, 'twas usual for the Accusers to tell of the black Man, or of a Spectre, as being then on the Table, etc. The People about would strike with Swords, or sticks at those places. One Justice broke his Cane at this Exercise, and sometimes the Accusers would say, they struck the Spectre, and it is reported several of the accused were hurt and wounded thereby, though at home at the same time.

The Justices proceeding in these works of Examination, and Commitment, to the end of May, there was by that time about a Hundred persons Imprisoned upon that Account.

June 2. A special Commission of Oyer and Terminer having been Issued out, to Mr. Stoughton, the New Lieutenant Governour, Major Saltonstall, Major Richards, Major Gidny, Mr. Wait Winthrop, Captain Sewall, and Mr. Sergeant; ²⁵⁹ These (a Quorum of them) sat at Salem this day; where the most that was done this Week, was the Tryal of one Bishop, *alias* Oliver, of Salem; who having long undergone the repute of a Witch, occasioned by the Accusations of one Samuel Gray: he about 20 Years since, having charged her with such Crimes, and though upon his Death-bed he testified his sorrow and repentance for such Accustations, as being wholly groundless; yet the report taken up by his means continued, and she being accused by those afflicted, and upon search a Tet, as they call it, being found, she was brought in guilty by the Jury; she received her Sentence of Death, and was Executed, June 10, but made not the least Confession of any thing relating to Witchcraft. ²⁶⁰

June 15. Several Ministers in and near Boston, having been to that end consulted by his Excellency, ²⁶¹ exprest their minds to this effect, *viz.*

That they were affected with the deplorable state of the afflicted; That they were thankful for the diligent care of the Rulers, to detect the abominable Witchcrafts, which have been committed in the Country, praying for a perfect discovery thereof. But advised to a cautious proceeding, least many Evils ensue, etc. And that tenderness be used towards those accused, relating to matters presumptive and convictive, and also to privacy in Examinations, and to consult Mr. Perkins and Mr. Bernard, ²⁶² what tests to make use of in the Scrutiny: That Presumptions and Convictions ought to have better grounds, than the Accusers affirming that they see such persons Spectres afflicting them: And that the Devil may afflict in the shape of good Men; and that falling at the sight, and rising at the touch of the Accused, is no infallible proof of guilt; That seeing the Devils strength consists in such Accusations, our disbelieving them may be a means to put a period to the dreadful Calamities; Nevertheless they humbly recommend to the Government, the speedy and vigorous prosecution of such as have

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the direction given in the Laws of God, and the wholesome Statutes of the English Nation, for the Detection of Witchcraft.

This is briefly the substance of what may be seen more at large in *Cases of Conscience*, (ult.)²⁶³ And one of them²⁶⁴ since taking occasion to repeat some part of this advice, *Wonders of the Invisible World*, p. 83, declares, (notwithstanding the Dissatisfaction of others) that if his said Book may conduce to promote thankfulness to God for such Executions, he shall rejoyce, etc.

The 30th of June, the Court according to Adjournment again sat; five more were tried, viz. Sarah Good and Rebecca Nurse, of Salem–Village; Susanna Martin of Amsbury; Elizabeth How of Ipswich; and Sarah Wildes of Topsfield; these were all condemned that Sessions, and were all Executed on the 19th of July.²⁶⁵

At the Tryal of Sarah Good, one of the afflicted fell in a Fit, and after coming out of it, she cried out of the Prisoner, for stabbing her in the breast with a Knife, and that she had broken the Knife in stabbing of her, accordingly a piece of the blade of a Knife was found about her. Immediately information being given to the Court, a young Man was called, who produced a Haft and part of the Blade, which the Court having viewed and compared, saw it to be the same. And upon inquiry the young Man affirmed, that yesterday he happened to break that Knife, and that he cast away the upper part, this afflicted person being then present. The young Man was dismiss, and she was bidden by the Court not to tell lyes; and was improved (after as she had been before) to give Evidence against the Prisoners.

At Execution, Mr. Noyes urged Sarah Good to Confess, and told her she was a Witch, and she knew she was a Witch, to which she replied, “you are a lyer; I am no more a Witch than you are a Wizard, and if you take away my Life, God will give you Blood to drink.”

At the Tryal of Rebecka Nurse, this was remarkable that the Jury brought in their Verdict not Guilty, immediately all the accusers in the Court, and suddenly after all the afflicted out of Court, made an hideous out–cry, to the amazement, not only of the Spectators, but the Court also seemed strangely surprized; one of the Judges exprest himself not satisfied, another of them as he was going off the Bench, said they would have her Indicted anew. The chief Judge said he would not Impose upon the Jury; but intimated, as if they had not well considered one Expression of the Prisoners, when she was upon Tryal, viz. That when one Hobbs, who had confessed her self to be a Witch, was brought into the Court to witness against her, the Prisoner turning her head to her, said, “What, do you bring her? she is one of us,” or to that effect; this together with the Clamours of the Accusers, induced the Jury to go out again, after their Verdict, not Guilty. But not agreeing, they came into the Court, and she being then at the Bar, her words were repeated to her, in order to have had her explanation of them, and she making no Reply to them, they found the Bill, and brought her in Guilty; these words being the Inducement to it, as the Foreman has signified in writing, as follows.

July 4, 1692.

I Thomas Fisk, the Subscriber hereof, being one of them that were of the Jury the last week at Salem–Court, upon the Tryal of Rebecka Nurse, etc., being desired by some of the Relations to give a Reason why the Jury brought her in Guilty, after her Verdict not Guilty; I do hereby give my Reasons to be as follows, viz.

When the Verdict not Guilty was, the honoured Court was pleased to object against it, saying to them, that they think they let slip the words, which the Prisoner at the Bar spake against her self, which were spoken in reply to Goodwife Hobbs and her Daughter, who had been faulty in setting their hands to the Devils Book, as they have confessed formerly; the words were “What, do these persons give in Evidence against me now, they used to come among us.” After the honoured Court had manifested their dissatisfaction of the Verdict, several of the Jury declared themselves desirous to go out again, and thereupon the honoured Court gave leave; but when we came to consider of the Case, I could not tell how to take her words, as an Evidence against her, till she had a further opportunity to put her Sense upon them, if she would take it; and then going into Court, I mentioned the words aforesaid, which by one of the Court were affirmed to have been spoken by her, she being then at the Bar, but made no reply, nor interpretation of them; whereupon these words were to me a principal Evidence against her.
Thomas Fisk .

When Goodwife Nurse was informed what use was made of these words, she put in this following Declaration into the Court.

These presents do humbly shew, to the honoured Court and Jury, that I being informed, that the Jury brought me in Guilty, upon my saying that Goodwife Hobbs and her Daughter were of our Company; but I intended no otherways, then as ²⁶⁶ they were Prisoners with us, and therefore did then, and yet do judge them not legal Evidence against their fellow Prisoners. And I being something hard of hearing, and full of grief, none informing me how the Court took up my words, and therefore had not opportunity to declare what I intended, when I said they were of our Company.

Rebecka Nurse.

After her Condemnation she was by one of the Ministers of Salem excommunicated; ²⁶⁷ yet the Governour saw cause to grant a Reprieve, which when known (and some say immediately upon granting) the Accusers renewed their dismal out–cries against her, insomuch that the Governour was by some Salem Gentleman prevailed with to recall the Reprieve, and she was Executed with the rest.

The Testimonials of her Christian behaviour, both in the course of her Life, and at her Death, and her extraordinary care in educating her Children, and setting them good Examples, etc., under the hands of so many, are so numerous, that for brevity they are here omitted. ²⁶⁸

It was at the Tryal of these that one of the Accusers cried out publickly of Mr. Willard Minister in Boston, ²⁶⁹ as afflicting of her; she was sent out of the Court, and it was told about she was mistaken in the person.

August 5. The Court again sitting, six more were tried on the same Account, viz. Mr. George Burroughs, sometime minister of Wells, John Procter, and Elizabeth Procter his Wife, with John Willard of Salem–Village, George Jacobs Senior, of Salem, and Martha Carryer of Andover; ²⁷⁰ these were all brought in Guilty and Condemned; and were all Executed Aug. 19, except Procter's Wife, who pleaded Pregnancy. ²⁷¹

Mr. Burroughs was carried in a Cart with the others, through the streets of Salem to Execution; when he was upon the Ladder, he made a Speech for the clearing of his Innocency, with such Solemn and Serious Expressions, as were to the Admiration of all present; his Prayer (which he concluded by repeating the Lord's Prayer,) was so

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

well worded, and uttered with such composedness, and such (at least seeming) fervency of Spirit, as was very affecting, and drew Tears from many (so that it seemed to some, that the Spectators would hinder the Execution). The accusers said the black Man stood and dictated to him; as soon as he was turned off, Mr. Cotton Mather, being mounted upon a Horse, addressed himself to the People, partly to declare, that he was no ordained Minister, and partly to possess the People of his guilt; saying, That the Devil has often been transformed into an Angel of Light; and this did somewhat appease the People, and the Executions went on; when he was cut down, he was dragged by the Halter to a Hole, or Grave, between the Rocks, about two foot deep, his Shirt and Breeches being pulled off, and an old pair of Trousers of one Executed, put on his lower parts, he was so put in, together with Willard and Carryer, one of his Hands and his Chin, and a Foot of one [of] them being left uncovered. ²⁷²

John Willard had been employed to fetch in several that were accused; but taking dissatisfaction from his being sent, to fetch up some that he had better thoughts of, he declined the Service, and presently after he himself was accused of the same Crime, and that with such vehemency, that they sent after him to apprehend him; he had made his Escape as far as Nashawag, ²⁷³ about 40 Miles from Salem; yet'tis said those Accusers did then presently tell the exact time, saying, now Willard is taken.

John Procter and his Wife being in Prison, the Sheriff came to his House and seized all the Goods, Provisions, and Cattle that he could come at, and sold some of the Cattle at half price, and killed others, and put them up for the West-Indies; threw out the Beer out of a Barrel, and carried away the Barrel; emptied a Pot of Broath, and took away the Pot, and left nothing in the House for the support of the Children: No part of the said Goods are known to be returned. Procter earnestly requested Mr. Noyes to pray with and for him, but it was wholly denied, because he would not own himself to be a Witch.

During his Imprisonment he sent the following Letter, in behalf of himself and others.

Letter

Salem–Prison , July 23, 1692.

Mr. Mather, Mr. Allen, Mr. Moody, Mr. Willard, and Mr. Bailey

274

Reverend Gentlemen.

The innocency of our Case with the Enmity of our Accusers and our Judges, and Jury, whom nothing but our Innocent Blood will serve their turn, having Condemned us already before our Tryals, being so much incensed and engaged against us by the Devil, makes us bold to Beg and Implore your Favourable Assistance of this our Humble Petition to his Excellency, That if it be possible our Innocent Blood may be spared, which undoubtedly otherwise will be shed, if the Lord doth not mercifully step in. The Magistrates, Ministers, Jewries, ²⁷⁵ and all the People in general, being so much enraged and incensed against us by the Delusion of the Devil, which we can term no other, by reason we know in our own Consciences, we are all Innocent Persons. Here are five Persons who have lately confessed themselves to be Witches, and do accuse some of us, of being along with them at a Sacrament, since we were committed into close Prison, which we know to be Lies. Two of the 5 are (Carriers Sons ²⁷⁶) Young–men, who would not confess any thing till they tyed them Neck and Heels ²⁷⁷ till the Blood was ready to come out of their Noses, and 'tis credibly believed and reported this was the occasion of making them confess that ²⁷⁸ they never did, by reason they said one had been a Witch a Month, and another five Weeks, and that their Mother had made them so, who has been confined here this nine Weeks. My son William Procter, when he was examin'd, because he would not confess that he was Guilty, when he was Innocent, they tyed him Neck and Heels till the Blood gushed out at his Nose, and would have kept him so 24 Hours, if one more Merciful than the rest, had not taken pity on him, and caused him to be unbound. These actions are very like the Popish Cruelties. They have already undone us in our Estates, and that will not serve their turns, without our Innocent Bloods. If it cannot be granted that we can have our Trials at Boston, we humbly beg that you would endeavour to have these Magistrates changed, and others in their rooms, begging also and beseeching you would be pleased to be here, if not all, some of you at our Trials, hoping thereby you may be the means of saving the shedding our Innocent Bloods, desiring your Prayers to the Lord in our behalf, we rest your Poor Afflicted Servants,

John Procter , etc.

He pleaded very hard at Execution, for a little respite of time, saying that he was not fit to Die; but it was not granted.

Old Jacobs being Condemned, the Sheriff and Officers came and seized all he had, his Wife had her Wedding Ring taken from her, but with great difficulty obtained it again. She was forced to buy Provisions of the Sheriff, such as he had taken, towards her own support, which not being sufficient, the Neighbours of Charity relieved her. ²⁷⁹

Margaret Jacobs being one that had confessed her own Guilt, and testified against her Grand–Father Jacobs, Mr. Burroughs, and John Willard, She the day before Executions, came to Mr. Burroughs, acknowledging that she had belyed them, ²⁸⁰ and begged Mr. Burroughs Forgiveness, who not only forgave her, but also Prayed with and for her. She wrote the following Letter to her Father.

Letter

*From the Dungeon,
in Salem–Prison, August 20, 92.
Honoured Father,*

After my Humble Duty Remembred to you, hoping in the Lord of your good Health, as Blessed be God I enjoy, tho in abundance of Affliction, being close 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 Grand–Father having Suffered already, and all his Estate Seized for the King. The reason of my Confinement is this, I having, through the Magistrates Threatnings, and my own Vile and Wretched Heart, confessed several things contrary to my Conscience and Knowledg, tho to the Wounding of my own 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, but in mercy I hope so my Soul would not suffer me to keep it in any longer, but I was forced to confess the truth of all before the Magistrates, who would not believe me, but tis their pleasure to put me in 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 poor Woman is very Crazy, and remembers her kind Love to you, and to Uncle, *viz.* D. A. ²⁸¹ So leaving you to the protection of the Lord, I rest your Dutiful Daughter,

Margaret Jacobs.

At the time appointed for her Tryal, she had an Imposthume in her head, which was her Escape. ²⁸²

September 9. Six more were tried, and received Sentance of Death, *viz.* Martha Cory of Salem–Village, Mary Easty of Topsfield, Alice Parker and Ann Pudeater of Salem, Dorcas Hoar of Beverly, and Mary Bradberry of Salisbury. ²⁸³ *September 16,* Giles Cory was prest to Death.

September 17. Nine more received Sentance of Death, *viz.* Margaret Scot of Rowly, Goodwife Redd of Marblehead, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker of Andover, also Abigail Falkner of Andover, who pleaded Pregnancy, Rebecka Eames of Boxford, Mary Lacy, and Ann Foster of Andover, and Abigail Hobbs of Topsfield. ²⁸⁴ Of these Eight were Executed, *September 22,* *viz.* Martha Cory, Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeater, Margaret Scot, Willmet Redd, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker.

Giles Cory pleaded not Guilty to his Indictment, but would not put himself upon Tryal by the Jury (they having cleared none upon Tryal) and knowing there would be the same Witnesses against him, rather chose to undergo what Death they would put him to. In pressing his Tongue being prest out of his Mouth, the Sheriff with his Cane forced it in again, when he was dying. He was the first in New–England, that was ever prest to Death. ²⁸⁵

The Cart going up the Hill with these Eight to Execution, was for some time at a sett; the afflicted and others said, that the Devil hindred it, etc.

Martha Cory, Wife to Giles Cory, protesting her Innocency, concluded her Life with an Eminent Prayer upon the Ladder.

Wardwell having formerly confessed himself Guilty, and after denied it, was soon brought upon his Tryal; his former Confession and Spectre Testimony was all that appeared against him. At Execution while he was speaking to the People, protesting his Innocency, the Executioner being at the same time smoaking Tobacco, the smoak coming in his Face, interrupted his Discourse, those Accusers said, the Devil hindred him with smoak.

Mary Easty, Sister also to Rebecka Nurse, when she took her last farewell of her Husband, Children and Friends, was, as is reported by them present, as Serious, Religious, Distinct, and Affectionate as could well be exprest, drawing Tears from the Eyes of almost all present. It seems besides the Testimony of the Accusers and Confessors, another proof, as it was counted, appeared against her, it having been usual to search the Accused for

Tets; upon some parts of her Body, not here to be named, was found an Excrescence, which they called a Tet. Before her Death she put up the following Petition:

To the Honorable Judge and Bench now sitting in Judicature in Salem and the Reverend Ministers, humbly sheweth, That whereas your humble poor Petitioner being Condemned to die, doth humbly beg of you, to take it 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 Wiles and Subtilty of my Accusers, by my self, cannot but judge charitably of others, that are going the same way with my self, if the Lord step not mightily in. I was confined a whole Month on the same account that I am now condemned for, and then cleared by the Afflicted persons, as some of your Honours know, and in two days time I was cried out upon by them, and have been confined, and now am condemned to die. The Lord above knows my Innocency then, and likewise doth now, as at the great day will be known to Men and Angels. I Petition to your Honours not for my own Life, for I know I must die, and my appointed time is set; but the Lord he knows it is, if it be possible, that no more Innocent Blood be shed, which undoubtedly cannot be avoided in the way and course you go in. I question not, but your Honours do to the utmost of your powers, in the discovery and detecting of Witchcraft and Witches, and would not be guilty of Innocent Blood for the World; but by my own Innocency I know you are in the wrong way. The Lord in his infinite Mercy direct you in this great work, if it be his blessed will, that Innocent Blood be not shed; I would humbly beg of you, that your Honours would be pleased to Examine some of those confessing Witches, I being confident there are several of them have belyed themselves and others, as will appear, if not in this World, I am sure in the World to come, whither I am going; and I question not, but your selves will see an alteration in these things: They say, my self and others have made a league with the Devil, we cannot confess. I know and the Lord he knows (as will shortly appear) they belye me, and so I question not but they do others; the Lord alone, who is the searcher of all hearts, knows that as I shall answer it at the Tribunal Seat, that I know not the least thing of Witchcraft, therefore I cannot, I durst not belye my own Soul. I beg your Honours 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 Endeavours.

Mary Esty.

After Execution Mr. Noyes turning him to the Bodies, said, what a sad thing it is to see Eight Firebrands of Hell hanging there.

In *October* 1692, One of Wenham ²⁸⁶ complained of Mrs. Hale, whose Husband, the Minister of Beverly, had been very forward in these Prosecutions, but being fully satisfied of his Wives sincere Christianity, caused him to alter his Judgment; for it was come to a stated Controversie, among the New-England Divines, whether the Devil could Afflict in a good Man's shape; it seems nothing else could convince him: yet when it came so near to himself, he was soon convinc'd that the Devil might soAfflict. ²⁸⁷ Which same reason did after wards prevail with many others; and much influenced to the succeeding change at Tryals. ²⁸⁸

October 7. (Edward Bishop and his Wife having made their Escape out of Prison) this day Mr. Corwin the Sheriff, came and Seiz'd his Goods, and Cattle, and had it not been for his second Son (who borrowed Ten Pound and gave it him) they had been wholly lost, the Receipt follows; but it seems they must be content with such a Receipt as he would give them.

Received this 7th day of October 1692, of Samuel Bishop of the Town of Salem, of the County of Essex, in New-England, Cordwainer, in full satisfaction, a valuable Summ of Money, for the Goods and Chattels of Edward Bishop, Senior, of the Town and County aforesaid, Husbandman; which Goods and Chattels being seized, for that the said Edward Bishop, and Sarah his Wife, having been committed for Witchcraft and Felony, have made their Escape; and their Goods and Chattles were forfeited unto their Majesties, and now being in Possession of the said Samuel Bishop; and in behalf of Their Majesties, I do hereby discharge the said Goods and Chattles, the day and year above written, as witness my hand,

George Corwin , Sheriff.

But before this the said Bishops Eldest Son, having Married into that Family of the Putmans, ²⁸⁹ who were chief Prosecutors in this business; he holding a Cow to be branded lest it should be seiz'd, and having a Push or Boyl upon his Thigh, with his straining it broke; this is that that was pretended to be burnt with the said Brand; and is one of the bones thrown to the Dogmatical to pick, in *Wonders of the Invisible World*, P. 143. ²⁹⁰ the other, of a Corner of a Sheet, pretended to be taken from a Spectre, it is known that it was provided the day before, by that Afflicted person, and the third bone of a Spindle is almost as easily provided, as the piece of the Knife; so that Apollo needs not herein be consulted, ²⁹¹ etc.

Mr. Philip English and his Wife having made their Escape out of Prison, Mr. Corwin the Sheriff seiz'd his Estate, to the value of about Fifteen Hundred Pound, which was wholly lost to him, except about Three Hundred Pound value, (which was afterward restored.) ²⁹²

After Goodwife Hoar was Condemned, her Estate was seiz'd, and was also bought again for Eight Pound.

George Jacobs, Son to old Jacobs, ²⁹³ being accused, he fled, then the Officers came to his House, his Wife was a Woman Crazy in her Senses and had been so several Years. She it seems had been also accused; there were in the House with her only four small Children, and one of them suck'd, her Eldest Daughter ²⁹⁴ being in Prison; the Officer perswaded her out of the House, to go along with him, telling her she should speedily return, the Children ran a great way after her crying.

When she came where the Afflicted were, being asked, they said they did not know her, at length one said, don't you know Jacobs the old Witch, and then they cry'd out of her, and fell down in their Fits; she was sent to Prison, and lay there Ten Months, the Neighbours of pitty took care of the Children to preserve them from perishing.

About this time a New Scene was begun, one Joseph Ballard of Andover, whose Wife was ill (and after died of a Fever) sent to Salem for some of those Accusers, to tell him who afflicted his Wife; others did the like: Horse and Man were sent from several places to fetch those Accusers who had the Spectral sight, that they might thereby tell who afflicted those that were any ways ill.

When these came into any place where such were, usually they fell into a Fit; after which being asked who it was that afflicted the person, they would, for the most part, name one whom they said sat on the head, and another that sat on the lower parts of the afflicted. Soon after Ballard's sending (as above) more than Fifty of the People of Andover were complained of, for afflicting their Neighbours. Here it was that many accused themselves, of Riding upon Poles through the Air; Many Parents believing their Children to be Witches, and many Husbands their Wives, etc. When these Accusers came to the House of any upon such account, it was ordinary for other young People to be taken in Fits, and to have the same Spectral sight.

Mr. Dudley Bradstreet, ²⁹⁵ a Justice of Peace in Andover, having granted out Warrants against, and Committed Thirty or Forty to Prisons, for the supposed Witchcrafts, at length saw cause to forbear granting out any more Warrants. Soon after which he and his Wife were cried out of, himself was (by them) said to have killed Nine persons by Witchcraft, and found it his safest course to make his Escape.

A Dog being afflicted at Salem–Village, those that had the Spectral sight being sent for, they accused Mr. John Bradstreet (Brother to the Justice) that he afflicted the said Dog, and now rid upon him: He made his Escape into Pescattequa–Government, ²⁹⁶ and the Dog was put to death, and was all of the Afflicted that suffered death.

At Andover, the Afflicted complained of a Dog, as afflicting of them, and would fall into their Fits at the Dogs looking upon them; the Dog was put to death.

A worthy Gentleman of Boston, being about this time accused by those at Andover, he sent by some particular Friends a Writ to Arrest those Accusers in a Thousand Pound Action for Defamation, with instructions to them, to inform themselves of the certainty of the proof, in doing which their business was perceived, and from thence forward the Accusations at Andover generally ceased. ²⁹⁷

In October some of these Accusers were sent for to Gloucester, and occasioned four Women to be sent to Prison, but Salem Prison being so full it could receive no more, two were sent to Ipswich Prison. In November they were sent for again by Lieutenant Stephens, who was told that a Sister of his was bewitched; in their way passing over Ipswich–bridge, they met with an old Woman, and instantly fell into their Fits: But by this time the

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

validity of such Accusations being much questioned, they found not that Encouragement they had done elsewhere, and soon withdrew.

These Accusers swore that they saw three persons sitting upon Lieutenant Stephens's Sister till she died; yet Bond was accepted for those Three.

And now Nineteen persons having been hang'd, and one prest to death, and Eight more condemned, in all Twenty and Eight, of which above a third part were Members of some of the Churches in N. England, and more than half of them of a good Conversation in general, and not one clear'd; About Fifty having confest themselves to be Witches, of which not one Executed; above an Hundred and Fifty in Prison, and above Two Hundred more accused; The Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer comes to a period, ²⁹⁸ which has no other foundation than the Governours Commission, ²⁹⁹ and had proceeded in the manner of swearing Witnesses, viz. By holding up the hand, (and by receiving Evidences in writing) according to the Ancient Usage of this Countrey; as also having their Indictments in English. In the Tryals, when any were Indicted for Afflicting, Pining, and wasting the Bodies of particular persons by Witchcraft; it was usual to hear Evidence of matter foreign, and of perhaps Twenty or Thirty years standing, about over-setting Carts, the death of Cattle, un kindness to Relations, or unexpected Accidents befalling after some quarrel. Whether this was admitted by the Law of England, or by what other Law, wants to be determined; the Executions seemed mixt, in pressing to death for not pleading, which most agrees with the Laws of England, and Sentencing Women to be hanged for Witchcraft, according to the former practice of this Country, and not by burning, as is said to have been the Law of England. ³⁰⁰ And though the confessing Witches were many; yet not one of them that confessed their own guilt, and abode by their Confession were put to Death. ³⁰¹

Here followeth what account some of those miserable Creatures give of their Confession under their own hands.

We whose Names are under written, Inhabitants of Andover, when as that horrible and tremendous Judgment beginning at Salem–Village, in the Year 1692, (by some) call'd Witchcraft, first breaking forth at Mr. Parris's House, several Young persons being seemingly afflicted, did accuse several persons for afflicting them, and many there believing it so to be; we being informed that if a person were sick, that the afflicted persons 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 from himself, or by the advice of others, fetch'd two of the persons call'd the afflicted persons, from Salem–Village to Andover. Which was the beginning of that dreadful Calamity that befel us in Andover. And the Authority in Andover, believing the said Accusations to be true, sent for the said persons to come together, to the Meeting–house in Andover (the afflicted persons being there.) After Mr. Bernard ³⁰² had been at Prayer, we were blindfolded, and our hands were laid upon the afflicted persons, they being in their Fits, and falling into their Fits at our coming into their presence (as they said) and some led us and laid our hands upon them, and then they said they were well, and that we were guilty of afflicting of them; whereupon we were all seized as Prisoners, by a Warrant from the Justice of the Peace, and forthwith carried to Salem. And by reason of that suddain surprizal, we knowing our selves altogether Innocent of that Crime, we were all exceedingly astonished and amazed, and consternated and affrighted even out of our Reason; and our nearest and dearest Relations, seeing us in that dreadful condition, and knowing our great danger, apprehending that there was no other way to save our lives, as the case was then circumstantiated, but by our confessing our selves to be such and such persons, as the afflicted represented us to be, they out of tender love and pittty perswaded us to confess what we did confess. And indeed that Confession, that is said we made, was no other than what was suggested to us by some Gentlemen; 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 understanding, our reason, and our faculties almost gone, we were not capable of judging our condition; as also the hard measures they used with us, rendred us incapable of making our Defence; but said any thing and every thing which they desired, and most of what we said, was but in effect a consenting to what they said. Sometime after when we were better composed, they telling of 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 Condemned and Executed, some of us were told that we were going after Wardwell.

Mary Osgood, Mary Tiler, Deliv. Dane, Abigail Barker, Sarah Wilson, Hannah Tiler .
303

It may here be further added concerning those that did Confess, that besides that powerful Argument, of Life (and

freedom from hardships and Irons not only promised, but also performed to all that owned their guilt), There are numerous Instances, too many to be here inserted, of the tedious Examinations before private persons, many hours together; they all that time urging them to Confess (and taking turns to persuade them) till the accused were wearied out by being forced to stand so long, or for want of Sleep, etc. and so brought to give an Assent to what they said; they then asking them, Were you at such a Witch-meeting, or have you signed the Devil's Book, etc. upon their replying, yes, the whole was drawn into form as their Confession.

But that which did mightily further such Confessions, was their nearest and dearest Relations urging them to it. These seeing no other way of escape for them, thought it the best advice that could be given; hence it was that the Husbands of some, by counsel often urging, and utmost earnestness, and Children upon their Knees intreating, have at length prevailed with them, to say they were guilty. ³⁰⁴

As to the manner of Tryals, and the Evidence taken for Convictions at Salem, it is already set forth in Print, by the

Reverend Mr. Cotton Mather, in his *Wonders of the Invisible World*, at the Command of his Excellency, Sir William Phips; with not only the Recommendation, but thanks of the Lieutenant Governour; ³⁰⁵ and with the Approbation of the Reverend Mr. J. M. ³⁰⁶ in his Postscript to his *Cases of Conscience*; which last Book was set forth by the consent of the Ministers in and near Boston. ³⁰⁷

Two of the Judges have also given their Sentiments in these words, p. 147.

The Reverend and worthy Author, having at the direction of his Excellency the Governour, so far obliged the Publick, as to give some account of the sufferings, brought upon the Countrey by Witchcrafts, and of the Tryals which have passed upon several executed for the same.

Upon perusal thereof, We find the matters of Fact and Evidence truly reported, and a prospect given of the Methods of Conviction, used in the proceedings of the Court at Salem.

Boston, October 11, 1692.

William Stoughton, Samuel Sewall .

And considering that this may fall into the hands of such as never saw those Wonders, it may be needful to transcribe the whole account he has given thereof, without any variation (but with one of the Indictments annexed to the Tryal of each). ³⁰⁸

Thus far the Account given in *Wonders of the Invisible World*; in which setting aside such words as these, in the Tryal of G. B. viz., "They (*i. e.* the Witnesses) were enough to fix the character of a Witch upon him." ³⁰⁹

In the Tryal of Bishop, these words, "but there was no need of them," *i. e.* of further Testimony. ³¹⁰

In the Tryal of How, where it is said, "and there came in Testimony of preternatural Mischief, presently

befalling some that had been instrumental to debar her from the Communion, whereupon she was intruding.”³¹¹ Martin is call'd “one of the most impudent, scurrilous, wicked Creatures in the World.” In his Account of Martha Carryer, he is pleased to call her “a Rampant Hag,”³¹² etc.

These Expressions, as they manifest that he wrote more like an Advocate than an Historian,³¹³ so also that those that were his Employers³¹⁴ were not mistaken in their choice of him for that work, however he may have mist it in other things.

As in his owning (in the Tryal of G. B.) That the Testimony of the bewitched and confessors was not enough against the Accused, for it is known that not only in New-England, such Evidence has been taken for sufficient, but also in England, as himself there owns, and will also hold true of Scotland, etc., they having proceeded upon such Evidence, to the taking away of the Lives of many, to assert that this is not enough is to tell the World that such Executions were but so many Bloody Murders; which surely was not his intent to say.

His telling that the Court began to think that Burroughs stept aside to put on invisibility, is a rendring them so mean Philosophers, and such weak Christians, as to be fit to be imposed upon by any silly pretender.

His calling the Evidence against How trivial, and others against Burroughs, he accounts no part of his Conviction; and that of lifting a Gun with one Finger, its being not made use of as Evidence, renders the whole but the more perplex. (Not to mention the many mistakes therein contain'd.)³¹⁵

Yet all this (and more that might have been hinted at) does not hinder, but that his Account of the manner of Trials of those for Witchcraft is as faithfully related as any Tryals of that kind, that was ever yet made publick;³¹⁶ and it may also be reasonably thought that there was as careful a Scrutiny, and as unquestion'd Evidences improved, as had been formerly used in the Tryals of others, for such crimes in other places. Tho indeed a second part might be very useful, to set forth which was the Evidence Convictive in these Tryals, for it is not supposed, that Romantick or Ridiculous stories should have any influence, such as biting a Spectres Finger, so that the Blood flowed out, or such as Shattock's Story of 12 Years standing, which yet was presently 18 Years or more, and yet a Man of that excellent Memory, as to be able to recall a small difference his Wife had with another Woman, when Eighteen Years were past.³¹⁷

As it is not to be supposed that such as these could Influence any Judge or Jury, so not unkindness to relations, or God's having given to one Man more strength than to some others, the over-setting of Carts, or the death of Cattle, nor yet Excrescencies (call'd Tets) nor little bits of Rags tied together (call'd Poppets.) Much less any persons illness, or having their Cloaths rent when a Spectre has been well banged, much less the burning the Mares Fart, mentioned in the Tryal of How.³¹⁸

None of these being in the least capable of proving the Indictment; The supposed Criminals were Indicted for Afflicting, etc., such and such particular persons by Witchcraft, to which none of these Evidences have one word to say, and the Afflicted and Confessors being declared not enough, the matter needs yet further explaining.³¹⁹

But to proceed, the General Court having sat and enacted Laws, particularly one against Witchcraft, assigning the Penalty of Death to any that shall feed, reward or employ, etc., Evil Spirits, though it has not yet been explained what is intended thereby, or what it is to feed, reward or employ Devils, etc., yet some of the Legislators have given this instead of an Explanation, that they had therein but Copied the Law of another Country.³²⁰

January 3. By vertue of an Act of the General Court, the first Superior Court was held at Salem, for the County of Essex, the Judges appointed were Mr. William Stoughton (the Lieutenant Governour) Thomas Danforth, John Richards, Wait Winthrop,³²¹ and Samuel Sewall, Esquires, Where Ignoramus³²² was found upon the several Bills of Indictment against Thirty, and *Billa Vera*³²³ against Twenty six more; of all these Three only were found Guilty by the Jewry upon Trial, two of which were (as appears by their Behaviour) the most senseless and Ignorant Creatures that could be found;³²⁴ besides which it does not appear what came in against those more than against the rest that were acquitted.³²⁵

The Third was the Wife of Wardwell, who was one of the Twenty Executed, and it seems they had both confessed themselves Guilty; but he retracting his said Confession, was tried and Executed;³²⁶ it is supposed that

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

this Woman fearing her Husbands fate, was not so stiff in her denials of her former Confession, such as it was. These Three received Sentence of Death.

At these Tryals some of the Jewry made Inquiry of the Court, what Account they ought to make of the Spectre Evidence? and received for Answer “as much as of Chips in Wort.” ³²⁷

January 31, 169 2/3. The Superior Court began at Charles–town, for the County of Middlesex, Mr. Stoughton, Mr. Danforth, Mr. Winthorp, and Mr. Sewall Judges, where several had Ignoramus returned upon their Bills of Indictment, and *Billa Vera* upon others.

In the time the Court sat, word was brought in, that a Reprieve was sent to Salem, ³²⁸ and had prevented the Execution of Seven of those that were there Condemned, which so moved the chief Judge, ³²⁹ that he said to this effect, “We were in a way to have cleared the Land of these, etc., whoit is obstructs the course of Justice I know not; the Lord be merciful to the Countrey,” and so went off the Bench, and came no more that Court: The most remarkable of the Tryals, was of Sarah Daston, she was a Woman of about 70 or 80 Years of Age. To usher in her Tryal, a report went before, that if there were a Witch in the World she was one, as having been so accounted of, for 20 or 30 Years; which drew many People from Boston, etc., to hear her Tryal. There were a multitude of Witnesses produced against her; but what Testimony they gave in seemed wholly forreign, as of accidents, illness, etc., befalling them, or theirs after some Quarrel; what these testified was much of it of Actions said to be done 20 Years before that time. The Spectre–Evidence was not made use of in these Tryals, so that the Jewry soon brought her in not Guilty; her Daughter and Grand–daughter, and the rest that were then tried, were also acquitted. After she was cleared Judge Danforth Admonished her in these words, “Woman, Woman, repent, there are shrewd things come in against you”; she was remanded to Prison for her Fees, and there in a short time expired. One of Boston that had been at the Tryal of Daston, being the same Evening in company with one of the Judges in a publick place, acquainted him that some that had been both at the Tryals at Salem and at this at Charlestown, had asserted that there was more Evidence against the said Daston than against any at Salem, to which the said Judge conceded, saying, That it was so. It was replied by that person, that he dare give it under his hand, that there was not enough come in against her to bear a just reproof. ³³⁰

April 25, 1693. The first Superiour Court was held at Boston, for the County of Suffolk, the Judges were the Lieutenant Governour, Mr. Danforth, Mr. Richards and Mr. Sewall, Esquires.

Where (besides the acquitting Mr. John Aldin by Proclamation) the most remarkable was, what related to Mary Watkins, who had been a Servant, and lived about Seven Miles from Boston, having formerly Accused her Mistress of Witch craft, and was supposed to be distracted, she was threatned if she persisted in such Accusations to be punished; this with the necessary care to recover her Health, had that good effect, that she not only had her Health restored, but also wholly acquitted her Mistress of any such Crimes, and continued in Health till the return of the Year, and then again falling into Melancholly humours she was found strangling her self; her Life being hereby prolonged, she immediately accused her self of being a Witch; was carried before a Magistrate and committed. At this Court a Bill of Indictment was brought to the Grand Jury against her, and her confession upon her Examination given in as Evidence, but these not wholly satisfied herewith, sent for her, who gave such account of her self, that they (after they had returned into the Court to ask some Questions) Twelve of them agreed to find Ignoramus, but the Court was pleased to send them out again, who again at coming in returned it as before.

She was continued for some time in Prison, etc., and at length was sold to Virginia. ³³¹ About this time the Prisoners in all the Prisons were released. ³³²

To omit here the mentioning of several Wenches in Boston, etc., who pretended to be Afflicted, and accused several, the Ministers often visiting them, and praying with them, concerning whose Affliction Narratives are in being in Manuscript. ³³³ Not only these, but the generality of those Accusers may have since convinc'd the Ministers by their vicious courses that they might err in extending too much Charity to them.

The conclusion of the whole in the Massachusetts Colony was, Sir William Phips, Governour, being call'd home, before he went he pardon'd such as had been condemned, for which they gave about 30 Shillings each to the Kings Attorney. ³³⁴

In *August 1697.* The Superiour Court sat at Hartford, in the Colony of Connecticut, where one Mistress Benom was tried for Witchcraft, she had been accused by some Children that pretended to the Spectral sight; they searched her several times for Tets; they tried the Experiment of casting her into the Water, ³³⁵ and after this she

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

was Excommunicated by the Minister of Wallinsford. ³³⁶ Upon her Tryal nothing material appearing against her, save Spectre Evidence, she was acquitted, as also her Daughter, a Girl of Twelve or Thirteen Years old, who had been likewise Accused; but upon renewed Complaints against them, they both fled into New-York Government. ³³⁷

Before this the Government Issued forth the following Proclamation. ³³⁸

By the Honourable the Lieutenant Governour, Council and Assembly of his Majesties Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in General Court Assembled.

Whereas the Anger of God is not yet turned away, but his Hand is still stretched out against his People in manifold Judgments, particularly in drawing out to such a length the troubles of Europe, by a perplexing War; and more especially, respecting ourselves in this Province, in that God is pleased still to go on in diminishing our Substance, cutting short our Harvest, blasting our most promising undertakings more ways than one, unsettling of us, ³³⁹ and by his more Immediate hand, snatching away many out of our Embraces, by sudden and violent Deaths, even at this time when the Sword is devouring so many both at home and abroad, and that after many days of publick and Solemn addressing of him, And altho considering the many Sins prevailing in the midst of us, we cannot but wonder at the Patience and Mercy moderating these Rebukes; yet we cannot but also fear that there is something still wanting to accompany our Supplications. And doubtless there are some particular Sins, which God is Angry with our Israel for, that have not been duly seen and resented by us, about which God expects to be sought, if ever he turn again our Captivity.

Wherefore it is Commanded and Appointed, that Thursday the Fourteenth of January next be observed as a Day of Prayer, with Fasting throughout this Province, strictly forbidding all Servile labour thereon; that so all Gods People may offer up fervent Supplications unto him, for the Preservation, and Prosperity of his Majesty's Royal Person and Government, and Success to attend his Affairs both at home and abroad; that all iniquity may be put away which hath stirred God's Holy jealousie against this Land; that he would shew us what we know not, and help us wherein we have done amiss to do so no more; and especially that whatever mistakes on either hand have been fallen into, either by the body of this People, or any orders of men, referring to the late Tragedy, raised among us by Satan and his Instruments, thro the awful Judgment of God, he would humble us therefore ³⁴⁰ and pardon all the Errors of his Servants and People, that desire to love his Name and be attoned to his Land; that he would remove the Rod of the wicked from off the Lot of the Righteous; that he would bring the American Heathen, and cause them to hear and obey his Voice.

Given at Boston, Decemb. 17, 1696, in the 8th Year of his Majesties Reign.
Isaac Addington , *Secretary*.

Upon the Day of the Fast in the full Assembly, at the South Meeting–House in Boston, one of the Honourable Judges, who had sat in Judicature in Salem, delivered in a Paper, ³⁴¹ and while it was in reading stood up, But the Copy being not to be obtained at present, It can only be reported by Memory to this effect, *viz.* It was to desire the Prayers of God's People for him and his, and that God having visited his Family, etc., he was apprehensive that he might have fallen into some Errors in the Matters at Salem, and pray that the Guilt of such Miscarriages may not be imputed either to the Country in general, or to him or his family in particular.

Some that had been of several Jewries, have given forth a Paper, Sign'd with their own hands in these words.

We whose names are under written, being in the Year 1692 called to serve as Jurors, in Court at Salem, on Tryal of many, who were by some suspected Guilty of doing Acts of Witchcraft upon the Bodies of sundry Persons:

We confess that we our selves were not capable to understand, nor able to withstand the mysterious delusions of the Powers of Darkness, and Prince of the Air; but were for want of Knowledge in our selves, 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, Deut. 17. 6, whereby we fear we have been instrumental with others, tho Ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon our selves, and this People of the Lord, the Guilt of Innocent Blood; which Sin the Lord saith in Scripture, he would not pardon, 2 Kings 24. 4, that is we suppose in regard of his temporal Judgments. We do therefore hereby signifie to all in general (and to the surviving Sufferers in especial) our deep sense of, and sorrow for our Errors, in acting on such Evidence to the condemning of any person.

And do hereby declare that we justly fear that we were sadly deluded and mistaken, for which we are much disquieted and distressed in our minds; and do therefore humbly beg forgiveness, first of God for Christ's sake for this our Error; And pray that God would not impute the guilt of it to our selves, nor others; and we also pray that we may be considered candidly, and aright by the living Sufferers as being then under the power of a strong and general Delusion, utterly unacquainted with, and not experienced in matters of that Nature.

We do heartily ask forgiveness of you all, whom we have justly offended, and do declare according to our present minds, we would none of us do such things again on such grounds for the whole World; praying you to accept of this in way of Satisfaction for our Offence; and that you would bless the Inheritance of the Lord, that he may be intreated for the Land.

Foreman, Thomas Fisk , William Fisk , John Batcheler , Thomas Fisk , *Junior* John Dane , Joseph Evelith , Thomas Perly , *Senior* John Pebody , Thomas Perkins , Samuel Sayer, Andrew Elliott , Henry Herrick , *Senior*.
342

Mr. C. M. having been very forward to write Books of Witchcraft, has not been so forward either to explain or defend the Doctrinal part thereof, and his belief (which he had a Years time to compose) he durst not venture so as to be copied. ³⁴³ Yet in this of the Life of Sir William he sufficiently testifies his retaining that Heterodox belief, seeking by frightfull stories of the sufferings of some, and the refined sight of others, etc., P. 69 to obtrude upon the World, and confirm it in such a belief, as hitherto he either cannot or will not defend, as if the Blood already shed thereby were not sufficient.

Mr. I. Mather, in his *Cases of Conscience*, P. 25, tells of a Bewitched Eye, and that such can see more than others. They were certainly bewitched Eyes that could see as well shut as open, and that could see what never was, that could see the Prisoners upon the Afflicted, harming of them, when those whose Eyes were not bewitched could have sworn that they did not stir from the Bar. The Accusers are said to have suffered much by biting, P. 73. And the prints of just such a set of Teeth, as those they Accused, had, but such as had not such bewitch'd Eyes have seen the Accusers bite themselves, and then complain of the Accused. It has also been seen when the Accused, instead of having just such a set of Teeth, has not had one in his head. They were such bewitched Eyes that could see the Poisonous Powder (brought by Spectres P. 70.) And that could see in the Ashes the print of the Brand, there invisibly heated to torment the pretended Sufferers with, etc.

These with the rest of such Legends have this direct tendency, *viz.* To tell the World that the Devil is more ready to serve his Votaries, by his doing for them things above or against the course of Nature, shewing himself to them, and making explicit contract with them, etc., than the Divine Being is to his faithful Servants, and that as he

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

is willing, so also able to perform their desires. The way whereby these People are believed to arrive at a power to Afflict their Neighbours, is by a compact with the Devil, and that they have a power to Commissionate him to those Evils, P. 72. However Irrational, or Inscriptural such Assertions are, yet they seem a necessary part of the Faith of such as maintain the belief of such a sort of Witches.

As the Scriptures know nothing of a covenanting or commissioning Witch, so Reason cannot conceive how Mortals should by their Wickedness arrive at a power to Commissionate Angels, Fallen Angels, against their Innocent Neighbours. But the Scriptures are full in it, and the Instances numerous, that the Almighty, Divine Being has this prerogative to make use of what Instrument he pleaseth, in Afflicting any, and consequently to commissionate Devils: And tho this word commissioning, in the Authors former Books, might be thought to be by inadvertency; yet now after he hath been caution'd of it, still to persist in it seems highly Criminal. And therefore in the name of God, I here charge such belief as guilty of Sacrilege in the highest Nature, and so much worse than stealing Church Plate, etc., As it is a higher Offence to steal any of the glorious Attributes of the Almighty, to bestow them upon Mortals, than it is to steal the Utensils appropriated to his Service. And whether to ascribe such power of commissioning Devils to the worst of Men, be not direct Blasphemy, I leave to others better able to determine. When the Pharisees were so wicked as to ascribe to Beelzebub, the mighty works of Christ (whereby he did manifestly shew forth his Power and Godhead) then it was that our Saviour declar'd the Sin against the Holy Ghost to be unpardonable.

When the Righteous God is contending with Apostate Sinners, for their departures from him, by his Judgments, as Plagues, Earthquakes, Storms and Tempests, Sickneses and Diseases, Wars, loss of Cattle, etc. Then not only to ascribe this to the Devil, but to charge one another with sending or commissionating those Devils to these things, is so abominable and so wicked, that it requires a better Judgment than mine to give it its just denomination.

But that Christians so called should not only charge their fellow Christians therewith, but proceed to Tryals and Executions; crediting that Enemy to all Goodness, and Accuser of the Brethren, rather than believe their Neighbours in their own Defence; This is so Diabolical a Wickedness as cannot proceed, but from a Doctrine of Devils; how far damnable it is let others discuss. Tho such things were acting in this Country in Sir Williams time, yet p. 65. there is a Discourse of a Guardian Angel, as then over-seeing it, which notion, however it may suit the Faith of Ethnicks, ³⁴⁴ or the fancies of Trithemius, ³⁴⁵ it is certain that the Omnipresent Being stands not in need as Earthly Potentates do, of governing the World by Vicegerents. And if Sir William had such an Invisible pattern to imitate, no wonder tho some of his Actions were unaccountable, especially those relating to Witchcraft: For if there was in those Actions an Angel super-intending, there is little reason to think it was Gabriel or the Spirit of Mercury, nor Hanael the Angel or Spirit of Venus, nor yet Samuel the Angel or Spirit of Mars; Names feigned by the said Trithemius, etc. It may rather be thought to be Apollyon, or Abaddon.

Obj. ³⁴⁶ But here it will be said, “What, are there no Witches? Do's not the Law of God command that they should be extirpated? Is the Command vain and Unintelligible?” *Sol.* ³⁴⁷ For any to say that a Witch is one that makes a compact with, and Commissions Devils, etc., is indeed to render the Law of God vain and Unintelligible, as having provided no way whereby they might be detected, and proved to be such; And how the Jews waded thro this difficulty for so many Ages, without the Supplement of Mr. Perkins and Bernard thereto, would be very mysterious. But to him that can read the Scriptures without prejudice from Education, etc., it will manifestly appear that the Scripture is full and Intelligible, both as to the Crime and means to detect the culpable. He that shall hereafter see any person, who to confirm People in a false belief, about the power of Witches and Devils, pretending to a sign to confirm it, such as knocking off of invisible Chains with the hand, driving away Devils by brushing, striking with a Sword or Stick, to wound a person at a great distance, etc., may (according to that head of Mr. Gauls, quoted by Mr. C. M. and so often herein before recited, and so well proved by Scripture) conclude that he has seen Witchcraft performed.

If Baalam became a Sorcerer by Sacrificing and Praying to the true God against his visible people; Then he

Some that had been of several Jewries, have given forth a Paper, Sign'd with their own hands in the ~~151~~ words.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

that shall pray that the afflicted (by their Spectral Sight) may accuse some other Person (whereby their reputations and lives may be indangered) such will justly deserve the Name of a Sorcerer. If any Person pretends to know more then ³⁴⁸ can be known by humane means, and professeth at the same time that they have it from the Black-Man, *i. e.* the Devil, and shall from hence give Testimony against the Lives of others, they are manifestly such as have a familiar Spirit; and if any, knowing them to have their Information from the Black-Man, shall be inquisitive of them for their Testimony against others, they therein are dealing with such as have a Familiar-Spirit.

And if these shall pretend to see the dead by their Spectral Sight, and others shall be inquisitive of them, and receive their Answers what it is the dead say, and who it is they accuse, both the one and the other are by Scripture Guilty of Necromancy.

These are all of them crimes as easily proved as any whatsoever, and that by such proof as the Law of God requires, so that it is no Unintelligible Law.

But if the Iniquity of the times be such, that these Criminals not only Escape Indemnified, ³⁴⁹ but are Encouraged in their Wickedness, and made use of to take away the Lives of others, this is worse than a making the Law of God Vain, it being a rendring of it dangerous, against the Lives of Innocents, and without all hopes of better, so long as these Bloody Principles remain.

As long as Christians do Esteem the Law of God to be Imperfect, as not describing that crime that it requires to be Punish'd by Death;

As long as men suffer themselves to be Poison'd in their Education, and be grounded in a False Belief by the Books of the Heathen;

As long as the Devil shall be believed to have a Natural Power, to Act above and against a course of Nature;

As long as the Witches shall be believed to have a Power to Commission him;

As long as the Devils Testimony, by the pretended afflicted, shall be received as more valid to Condemn, than their Plea of Not Guilty to acquit;

As long as the Accused shall have their Lives and Liberties confirmed and restored to them, upon their Confessing themselves Guilty;

As long as the Accused shall be forc't to undergo Hardships and Torments for their not Confessing;

As long as Tets for the Devil to Suck are searched for upon the Bodies of the accused, as a token of guilt;

As long as the Lords Prayer shall be profaned, by being made a Test, who are culpable;

As long as Witchcraft, Sorcery, Familiar Spirits, and Necromancy, shall be improved to discover who are Witches, etc.,

So long it may be expected that Innocents will suffer as Witches.

So long God will be Daily dishonoured, And so long his Judgments must be expected to be continued.

Finis

Notes

[223]. *I. e.*, the witchcraft at Salem in 1692.

[224]. As to Parris and Salem Village, and in general as to the Salem witchcraft, which is the subject of the rest of Calef's narrative, see the introduction and notes to Lawson's *Brief Account* (pp. 147–164, above). That account (as also the parallel narrative of Hale, at pp. 413 ff., below) should be constantly compared with the present one.

[225]. 1692 of our calendar.

[226]. Doubtless Dr. William Griggs, of Salem Village, whose wife's niece, a maid in his household, was one of the “afflicted.”

[227]. Abigail Williams, Parris's niece.

[228]. West–Indian slaves, brought back with him from Barbadoes.

[229]. It was suggested by the wife of a neighbor. When, a fortnight later, she was disciplined by the village church for this dabbling in superstition, Parris himself wrote in the church–record book: “It is well known that when these Calamities first began, which was in my own Family, the Affliction was several weeks before such hellish Operations as Witchcraft was suspected; Nay, it never broke forth to any considerable Light, until diabolical Means was used, by the making of a cake by my Indian Man, who had his Directions from this our Sister Mary Sibly; since which Apparitions have been plenty, and exceeding much Mischief hath followed.” (Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 95; Hanson, *Danvers*, p. 289, quoted by Drake.)

[230]. *I. e.*, to meet her prison expenses. She lay there for a year and a month.

[231]. Besides the documents of Tituba's case printed in the *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (I. 41–50), a much fuller report of her examination (March 1–2, 1692) strangely differing from that already printed, is appended to Drake's edition of Mather and Calef (*The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, III. 185–195).

[232]. On March 1, before John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin. From this point to his entry of April 3 Calef's narrative rests wholly on that of Lawson.

[233] See above, pp. 162–164.

[234]. “Sucking” in original; corrected in *Errata*.

[235]. Among them was Samuel Sewall, who wrote in his diary for that day: “Went to Salem, where, in the Meeting–house, the persons accused of Witchcraft were examined; was a very great Assembly; 'twas awfull to see how the afflicted persons were agitated. Mr. Noyes pray'd at the beginning, and Mr. Higginson concluded.” In the margin he has later added: “*Vae, Vae, Vae, Witchcraft*” — *i. e.*, “woe, woe, woe!” So many (seven) of the magistrates were present that the court took the form of a “council” (the highest of colonial tribunals), under the presidency of Deputy–governor Danforth (*Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 101; Hutchinson, *Massachusetts*, second ed., II. 27–30).

[236]. *I. e.*, than. This spelling was then usual.

[237]. Jail–keeper.

[238]. Deliverance.

[239]. Mary Esty, aged 56, was a sister of Rebecca Nurse and Sarah Cloyse. We shall meet her again. As to these Topsfield cases, see above, p. 237, note 1. Edward Bishop, aged 44, was probably a step–son of Bridget Bishop (see above, pp. 223–229, and below, p. 356), and his wife was a daughter of John Wilds. On Mary Black, see Chandler, *American Criminal Trials*, I. 427, and Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 136–137. As for Mary English, see below, p. 371.

[240]. “Mary” in original; corrected in *Errata*.

[241]. *I. e.*, cried out against, accused.

[242]. *The afflicted Indian, i.e.*, Parris's John: it is clearly a misprint.

[243]. *I. e.*, the English Revolution and the overthrow in New England of the Andros government (1689).

[244]. He doubtless means especially Cotton Mather. So, at least, Mather assumes in his reply (his letter in *Some Few Remarks*, etc., pp. 46–47) and vigorously denies that he opposed the reassumption.

[245]. See p. 348, note 1.

[246]. Doubtless a misprint for “having them taken off.”

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[247]. The reason for the irons was the assertion of the “afflicted” that their sufferings did not cease till the accused were thus in fetters. An account of the prison-keeper (Hanson, *Danvers*, p. 290) has such items as: “May 9th, To Chains for Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn, 14s. May 23d, To Shackles for 10 Prisoners. May 29th, to 1 pr. Irons.” See also *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 212, 213. Even little Dorcas Good was put into chains.

[248]. Captain Nathaniel Cary was a shipmaster, a man of ability and prominence, later a member of the General Court and a justice.

[249]. Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam.

[250]. Talk with.

[251]. The Rev. John Hale, of Beverly. As to his part in the trials see below, p. 369.

[252]. Cary is speaking, of course, of “John Indian” and Tituba.

[253]. Rhode Island. “July 30, 1692. Mrs. Cary makes her escape out of Cambridge–Prison, who was Committed for Witchcraft.” (Sewall, *Diary*, I. 362.)

[254]. “Jonathan” in original: corrected to “Nathaniel” in *Errata*.

[255]. See above, pp. 170, note 2, and 178, note 6. Captain Alden, Indian fighter, naval commander, now at seventy a man of wealth, was one of the leading figures of New England.

[256]. The lieutenant–governor — soon to be head of the special court for the trial of the witches. See above, p. 183, note 2, and p. 199.

[257]. Bartholomew Gedney, of Salem, the third magistrate, was, like his colleagues, an assistant of the province.

[258]. Captain Alden's case seems to have made a great stir. On July 20 there was held a special “Fast at the house of Capt. Alden, upon his account.” Judge Sewall read a sermon, and Willard, Allen, and Cotton Mather prayed, then Captain Hill and Captain Scottow; “concluded about 5. a'clock.” (Sewall, *Diary*, I. 361–362.) A year later, on June 12, 1693, Sewall records: “I visit Capt. Alden and his wife, and tell them I was sorry for their Sorrow and Temptations by reason of his Imprisonment, and that [I] was glad of his Restauration.”

[259]. See above, pp. 183–185, 196–198. These gentlemen were all members of the new Council of the province. Saltonstall, out of dissatisfaction with the proceedings, early withdrew (see above, p. 184), and was

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

later himself accused (Sewall's *Diary*, I. 373). Jonathan Corwin took his place. A quorum was five. All the judges had had experience in the colony's Court of Assistants; but none had had a legal training.

[260]. As to the trial of Bridget Bishop see above, pp. 223–229. Before her last marriage she had been a widow Oliver. The testimony against her includes the deposition of a Samuel Gray (*Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 152–153) as to her bewitching to death his child some fourteen years before. Of his repentance at his death, which must have been recent when Calef wrote, the writer doubtless speaks from personal knowledge.

[261]. See above, p. 194.

[262]. See above, p. 304, notes 3, 5.

[263]. The full text of the document, that is, may be found at the end of Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience* (London, 1693). With that book, or from it, it has been often reprinted. In his life of Phips (and in its reprint in his *Magnalia*) Cotton Mather tells us that it was drawn up by himself; but it doubtless embodied a compromise. Increase Mather calls it “the humble Advice which twelve Ministers concurringly presented before his Excellency and Council,” and it entitles itself “The Return of several Ministers consulted by his Excellency, and the Honourable Council, upon the present Witchcrafts in Salem Village.”

[264]. Cotton Mather, of course.

[265]. As to the trials of Susanna Martin and Elizabeth How see above, pp. , and records there cited. The documents for those of Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Wildes, may be found in *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (I. 11–34, 76–99, 180–189), but for the two last more fully in the *Historical Collections* of the Topsfield Historical Society (XIII. 80–92).

[266]. *I. e.*, than that.

[267]. By Mr. Noyes, of whose church in Salem Town she was a member. Says the church record: “1692, July 3. — After sacrament, the elders propounded to the church, — and it was, by an unanimous vote, consented to, — that our sister Nurse, being a convicted witch by the Court, and condemned to die, should be excommunicated; which was accordingly done in the afternoon, she being present.” (Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 290.) Upham, himself long pastor of this church, has drawn a powerful picture of the probable scene.

[268]. Two of these testimonials, one of them signed by thirty–eight of her neighbors, are printed by Upham (*Salem Witchcraft*, II. 271–272), and more exactly, from the still extant MSS., in the *Historical Collections* of the Topsfield Historical Society (XIII. 57–58) — and with them the touching evidence of the neighbors who first bore her the news of her accusation.

[269]. See above, pp. 22, 184, and 186, note 3.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[270]. As to the trials of Burroughs and Goodwife Carrier see above, pp. 215–222, 241–244, and records there cited. Those relating to Procter and his wife, to Willard, and to Jacobs may be found in *Records of Salem Witchcraft* (I. 60–74, 99–117, 266–279, 253–265). The testimonials on behalf of the Procters are reprinted (with corrections) by Upham (*Salem Witchcraft*, II. 305–307). As to Willard other papers will be found in Dr. S. A. Green's *Groton in the Witchcraft Times* (Groton, 1883), pp. 23–29. The documents relating to Jacobs are to be found also in the *Collections* of the Essex Institute (II. 49–57), where (and in I. 52–56) are further details as to him and his household.

[271]. For Brattle's account of their execution see above, p. 177.

[272]. “This day,” writes Judge Sewall in his diary, “George Burrough, John Willard, Jno. Procter, Martha Carrier and George Jacobs were executed at Salem, a very great number of Spectators being present. Mr. Cotton Mather was there, Mr. Sims, Hale, Noyes, Chiever, etc. All of them said they were innocent, Carrier and all. Mr. Mather says they all died by a Righteous Sentence. Mr. Burrough by his Speech, Prayer, protestation of his Innocence, did much move unthinking persons, which occasions their speaking hardly concerning his being executed.” In the margin he later added “Dolefull Witchcraft!”

[273]. Nashaway, an old name of Lancaster.

[274]. By “Mr. Mather” is unquestionably meant Increase Mather. He alone, as the senior in age and in dignity, could with propriety be thus given the first place; and his son, if named at all, would have been identified as “Mr. Cotton Mather.” That he is not named at all needs no explanation to those who have read his own words as to accusers and accused and his complaints as to the blame heaped upon himself. Of Moody, Willard, Bailey, we have perhaps seen enough in earlier pages to guess why such an appeal might with hope be addressed to them. The Boston Tory Joshua Broadbent, writing on June 21 from New York, reported that “Mrs. Moody, Parson Moody's wife, is said to be one” of the witches. (*Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1689–1692, p. 653.) Of Allen, the well-to-do minister of the First Church, who seems to have been a man of much caution, it may be well to remember that prior to 1678 he had owned the estate at Salem Village since occupied, but not yet in full ownership, by the Nurses, Procter's near neighbors, and that he was doubtless personally known to the petitioner. Bailey, who had come to America in 1683, had at first assisted Willard at the South Church, and, after a pastorate at Watertown, was now Allen's assistant at the First.

[275]. Juries. It should not be overlooked that in these trials of 1692 the jurors were chosen from among church-members only, not, as later, from all who had the property to make them voters under the new charter. The act establishing this qualification for the jurors was not passed till November 25. (See Goodell in *Mass. Hist. Soc., Proceedings*, second series, I. 67–68.)

[276]. Richard and Andrew, sons of Martha Carrier, of Andover. (See above, pp. 241–244.) Richard was 18.

[277]. As to this form of torture see above, p. 102 and note 1 . For some of the evidence extorted by it in this case see *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, p. 198. The use of torture in cases of witchcraft had been recommended by Perkins, the Puritan oracle, and yet more warmly by King James; and despite protesting jurists it came into use. Even Coke, who maintains that “there is no Law to warrant tortures in this land, nor can they be justified by any

prescription,” has to add “being so lately brought in” (*Institutes*, III., cap. 2). As to its actual use in English witch-trials see Notestein, *Witchcraft in England*, index, s. v. “Torture.” But Massachusetts law, from 1641 on, had straitly forbidden it except, after conviction, to extort the names of accomplices; and even then forbade “such tortures as be barbarous and inhumane” (see *Body of Liberties*, par. 45; ed. of 1660, p. 67; ed. of 1672, p. 129). If in 1648 the highest court of the colony, learning with admiration of the achievements of Matthew Hopkins in England, was “desirous that the same course which hath been taken in England for the discovery of witches, by watchinge, may also be taken here,” and ordered, in the case of a witch, that “a strict watch be set about her every night, and that her husband be confined to a private room, and watched also” (*Records of Massachusetts*, III. 126), their phrasing betrays how little they understood the rigor of the English method. In 1692 even Cotton Mather declared himself “farr from urging the un-English method of torture” (*Mather Papers*, p. 394), though he urged on the judges “whatever hath a tendency to put the witches into confusion,” such as “Crosse and Swift Questions.” But the procedure of that day, like our own, drew a line between what might be used in the courts and what might be permitted to extra-judicial inquiry, and we shall see yet more of methods used at Salem to extort confession.

[278]. That which.

[279]. *I. e.*, out of charity the neighbors relieved her.

[280]. How she was brought to confess she herself told in a brave paper:

“The humble declaration of Margaret Jacobs unto the honoured court now sitting at Salem, sheweth
 “That whereas your poor and humble declarant being closely confined here in Salem jail for the crime of witchcraft, which crime, thanks be to the Lord, I am altogether ignorant of, as will appear at the great day of judgment. May it please the honoured court, I was cried out upon by some of the possessed persons, as afflicting of them; whereupon I was brought to my examination, which persons at the sight of me fell down, which did very much startle and affright me. The Lord above knows I knew nothing, in the least measure, how or who afflicted them; they told me, without doubt I did, or else they would not fall down at me; they told me 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 made me make the confession I did, which confession, may it please the honoured court, is altogether false and untrue. The very first night after I had made my confession, I was in such horror of conscience that I could not sleep, for fear the Devil should carry me away for telling such horrid lies. I was, may it please the honoured court, sworn to my confession, as I understand since, but then, at that time, was ignorant of it, not knowing what an oath did mean. The Lord, I hope, in whom I trust, out of the abundance of his mercy, will forgive me my false forswearing myself. What I said was altogether false, against my grandfather, and Mr. Burroughs, which I did to save my life and to have my liberty; but the Lord, charging it to my conscience, made me in so much horror, that I could not contain myself before I had denied my confession, which I did, though I saw nothing but death before me, choosing rather death with a quiet conscience, than to live in such horror, which I could not suffer. Whereupon my denying my confession, I was committed to close prison, where I have enjoyed more felicity in spirit a thousand times than I did before in my enlargement.

“And now, may it please your honours, your poor and humble declarant having, in part, given your honours a description of my condition, do leave it to your honours pious and judicious discretions to take pity and compassion on my young and tender years; to act and do with me as the Lord above and your honours shall see good, having no friend but the Lord to plead my cause for me; not being guilty in the least measure of the crime of witchcraft, nor any other sin that deserves death from man; and your poor and humble declarant shall forever pray, as she is bound in duty, for your honours' happiness in this life, and eternal felicity in the world to come. So prays your honours declarant.

“Margaret Jacobs.”

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

The document is preserved by Hutchinson, and may be found in the first chapter of his second volume (or in Poole's reprint of an earlier draft, *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXIV. 402–403).

[281]. Daniel Andrew, the kinsman and neighbor who had fled with her father. He had been a leading man, a teacher, a deputy to the General Court, and apparently a staunch opponent of the panic. As to the crazed mother, see p. 371, below, and the grandmother's petition in *Mass. Hist. Soc., Collections*, V. 79 (or in Chandler's *American Criminal Trials*, I. 431–432).

[282]. For a little more of her story see below, p. 371. She was acquitted in January, but had to remain in jail, even after the governor by proclamation had freed the prisoners (May, 1693), for want of means to pay her prison fees. A stranger, touched with compassion on hearing of her case, advanced the money — and was in time repaid. (Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, II. 353–354.)

[283]. The papers relating to Ann Pudeater (*Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 12–22) have been embodied in a study of her case by G. F. Chever in the *Collections* of the Essex Institute (II. 37–42, 49–54). The widow Dorcas Hoar seems to have earned some suspicion by an interest in fortune-telling (*Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 235–253), and, though she confessed, she was condemned; but she had potent friends. “A petition is sent to Town,” says Sewall in his *Diary* on September 21, “in behalf of Dorcas Hoar, who now confesses. Accordingly an order is sent to the Sheriff to forbear her Execution.” “This is,” he adds, “the first condemned person who has confess'd.” The aged Mrs. Bradbury, daughter of John Perkins of Ipswich and wife of Captain Thomas Bradbury of Salisbury, was not only one of the most socially eminent but one of the most venerated women of her region, and her arrest enlisted in her defence the public sentiment of all the district (see *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 160–174). She was aided to escape from prison, and so from death.

[284]. For the Andover and Topsfield cases reference may again be made to Mrs. Bailey's *Historical Sketches of Andover* and to vol. XIII. of the *Collections* of the Topsfield Historical Society as well as to the *Records of Salem Witchcraft*. The papers as to Wilmot Redd, or Reed, are in the *Records* (II. 97–106); Margaret Scott's seem lost. The examinations of Mary Lacy and Ann Foster should be studied in Hutchinson's chapter as well as in the *Records* (II. 135–142), and see also p. 244, above, and pp. 418–419, below.

[285]. This was, of course, the old English “peine forte et dure” for those who, in cases of petty treason or of felony, will not “put themselves upon the country,” or, as Coke has it, “when the offender standeth mute, and refuseth to be tryed by the common law of the land.” (See Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, second ed., II. 650–652.) Whether in Giles Corey's case this was mere proud protest or had some ulterior end is not yet clear. The theory that he hoped thereby to save himself from attainder and preserve his right to bequeath his property has been learnedly contested by G. H. Moore (see especially his *Final Notes on Witchcraft in Massachusetts*, New York, 1885, pp. 40–59). As to Giles Corey see also p. 250, above, and *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 175–180. The missing report of his examination is printed at the end of Calef's book in the editions of 1823, 1861, and 1866.

[286]. Mary Herrick. At least the following remarkable tale of hers (first published in the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXVII. 55) must have had to do with Mr. Hale's change of view:

“An Account Received from the mouth of Mary Herrick aged about 17 yeares having been Afflicted [by] the Devill or some of his instruments, about 2 month. She saith she had oft been Afflicted and that the shape of Mrs. Hayle had been represented to her, One amongst others, but she knew not what hand Afflicted her then, but on the

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

5th of the 9th [*i. e.*, November] She Appeared again with the Ghost of Gooddee Easty, and that then Mrs. Hayle did sorely Afflict her by pinching, pricking and Choaking her. On the 12th of the 9th she Came again and Gooddee Easty with her and then Mrs. Hayle did Afflict her as formerly. Sd Easty made as if she would speake but did not, but on the same night they Came again and Mrs. Hayle did sorely Afflict her, and asked her if she thought she was a Witch. The Girl answered no, You be the Devill. Then said Easty sd and speake, She Came to tell her She had been put to Death wrongfully and was Innocent of Witchcraft, and she Came to Vindicate her Cause and she Cryed Vengeance, Vengeance, and bid her reveal this to Mr. Hayle and Gerish, and then she would rise no more, nor should Mrs. Hayle Afflict her any more. Memorand: that Just before sd Easty was Executed, She Appeared to sd Girl, and said I am going upon the Ladder to be hanged for a Witch, but I am innocent, and before a 12 Month be past you shall believe it. Sd Girl sd she speake not of this before because she believed she was Guilty, Till Mrs. Hayle appeared to her and Afflicted her, but now she believeth it is all a Delusion of the Devil.

“This before Mr. Hayle and Gerish 14th of the 9th 1692.”

“Gerish” means the Rev. Joseph Gerrish, of Wenham, who is doubtless here the scribe.

[287]. But see (at pp. 404, 405, below) Hale's own account of this change of view.

[288]. Hale's whole book (see below, pp. 397–432) is a commentary on this passage.

[289]. His wife was a daughter of John Putnam, brother of Nathaniel and uncle of Deacon Edward and of the Thomas whose wife and daughter were of the “afflicted.” As to the Bishops see (besides Upham) *Essex Institute Collections*, XLII. 146 ff.

[290]. At pp. 247–248, above.

[291]. *I. e.*, it needs no oracle to explain the matter; see p. 248, note 1.

[292]. Philip English was the foremost ship-owner of Salem, a man of large wealth and exceptional prominence. He had come in early life from the island of Jersey and at Salem had married, in 1675, the daughter and heiress of the merchant William Hollingworth. His wife, now thirty-nine, a lady of education and refinement, was arrested on April 22 (see p. 347, above) and on April 30 a warrant was issued for himself, but he could not be found. Detected, however, in his Boston hiding-place, he was on May 31 committed, but was allowed to give bail, and with his wife was kept in loose custody at Boston. As to their escape thence, see above, pp. 178, 186, note 3 ; and for their story in general the articles by G. F. Chever in the *Essex Institute's Collections*, I., II., *Salem Witchcraft Records*, I. 189–193, the evidence of William Beale appended by Drake to his ed. of Mather and Calef (III. 177–185), the documents printed in the *Publications* of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, X. 17–20, a letter of Dr. Bentley in *Mass. Hist. Soc., Collections*, first ser., X. 64–66, and a passage from his diary quoted by R. D. Paine in *The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem* (New York, 1909), pp. 26–28.

[293]. See above, pp. 360, 364.

[294]. Margaret. See pp. 364–366.

[295]. A son of the venerable Governor Bradstreet and himself a man of station.

[296]. *I. e.*, New Hampshire.

[297]. On this Andover episode see also pp. 180–181, 241–244, above.

[298]. Its last session was on September 22, though the court was not definitely dropped till the end of October. See above, p. 200 and note 1.

[299]. The implication perhaps is that the governor exceeded his powers. That question has been much and hotly debated — most learnedly by Mr. A. C. Goodell in his *Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 1884), pp. 20 ff., and Dr. G. H. Moore in his *Final Notes on Witchcraft in Massachusetts* (New York, 1885), pp. 71–84.

[300]. This is an error. In England, too, witches were hanged — unless convicted of bewitching to death their husbands, when for husband–murder, “petty treason,” they were burned (see Coke, *Institutes*, pt. III., cap. 2, 6, 101, and the records of the courts). Sir Matthew Hale indeed makes witchcraft “at Common Law” still “punished with death, as Heresie, by Writ *De Hæretico Comburendo*” (*Pleas of the Crown*, p. 6). But this, of course, was after trial by an ecclesiastical court; and since the Reformation ecclesiastical courts had not had cognizance of such cases.

[301]. This, the most striking feature of the Salem trials, is perhaps partially explained by the closing suggestion of Cotton Mather's advice to the judges (*Mather Papers*, p. 396): “What if some of the lesser Criminalls be onely scourged with lesser punishments, and also put upon some solemn, open, Publike and Explicitt renunciation of the Divil?... Or what if the death of some of the offenders were either diverted or inflicted, according to the successe of such their renunciation?” If it was unique that those who confessed escaped death, it was nothing unique that they should be reckoned “lesser Criminalls.”

[302]. The Rev. Thomas Barnard, associate minister at Andover. Dane, his senior, seems to have been averse to the proceedings.

[303]. This is doubtless what Brattle calls (p. 189, above) “a petition lately offered to the chief Judge.” The examination and confession of Mary Osgood may be found in Hutchinson's *Massachusetts*, II. ch. I. (or in Poole's reprint, *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXIV. 398). She, the two Tylers, and Abigail Barker were tried and acquitted in January at the first session of the new Superior Court (see in vol. X. of the *Publications* of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts the brief but valuable paper of John Noble, pp. 12–26).

[304]The best commentary on these words is a remarkable paper which more than a century ago came into the hands of the Massachusetts Historical Society and was published in its *Collections* (second series, 111. 221–225). As Dr. Belknap, who prepared it for publication, labelled it “Remainder of the account of the Salem Witchcraft” and seems to have meant it to be printed with Brattle's letter (see pp. 169–190, above), it is not improbable that,

with that document, it had come from the family of Brattle and that it was originally his. In that case it is by no means impossible that in his hands Calef may have seen it and that from him he may have received the recantation printed just above. The added paper runs:

“*Salem*, Oct. 19, '92. The Rev. Mr. 1. Mather went to Salem [to visit] the confessours (so called): He conferred with several of them, and they spake as follows:” [Then are narrated the explanations given by eleven of the women, the most suggestive being this:] “Goodwife Tyler did say, that when she was first apprehended, she had no fears upon her, and did think that nothing could have made her confesse against herself; but since, she had found to her great grief, that she had wronged the truth, and falsely accused herself: she said, that when she was brought to Salem, her brother Bridges rode with her, and that all along the way from Andover to Salem, her brother kept telling her that she must needs be a witch, since she afflicted accused her, and at her touch were raised out of their fits, and urging her to confess herself a witch; she as constantly told him, that she was no witch, that she knew nothing of witchcraft, and begged of him not to urge her to confesse; however when she came to Salem, she was carried to a room, where her brother on one side and Mr. John Emerson on the other side did tell her that she was certainly a witch, and that she saw the devill before her eyes at that time (and accordingly the said Emerson would attempt with his hand to beat him away from her eyes) and they so urged her to confesse, that she wished herself in any dungeon, rather than be so treated: Mr. Emerson told her once and again, Well! I see you will not confesse! Well! I will now leave you, and then you are undone, body and soul forever: Her brother urged her to confesse, and told her that in so doing she could not lye; to which she answered, Good brother, do not say so, for I shall lye if I confesse, and then who shall answer unto God for my lye? He still asserted it, and said that God would not suffer so many good men to be in such an error about it, and that she would be hang'd, if she did not confesse, and continued so long and so violently to urge and presse her to confesse, that she thought verily her life would have gone from her, and became so terrified in her mind, that she own'd at length almost any thing that they propounded to her; but she had wronged her conscience in so doing, she was guilty of a great sin in belying of herself, and desired to mourn for it as long as she lived: This she said and a great deal more of the like nature, and all of it with such affection, sorrow, relenting, grief, and mourning as that it exceeds any pen to describe and expresse the same.”

The “Mr. John Emerson” of this episode was that clerical schoolmaster whom we have already met in New Hampshire (see p. 37, note 3), but who was now, a teacher at Charlestown. (Sibley, *Harvard Graduates*, II. 471–474.) If so personal an activity of President Mather surprise, let it be remembered how widely the persecution was now striking. His parishioner Lady Phips was among the accused, and the Quaker John Whiting has a yet more startling suggestion: commenting in 1702 on the account just printed in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, he mentions the “two Hundred more accused, some of which of great Estates in Boston,” and in the margin adds, “Query, Was not the Governour's Wife, and C. M.'s Mother, some of them?” (*Truth and Innocency Defended*, p. 140.)

Yet not all dared to retract. “More than one or two of those now in Prison,” writes Increase Mather (*Cases of Conscience*, Postscript), “have freely and credibly acknowledged their Communion and Familiarity with the Spirits of Darkness; and have also declared unto me the Time and Occasion, with the particular Circumstances of their Hellish Obligations and Abominations.”

[305] For Cotton Mather's *Wonders*, with its *imprimatur* by Phips and its preface by Stoughton, see above, pp. 205 ff.

[306] Increase Mather: the printer seems unable to distinguish Calef's I from his J.

[307]. The book, with all its credulity, is in the main a vigorous and learned argument against improper methods for detecting witches, and chiefly against reliance on the testimony of the bewitched. Commended by the ministers, fourteen of whom sign the preface “to the Christian reader,” it may have done something to allay the panic. But, though it is dated by the author “October 3,” the title–page date of 1693 suggests that, like his son's *Wonders* (see p. 207, note 1), it was long in the press or withheld from the public.

[308]. As the pages of Mather's *Wonders* containing these trials are reprinted in full above (pp. 215–244), it is needless here to repeat them. They occupy pp. 113–139 of Calef's book. Then comes what here follows.

[309]. See p. 216.

[310]. See p. 229.

[311]. See p. 237.

[312]. See p. 244.

[313]. The author had himself said, "I report matters not as an Advocate, but as an Historian."

[314]. Phips, Stoughton, and the latter's fellow-judges.

[315]. As to the insertion in Mather's account of evidence not given at the trial, and as to his errors of statement, see the careful analysis of Upham in his "Salem Witchcraft and Cotton Mather," pp. 46–48 (*Historical Magazine*, n. s., VI. 175–177).

[316]. To those who know the wretched chap-books which have had to serve as records of the English witch-trials — and these alone Calef was likely to know — this will not seem high praise. The modern student can, however, compare for himself Mather's accounts with the court records — and, where mere transcription is concerned, will find them faithful.

[317]. See pp. 225–227. Shattuck, testifying in 1692, placed in 1680 his child's bewitchment, but "about 17 or 18 years after" the exposure of the witch.

[318]. See pp. 239–240.

[319]. The offense charged, in the indictments printed by Calef, was that the accused "wickedly and feloniously hath used certain detestable arts, called witchcrafts and sorceries, by which said wicked arts" the said bewitched "was and is tortured, afflicted, pined, consumed, wasted and tormented against the peace of our sovereign lord and lady, the King and Queen, and against the form of the statute in that case made and provided." This was the usual form; but four of the indictments extant (against Rebecca Eames, Samuel Wardwell, Rebecca Jacobs, *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 24, 143, 147–148, and William Barker's, preserved by Chandler, *American Criminal Trials*, I. 429) charge instead that the accused "wickedly and feloniously a covenant with the Evil Spirit the Devil did make," and in two of these "the statute of King James the First" is expressly named as contravened. That statute, indeed, punished alike with death those who should "consult, covenant with, entertain,

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

employ, feed, or reward any evil or wicked spirit,” and the laws of Massachusetts made it death “if any man or woman be a witch (that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit)” — without a mention of harm to man or beast as element of the crime. That the indictments specify such harm was perhaps only because the public attorney — Thomas Newton (succeeded on July 26 by Anthony Checkley) — was fresh from English practice; but, as Calef implies, the proof should meet the indictment. Newton (1660–1721) had come to Boston in 1688. Mr. Goodell, who studied the originals, says the quoted indictments mentioning the English statute “appear to have been drawn in blank by him, and afterwards filled in by Checkley” (*Further Notes*, p. 37). As to Newton see the study of Moore (*Final Notes*, pp. 94–103). Edward Randolph says of him (V. 143) that he was “a person well known in the practice in the Courts in England and New England,” while Checkley he calls “a man ignorant in the Laws of England.” In 1691 Newton had been attorney general at New York.

[320]. The laws of the colony had never ceased to be operative; and the first act passed (June 15, 1692) by the General Court under the new charter was for the continuance of these laws, “being not repugnant to the laws of England nor inconsistent with the present constitution,” in full force till November 10. On October 29 the Court passed a general “act for the punishing of capital offenders,” in which the old Massachusetts law as to witchcraft — “If any man or woman be a witch, that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death” — retains its old place and wording. And on December 14, “for more particular direction in the execution of the law against witchcraft,” the same General Court enacted the long English statute of 1604 (1 James I., cap. 12) — omitting only the penalty of loss of “the privilege and benefit of clergy and sanctuary” and the clauses saving dower and inheritance to widow and heir of the convicted and providing that peers shall be tried by peers, substituting as the place of pillorying “some shire town” for “some market town upon the market day or at such time as any fair shall be kept there,” and adding to the penalty (for the lighter degrees of sorcery) of imprisonment, pillory, and public confession of the offence, the clause: “which said offense shall be written in capital letters, and placed upon the breast of said offender.” The commission creating the Court of Oyer and Terminer (May 27, 1692) antedated, however, all these laws, and instructed that body “to enquire of, hear and determine for this time, according to the law and custom of England and of this their Majesties' province, all and all manner of crimes.” (For a learned study of witchcraft laws in England and New England see Moore's *Notes on Witchcraft*, pp. 3–11.)

[321]. Winthrop.

[322]. “We do not know” — *i. e.*, no basis for prosecution.

[323]. “A true bill.”

[324]. Elizabeth Johnson and Mary Post. Elizabeth Johnson (as to whom see also p. 420) was reprieved, and after six months' imprisonment was freed. Her grandfather, the Rev. Francis Dane, said of her “she is but simplish at the best.” Mary Post and Sarah Wardwell likewise escaped death.

[325]. And so the public attorney told the governor (see p. 201).

[326]. See pp. 366–367.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[327]. *I. e.*, as of less than no worth.

[328]. By Governor Phips (see p. 201).

[329]. Stoughton.

[330]. On Sarah Daston's case see documents printed in the *Publications* (X. 12–16) of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts and the brief account of her trial by an eye-witness in the letter prefixed to the London edition of Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience*.

[331]. As to Mary Watkins see an article in the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register* (XLIV. 168 ff.). She lived at Milton, was white, and on August 11 was still in prison, but was asking the jail-keeper to provide a master to carry her “out of this country into Virginia.”

[332]. *I. e.*, on payment of fees. See pp. 343, 366.

[333]. He means, of course, Mercy Short (see above, pp. 255 ff.) and Margaret Rule (see pp. 308–323). From this sentence it seems clear that this account of the Salem episode was written before the earlier pages of his book, which begins with the narrative of Margaret Rule and takes its title from it.

[334]. Phips left for England November 17, 1694. (Sewall's *Diary*, I. 393.)

[335]. See above, p. 21.

[336]. Wallingford.

[337]. Of Winifred Benham, mother and daughter, Mr. Taylor (*The Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut*, p. 155) learns only — from “Records Court of Assistants (1: 74, 77)” — that they were in August, 1697, tried and acquitted at Hartford, and in October indicted on new complaints, the jury returning “Ignoramus.” They were doubtless the widow and daughter of that “Joseph Benham of New Haven,” who in 1656/7 was married at Boston to Winifred King (*N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XI. 203) and later became one of the first settlers of Wallingford. (See also Davis, *History of Wallingford and Meriden*, p. 412, cited by Levermore, in the *New Englander*, XLIV. 815.)

[338]. For the interesting story of this proclamation see the *Diary* (I. 439–441) of Judge Sewall, who drafted its final form, and that of Cotton Mather (I. 211), who drew a rejected one. The draft itself, with a careful study of these proceedings, see in Moore's *Notes on Witchcraft* (pp. 14–19).

[339]. The punctuation of the copy in the Massachusetts archives, as printed in a note to Sewall's *Diary* (I.

440), joins “more ways than one” to “unsettling of us.”

[340]. *I. e.*, therefor.

[341]. Samuel Sewall. The exact wording of his paper he gives in his *Diary* (I. 445):

“Copy of the Bill I put up on the Fast day; giving it to Mr. Willard as he pass'd by, and standing up at the reading of it, and bowing when finished; in the Afternoon.

“Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the Guilt contracted upon the opening of the late Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order for this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and shame of it, Asking pardon of men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that sin and all other his sins, personal and Relative: And according to his infinite Benignity, and Sovereignty, Not Visit the sin of him, or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land: But that He would powerfully defend him against all Temptations to Sin, for the future; and vouchsafe him the efficacious, saving Conduct of his Word and Spirit.”

[342]. This ends the book, as first written; but the author adds a “Postscript,” called out by the publication, in 1697, of Cotton Mather's life of Sir William Phips, who had died in London early in 1695. Not the achievements of Sir William, thinks Calef, but Increase Mather's negotiation in England and his procuring of the new charter, “are the things principally driven at in the book,” and “another principal thing is to set forth the supposed witchcrafts in New-England, and how well Mr. Mather the Younger therein acquitted himself.” Wherefore, after freeing his mind as to the matter of the charter, he takes up Mather's allegations as to the Salem episode, and, pointing out that, “tho this Book pretends to raise a Statue in Honour of Sir William, yet it appears it was the least part of the design of the Author to Honour him, but rather to Honour himself, and the Ministers,” since by so printing the advice of the ministers (see above, p. 356) “as to give a full Account of the cautions given him, but designedly hiding from the Reader the Incouragements and Exhortations to proceed,” it really throws the blame upon Phips, he devotes the remaining pages, here reprinted, to Cotton Mather's real views and their influence. The *Life of Phips*, now a rare book, is reprinted in Mather's *Magnalia*.

[343]. In a part of his book not here reprinted (pp. 85 ff.) Calef speaks more fully of this paper, lent him early in 1695, but on condition of its return within a fortnight and uncopied. It was perhaps the MS. described by Poole (*Memorial History*, II. 152, note) as now in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and called “Cotton Mather's belief and practice in those thorny difficulties which have distracted us in the day of temptation” — having “marginal reflections in another hand.” [Since the foregoing words were written, this conjecture has been proved true. See above, p. 306, note 1.]

[344]. Pagans.

[345]. A German abbot and scholar who in the early sixteenth century wrote most credulously about witches and angels.

[346]. *Objection*.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[347]. *Solution.*

[348]. *I. e.*, than.

[349]. Unpunished.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

**A MODEST INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT, BY JOHN
HALE, 1702**

INTRODUCTION

The Rev. John Hale (1636–1700), a native of the colony and a graduate of Harvard in its class of 1657, had since 1665 been pastor at Beverly, the parish lying north of Salem, from which it was severed by a narrow arm of the sea, and at the west adjoining yet more closely Salem Village, through which lay the land route connecting Beverly with Salem and with Boston. Many of those connected with the beginnings of the witch panic had, prior to the erection of the Village parish, been in attendance at the Beverly church. Some were still so; and the spreading suspicion soon invaded this parish itself. It was not strange, then, that from the first, as we have seen already, Hale's interest in the proceedings was close and attentive. ³⁵⁰ There can be no question that, as Calef says, “he had been very forward in these Prosecutions,” and, like his neighbor pastors Parris and Noyes, had held the most credulous views as to the worth of the testimony of the “afflicted.” How those views changed after the accusation of his loved and honored wife we have also seen; ³⁵¹ and of all this he himself tells us with a touching sincerity in the pages now to follow. His little book is no apology, but a manly attempt to make amends for what he now felt to be error by setting forth to others what he had learned. Judge Sewall, who likewise had repented of his error and likewise frankly owned it, records in his diary on November 19, 1697, when he was on a visit to Salem: “Mr. Hale and I lodg'd together: He discours'd me about writing a History of the Witchcraft; I fear lest he go into the other extream.”

The Rev. John Higginson (1616–1708), the aged senior pastor of Salem, who writes for Hale the introduction, is also no stranger to us; ³⁵² and we have seen what reason there is to think him hesitant all along as to the proceedings. Yet how far he had been from incredulity as to human dealings with the Devil appears not only from his own words here, but from the materials he furnished Increase Mather for his *Providences*. ³⁵³ Perhaps he, too, consulted Judge Sewall as to his part in the little book; for before the words just cited the latter writes: “Mr. Higginson comes as far as Brother's to see me; which I wonder'd at.”

Though completed early in 1698 — since Higginson had read it before signing his introduction on March 23 — the book, as may be seen from its imprint, was not published till 1702, after Hale's death. Perhaps that was its author's wish: so, Judge Sewall tells us, ³⁵⁴ Higginson withheld his treatise on periwigs. The *Modest Enquiry* is now one of the rarest books in the literature of witchcraft. Its single reimpression (Boston, 1771) is said to be yet rarer than the original. Happily, that part of the book which narrates the story of the Salem episode was taken up by Cotton Mather into his *Magnalia* (at the end of his Book VI.); and from that work, though it gives Hale due credit, it is often quoted as if Mather's own. ³⁵⁵

Notes

[350]. See above, pp. 158, 184, 342, 344, 350, 369.

More than once (as against Bridget Bishop and Dorcas Hoar) he himself became a witness as to the reputation or career of the accused. That already then there was thought of his writing upon the subject may perhaps be inferred from Cotton Mather's letter quoted on p. 206; and see also p. 214.

[351]. See p. 369, and note 1.

[352]. See above, pp. 245, 248, note 2.

[353]. *Mather Papers*, pp. 282–287.

[354]. *Diary*, I. 463–464.

[355]. As to Hale's career see a memoir in *Mass. Hist. Soc., Collections*, third series, VII. 255–269; also Sibley, *Harvard Graduates*, I. 509–520, and authorities there cited.

HALE'S A MODEST INQUIRY

A Modest Enquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft, and How Persons Guilty of that Crime may be Convicted: And the means used for their Discovery Discussed, both Negatively and Affirmatively, according to Scripture and Experience.

By John Hale, Pastor of the Church of Christ in Beverley, Anno Domini 1697.

When they say unto you, seek unto them that have Familiar Spirits and unto Wizzards, that peep, etc., To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah VIII. 19. 20. That which I see not teach thou me, Job 34. 32.

Boston in N. E. Printed by B. Green and J. Allen, for Benjamin Eliot under the Town House. 1702 ³⁵⁶

*Any general Custom against the Law of God is void. St. Germans, *Abridgment of Common Law*. Lib. 1. C. 6.*

*Omnium legum est inanis censura nisi Divinae legis imaginem gerat. ³⁵⁷ Finch, *Common Law*. Lib. 4. C. 3.*

*Where a Law is grounded upon a Presumption, if the Presumption fail the Law is not to be holden in Conscience. *Abridgment of C. Law*. Lib. 1. C. 19. ³⁵⁸*

Notes

[356]. Title–page of original.

[357]. “No law hath any validity unless it bear the image of divine law.”

[358]. Reverse of title–page.

An Epistle to the Reader.

It hath been said of Old, That Time is the Mother of Truth, and Truth is the Daughter of Time. It is the Prerogative of the God of Truth, to know all the truth in all things at once and together: It is also his Glory to conceal a matter, Prov. 25. 2, And to bring the truth to light in that manner and measure, and the times appointed, as it pleaseth him; it is our duty in all humility, and with fear and trembling, to search after truth, knowing that secret things belong to God, and only things revealed belong to us, and so far as they are revealed; for in many things it may be said, what God is doing we know not now; but we, or others that succeed us, shall know hereafter. Omitting other Examples, I shall Instance only in the matter of Witchcraft, which on the Humane side, is one of the most hidden Works of Darkness, managed by the Rulers of the darkness of this World, to the doing of great spoil amongst the Children of men: And on the Divine side, it is one of the most awful and tremendous Judgments of God which can be inflicted on the Societies of men, especially when the Lord shall please for his own Holy Ends to Enlarge Satans Commission in more than an ordinary way.

It is known to all men, that it pleased God some few years ago, to suffer Satan to raise much trouble amongst us in that respect, the beginning of which was very small, and looked on at first as an ordinary case which had fallen out before at several times in other places, and would be quickly over. Only one or two persons belonging to Salem Village about five miles from the Town being suspected were Examined, etc. But in the progress of the matter, a multitude of other persons both in this and other Neighbour Towns, were Accused, Examined, Imprisoned, and came to their Trials, at Salem, the County Town, where about Twenty of them Suffered as Witches; and many others in danger of the same Tragical End: and still the number of the Accused increased unto many Scores; amongst whom were many Persons of unquestionable Credit, never under any grounds of suspicion of that or any other Scandalous Evil. This brought a general Consternation upon all sorts of People, doubting what would be the issue of such a dreadful Judgment of God upon the Country; but the Lord was pleased suddenly to put a stop to those proceedings, that there was no further trouble, as hath been related by others. But it left in the minds of men a sad remembrance of that sorrowful time; and a Doubt whether some Innocent Persons might not Suffer, and some guilty Persons Escape. There is no doubt but the Judges and Juries proceeded in their Integrity, with a zeal of God against Sin, according to their best light, and according to Law and Evidence; but there is a Question yet unresolved, Whether some of the Laws, Customs and Principles used by the Judges and Juries in the Trials of Witches in England (which were followed as Patterns here) were not insufficient and unsafe.

As for my Self, being under the Infirmities of a decrepit Old Age, I stirred little abroad, and was much disenabled (both in body and mind) from Knowing and judging of Occurrents and Transactions of that time: But my Reverend Brother Mr. Hale, having for above Thirty Years been Pastor of the Church at Beverly (but Two Miles from Salem, where the Tryals were) was frequently present, and was a diligent Observer of all that passed, and being one of a Singular Prudence and Sagacity, in searching into the narrows of things: He hath (after much deliberation) in this Treatise, related the Substance of the Case as it was, and given Reasons from Scripture against some of the Principles and Practises then used in the Tryals of Witchcraft; and said something also in a Positive way, and shewing the right Application that is to be made of the whole, and all this in such a pious and modest Manner, as cannot be offensive to any, but may be generally acceptable to all the lovers of Truth and Peace.

I am the more willing to accompany him to the Press, because I am perswaded such a Treatise as this is needful and useful, upon divers accounts. As,

1. That the Works of God may be known; and that God may be more acknowledged and adored, in his Justice, and in his Mercy: in his Justice, by letting loose Evil Angels, to make so great a spoyl amongst us as they did, for the Punishment of a declining People: And in his Mercy, by Counter-manding of Satans Commission, and keeping of him in Chains of restraint, that he should proceed no further. Psal. 83, last.

2. That the Truth of things may be more fully known, so far as God shall please to reveal the same in the use of lawful means; for the Judgments of God are a great deep, and he is wont to make known truth by degrees; and

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Experience teacheth us, there is need of more to be said than hath been yet, for the clearing up of difficulties about the matter of Witchcraft. We ought to be fellow helpers to the truth. 3 Epistle of John, 8. v.

3. That whatever Errors or Mistakes we fell into, in the dark hour of Temptation that was upon us, may be (upon more light) so discovered, acknowledged and disowned by us, as that it may be a matter of Warning and Caution to those that come after us, that they may not fall into the like. 1 Cor. 10. 11. *Fælix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* ³⁵⁹

4. And that it may Occasion the most Learned and Pious men to make a further and fuller Enquiry into the matter of Witchcraft, especially into the positive part, How Witches may be so discovered, that innocent persons may be preserved, and none but the guilty may suffer. Prov. 17. 15.

Verily whosoever shall by the Grace of God be enabled to Contribute further light in this matter, will do good Service to God and Men in his Generation.

I would also propound and leave it as an Object of Consideration to our Honoured Magistrates and Reverend Ministers, Whether the æquity of that Law in Leviticus, Chap. 4, for a Sin offering for the Rulers and for the Congregation, in the case of Sins of Ignorance, when they come to be known, be not Obliging, and for direction to us in a Gospel way.

Now the Father of Lights and Mercies grant unto us, that Mercy and Truth may meet together, that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, that the Glory of God may dwell in our Land; and that it may be said of New England, The Lord Bless thee, O Habitation of Justice and Mountain of Holiness,

Finally, That the Blessing of Heaven may go along with this little Treatise to attain the good Ends thereof, is, and shall be the Prayer of him who is daily waiting for his Change, and looking for the Mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life.

John Higginson ,

March 23d, 1697, 8. *Pastor of the Church, of Salem. ætatis 82.*

360

Notes

[359]. “Happy the man whom the perils of others make cautious.”

[360]. “In the 82d year of his age.” As to the aged senior pastor of Salem see p. 398.

The Preface to the Christian Reader.

The Holy Scriptures inform us that the Doctrine of Godliness is a great Mystery, containing the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven: Mysteries which require great search for the finding out: And as the Lord hath his Mysteries to bring us to Eternal Glory; so Satan hath his Mysteries to bring us to Eternal Ruine: Mysteries not easily understood, whereby the depths of Satan are managed in hidden wayes. So the Whore of Babylon makes the Inhabitants of the Earth drunk with the Wine of her Fornication, by the Mystery of her abominations, Rev. 17. 2. And the man of Sin hath his Mystery of iniquity whereby he deceiveth men through the working of Satan in signes and lying wonders, 2 Thes. 2. 3, 7, 9.

And among Satans Mysteries of iniquity, this of Witchcraft is one of the most difficult to be searched out by the Sons of men; as appeareth by the great endeavours of Learned and Holy men to search it out, and the great differences that are found among them, in the rules laid down for the bringing to light these hidden works of darkness. So that it may seem presumption in me to undertake so difficult a Theam, and to lay down such rules as are different from the Sentiments of many Eminent writers, and from the Presidents and practices of able Lawyers; yea and from the Common Law it self.

But my Apology for this undertaking is;

1. That there hath been such a dark dispensation by the Lord, letting loose upon us the Devil, *Anno*. 1691 and 1692, ³⁶¹ as we never experienced before: And thereupon apprehending and condemning persons for Witchcraft; and nextly acquitting others no less liable to such a charge; which evidently shew we were in the dark, and knew not what to do; but have gone too far on the one or other side, if not on both. Hereupon I esteemed it necessary for some person to Collect a Summary of that affair, with some animadversions upon it, which might at least give some light to them which come after, to shun those Rocks by which we were bruised, and narrowly escaped Shipwrack upon. And I have waited five years for some other person to undertake it, who might doe it better than I can, but find none; and judge it better to do what I can, than that such a work should be left undone. Better sincerely though weakly done, then not at all, or with such a byas of prejudice as will put false glosses upon that which was managed with uprightness of heart, though there was not so great a spirit of discerning, as were to be wished in so weighty a Concernment.

2. I have been present at several Examinations and Tryals, and knew sundry of those that Suffered upon that account in former years, and in this last affair, and so have more advantages than a stranger, to give account of these Proceedings.

3. I have been from my Youth trained up in the knowledge and belief of most of those principles I here question as unsafe to be used. The first person that suffered on this account in New-England, about Fifty years since, was my Neighbour, and I heard much of what was charged upon her, and others in those times; and the reverence I bore to aged, learned and judicious persons, caused me to drink in their principles in these things, with a kind of Implicit Faith. *Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem, Testa diu.* ³⁶² A Child will not easily forsake the principles he hath been trained up in from his Cradle.

But observing the Events of that sad Catastrophe, *Anno* 1692, I was brought to a more strict scanning of the principles I had imbibed, and by scanning, to question, and by questioning at length to reject many of them, upon the reasons shewed in the ensuing Discourse. It is an approved saying *Nihil certius, quam quod ex dubio fit certum;* ³⁶³ No truth more certain to a man, than that which he hath formerly doubted or denied, and is recovered from his error, by the convincing evidence of Scripture and reason. Yet I know and am sensible, that while we know but in part, man is apt in flying from a discovered error, to run into the contrary extrem.

Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim. ³⁶⁴

The middle way is commonly the way of truth. And if any can shew me a better middle way than I have here

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

laid down, I shall be ready to embrace it: But the conviction must not be by vinegar or drollery, but by strength of argument.

4. I have had a deep sence of the sad consequence of mis takes in matters Capital; and their impossibility of recovering when compleated. And what grief of heart it brings to a tender conscience, to have been unwittingly encouraging of the Sufferings of the innocent. And I hope a zeal to prevent for the future such sufferings is pardonable, although there should be much weakness, and some errors in the pursuit thereof.

5. I observe the failings that have been on the one hand, have driven some into that which is indeed an extream on the other hand, and of dangerous consequences, viz. To deny any such persons to be under the New Testament, who by the Devils aid discover Secrets, or do work wonders. Therefore in the latter part of this discourse, I have taken pains to prove the Affirmative, yet with brevity, because it hath been done already by Perkins of *Witchcraft*.³⁶⁵ Glanvil his *Saducismus Triumphatus*,³⁶⁶ Pt. 1. p. 1 to 90 and Pt. 2. p. 1 to 80. Yet I would not be understood to justify all his notions in those discourses, but acknowledge he hath strongly proved the being of Witches.

6. I have special reasons moving me to bear my testimony about these matters, before I go hence and be no more; the which I have here done, and I hope with some assistance of his Spirit, to whom I commit my self and this my labour, even that God whose I am and whom I serve: Desiring his Mercy in Jesus Christ to Pardon all the Errors of his People in the day of darkness; and to enable us to fight with Satan by Spiritual Weapons, putting on the whole Armour of God.

And tho' Satan by his Messengers may buffet Gods Children, yet there's a promise upon right *Resisting, he shall flee from them*, Jam. 4. 7. *And that all things shall work together for the good of those that Love the Lord*, Rom. 8. 28. So that I believe Gods Children shall be gainers by the assaults of Satan, which occasion'd this Discourse; which that they may, is the Prayer of, Thine in the Service of the Gospel.

John Hale .

Beverly, Decemb. 15th, 1697.

Notes

[361]. “1691” because the troubles began before March 25.

[362]. Literally, “the fresh-made pot will long retain the odor in which once 'tis steeped.” The line is from Horace.

[363]. Literally, “nothing is surer than what out of doubt is made sure.”

[364]. “Into Scylla falls he who tries to keep clear of Charybdis.”

[365]. See above, p. 304, note 3.

[366]. *Saducismus Triumphatus* was the name given Glanvill's book in the enlarged edition (1681) brought out after the author's death by Henry More. In later impressions the word becomes *Sadducismus*. As to Glanvill, see above, p. 5.

A MODEST ENQUIRY, INTO THE NATURE OF WITCHCRAFT Chapter I.

Sect. 1. The Angels who kept not their First Estate, by Sin against God, lost their primitive purity, and glorious Excellency, as to their moral qualifications, and became unclean, wicked, envious, lyars, and full of all wickedness, which as Spirits they are capable of. Yet I do not find in Scripture that they lost their natural abilities of understanding or power of Operation.

1. As for their Understanding, they are called *Daimon* (which we Translate Devil) because they are full of wisdom, cunning, skill, subtilty and knowledge. He hath also the name of Serpent from his subtilty, 2 Cor. 11. 3. And his knowledge in the Scriptures, and wittiness to pervert them, appears by his quoting Scripture to our Saviour when he tempted him. Mat. 4.

And as there be many Devils, and these active, quick, swift and piercing Spirits, so they going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it, have advantages to know all the actions of the Children of men, both open and secret, their discourses, consultations, and much of the inward affections of men thereby; though still its Gods prerogative immediately to know the heart. Jer. 17. 10.

2. As to their natural power as Spirits, its very great, if not equal to that of the Holy Angels: For,

1. They are called *Principalities and Powers*. Rom. 8. 38. Eph. 6. 12. Col. 2. 14, 15, compared with Heb. 2. 14, 15. Now these are names given to the Holy Angels. Eph. 1. 21, and 3. 10.

2. They are called, *Rulers of the darkness of this world, the Prince of the power of the Air*. Eph. 6. 12 and 2. 2.

3. Such was their power that they contended with Michael and the Angels about the Body of Moses. 2 Pet. 2. 11. Jude 9. That is, as I conceive, about preventing the Burial of the Body of Moses: For it's said, Deut. 34. 6, The Lord buried him, and no man knoweth of his Sepulcher to this day. That is, he did it by the Ministry of Angels (for the Lord gave the Law, Exod. 20. 1, and that it was by the Ministry of Angels, see Gal. 3. 19. so probably was the burial of Moses's Body) and the Devils endeavour if possible, to discover Moses's Body, or place of its burial, that they might draw Israel to commit Idolatry in worshipping at his Tomb (as our Popish Fore-fathers did at Thomas Becket's in Kent) from the Veneration they had to him as their Law giver.

4. The Devils actings against Job, Chap. 1 and 2, and what he did to the Gadarene Swine, etc., Shew his great power. So that we may conclude, had the Devils liberty to reveal all that they know of the affairs of mankind, or to do all that is in their power to perform, they would bring dreadful confusions and desolations upon the World.

Sect. 2. The way God governs Devils is by Chains. 2 Pet. 2. 4. Jude 6 ver. Rev. 20. 1, 2, 7, 8, whereby they are kept Prisoners. Men are governed by Laws, by convictions of Conscience. Rom. 2. 12, 13, 14, 15. By Scripture Rules, Humane Laws, and also by Gods Spirit. 1 John 2. 20. But Devils have no such Laws, or tenderness of Conscience to bridle or restrain them. But the Lord hath his Chains, which are called Everlasting, and are always lasting; so that they are never wholly without a Chain. This Chain is sometimes greater and shorter, other times lesser and longer, as the Lord pleaseth, for his own Glory, Rev. 20. 1, 2, 7, 8. For as the *wrath of man praiseth the Lord, and the remainder of wrath he doth restrain*, Psal. 76. 10, So may we say of the Devils wrath.

Sect. 3. The Devil is full of malice against man, and frames his designs against him, chiefly to destroy his Soul, as, 1 Pet. 5. 8, 2 Cor. 11. 3, and other Scriptures abundantly testify. Hence probably at sometimes he doth not all the hurt to mans Body that he could, lest thereby he should awaken man to repentance and prayer; he seeks to keep men in a false peace. Luk. 11. 21. Yet at other times he disturbs and afflicts men in Body and Estate; as Scripture and experience shew. Among the Devices Satan useth to ruine man, one is to allure him into such a familiarity with him, that by Sorceries, Inchantments, Divinations, and such like, he may lead them Captive at his pleasure. This snare of his we are warned against, Deut. 18. 10, 11, and in other Scriptures. This Sin of men hearkening after Satan in these ways, is called Witchcraft; of which it is my purpose to treat: But first I shall speak something Historically what hath been done in New England, in prosecution of persons suspected of this Crime.

Sect. 4. Several persons have been Charged with and suffered for the Crime of Witchcraft in the Governments of the Massachusetts, New Haven, or Stratford ³⁶⁷ and Connecticut, from the year 1646 to the year 1692.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

Sect. 5. The first was a Woman of Charlestown, *Anno* 1647 or 48. ³⁶⁸ She was suspected partly because that after some angry words passing between her and her Neighbours, some mischief befel such Neighbours in their Creatures, or the like: partly because some things supposed to be bewitched, or have a Charm upon them, being burned, she came to the fire and seemed concerned.

The day of her Execution, I went in company of some Neighbours, ³⁶⁹ who took great pains to bring her to confession and repentance. But she constantly professed her self innocent of that crime: Then one prayed her to consider if God did not bring this punishment upon her for some other crime, and asked, if she had not been guilty of Stealing many years ago; she answered, she had stolen something, but it was long since, and she had repented of it, and there was Grace enough in Christ to pardon that long agoe; but as for Witchcraft she was wholly free from it, and so she said unto her Death.

Sect. 6. Another that suffered on that account some time after, was a Dorchester Woman. ³⁷⁰ And upon the day of her Execution Mr. Thompson Minister at Brantry, ³⁷¹ and J. P. ³⁷² her former Master took pains with her to bring her to repentance, And she utterly denyed her guilt of Witchcraft: yet justified God for bringing her to that punishment: for she had when a single woman played the harlot, and being with Child used means to destroy the fruit of her body to conceal her sin and shame, and although she did not effect it, yet she was a Murderer in the sight of God for her endeavours, and shewed great penitency for that sin; but owned nothing of the crime laid to her charge.

Sect. 7. Another suffering in this kind was a Woman of Cambridge, against whom a principal evidence was a Water-town Nurse, who testified, that the said Kendal (so was the accused called) did bewitch to Death a Child of Goodman Genings of Watertown; for the said Kendal did make much of the Child, and then the Child was well, but quickly changed its colour and dyed in a few hours after. The Court took this evidence among others, the said Genings not knowing of it. But after Kendal was Executed (who also denyed her guilt to the Death,) Mr. Rich. Brown knowing and hoping better things of Kendal, asked said Genings if they suspected her to bewitch their Child, they answered No. But they judged the true cause of the Childs Death to be thus, *viz.* The Nurse had the night before carryed out the Child and kept it abroad in the Cold a long time, when the red gum was come out upon it, and the Cold had struck in the red gum, and this they judged the cause of the Childs death. And that said Kendal did come in that day and make much of the Child, but they apprehended no wrong to come to the Child by her. After this the said Nurse was put into Prison for Adultery, and there delivered of her base Child, and Mr. Brown went to her and told her, It was just with God to leave her to this wickedness as a Punishment for her Murdering goody Kendal by her false witness bearing. But the Nurse dyed in Prison, and so the matter was not farther inquired into.

There was another Executed, of Boston *Anno* 1656. for that crime. ³⁷³ And two or three of Springfield, one of which confessed; and said the occasion of her familiarity with Satan was this: She had lost a Child and was exceedingly discontented at it and longed; Oh that she might see her Child again! And at last the Devil in likeness of her Child came to her bed side and talked with her, and asked to come into the bed to her, and she received it into the bed to her that night and several nights after, and so entred into covenant with Satan and became a Witch. ³⁷⁴ This was the only confessor in these times in that Government.

Sect. 8. Another at Hartford, *viz.* Mary Johnson, men-*tioned* in *Remarkable Providences*, p. 62, 63, ³⁷⁵ Confessed her self a Witch. Who upon discontent and slouthfulness agreed with the Devil to do her work for her, and fetch up the Swine. And upon her immoderate laughter at the running of the Swine, as the Devil drove them, as she her self said, was suspected and upon examination confessed. I have also heard of a Girl at New Haven or Stratford, that confessed her guilt. ³⁷⁶ But all others denyed it unto the death unless one Greensmith, at Hartford. ³⁷⁷

Sect. 9. But it is not my purpose to give a full relation of all that have suffered for that Sin, or of all the particulars charged upon them, which probably is now impossible, many witnessing *Viva voce*, those particulars which were not fully recorded. But that I chiefly intend is to shew the principles formerly acted upon in Convicting of that Crime; which were such as these.

1. The first great principle laid down by a person Eminent for Wisdom, Piety and Learning ³⁷⁸ was; That the Devil could not assume the shape of an innocent person in doing mischief unto mankind: for if the Lord should suffer him in this he would subvert the course of humane Justice, by bringing men to suffer for what he did in their Shapes.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

2. Witchcraft being an habitual Crime, one single witness to one Act of Witchcraft, and another single witness to another such fact, made two witnesses against the Crime and the party suspected.

3. There was searching of the bodies of the suspected for such like teats, or spots (which writers speak of) called the Devils marks; and if found, these were accounted a presumption at least of guilt in those that had them.

4. I observed that people laid great weight upon this; when things supposed to be bewitched were burnt, and the suspected person came to the fire in the time of it.³⁷⁹ Although that Eminent person above said³⁸⁰ condemned this way of tryal, as going to the Devil to find the Devil.

5. If after anger between Neighbours mischief followed, this oft bred suspicion of Witchcraft in the matter. In fine, the presumptions and convictions used in former times were for substance the same which we may read of in Keeble of the Common Law,³⁸¹ and in Bernard,³⁸² and other Authors of that subject.

Sect. 10. About 16 or 17 years since was accused a Woman of Newbury,³⁸³ and upon her tryal the Jury brought her in Guilty. Yet the Governour Simon Bradstreet Esq. and some of the Magistrates reprevied her, being unsatisfyed in the Verdict upon these grounds.

1. They were not satisfyed that a Specter doing mischief in her likeness, should be imputed to her person, as a ground of guilt.

2. They did not esteem one single witness to one fact, and another single witness to another fact, for two witnesses, against the person in a matter Capital. She being reprevied, was carried to her own home, and her Husband (who was esteemed a Sincere and understanding Christian by those that knew him) desired some Neighbour Ministers, of whom I was one, to meet together and discourse his Wife; the which we did: and her discourse was very Christian among us, and still pleaded her innocence as to that which was laid to her charge. We did not esteem it prudence for us to pass any definitive Sentance upon one under her circumstances, yet we inclined to the more charitable side.

In her last Sickness she was in much darkness and trouble of Spirit, which occasioned a Judicious friend to examine her strictly, Whether she had been guilty of Witchcraft, but she said No: But the ground of her trouble was some impatient and passionate Speeches and Actions of hers while in Prison, upon the account of her suffering wrongfully; whereby she had provoked the Lord, by putting some contempt upon his word. And in fine, she sought her pardon and comfort from God in Christ, and dyed so far as I understood, praying to and resting upon God in Christ for Salvation.

Sect. 11. The next that Suffered was an Irish Woman of Boston,³⁸⁴ suspected to bewitch John Goodwins Children, who upon her Tryal did in Irish (as was testified by the Interpreters) confess her self guilty, and was condemned out of her own mouth; (as Christ saith, Luk. 19. 22. *Out of thine own mouth will I Judge thee.*) The History of which is published by Mr. Cotton Mather, (and attested by the other Ministers of Boston and Charlstown.) in his Book, Entituled, *Memorable Providences*, Printed Anno 1689.³⁸⁵ Thus far of the History of Witches before the year, 1692.

Notes

[367]. *I. e.*, “New Haven (or Stratford)”: Hale was not sure (see p. 410

) whether the case in mind was at New Haven or at Stratford. Stratford, though so near New Haven, was under the Connecticut government. Under that of New Haven there were, so far as is known, no witch–executions.

[368]. Margaret Jones, executed at Boston on June 15, 1648. See Winthrop, *Journal*, II. 344–345 (of the edition in this series, II. 397 of ed. of 1853), and Poole in *Memorial History of Boston*, II. 135–137; also, above, p. 363, note 2 — for it was doubtless to Margaret Jones that the resolution as to “watchinge” referred, and it suggests that her accusation too may have been the outcome of the witch–hunt which had just been raging in the Puritan counties of England. She was not, as thinks Hale, the first New England victim; in Connecticut Alse Young was hanged, May 26, 1647.

[369]. The writer was then a boy of twelve.

[370]. Doubtless that “H. Lake's wife, of Dorchester, whom,” as Nathaniel Mather in 1684 wrote to his brother Increase of having heard, “the devill drew in by appearing to her in the likenes, and acting the part of a child of hers then lately dead, on whom her heart was much set.” (See *Mather Papers*, p. 58, and Poole in *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXIV. 3, note.) Mather had lived in Dorchester prior to his migration to England, about 1650; but, as he had been in constant communication with friends in America, it is not at all sure that his knowledge of this case antedates his leaving. In Hale's account there seems some confusion with the case of Mary Parsons (p. 410).

[371]. Braintree.

[372]. Probably John Phillips of Dorchester — the conjecture is Farmer's.

[373]. Mrs. Ann Hibbins, widow of one of the foremost men in Boston and said to have been a sister of Governor Bellingham. (See *Records of Massachusetts*, IV., pt. 1, p. 269; Hutchinson, *Massachusetts*, second ed., I. 187–188; *Me–morial History of Boston*, II. 138–141.)

[374]. This was the case of Mary Parsons and her husband Hugh, whom she accused (1651). (See Drake, *Annals of Witchcraft*, pp. 64–72, and especially the appended papers of Hugh Parsons's case, pp. 219–258. The originals of these papers are now in the New York Public Library. Others, from the Suffolk court files, are printed in the *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, XXXV. 152–153.)

[375]. Not in the *Remarkable Providences* of Increase Mather, but in the *Memorable Providences* of Cotton Mather at the pages named (see above, pp. 135–136).

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[376]. Probably that “Goody Bassett” who was on trial at Stratford in 1651 (*Connecticut Records*, I. 220), and of whom we know from testimony given at New Haven in 1654 (*New Haven Records*, II. 83) that she was condemned and that she confessed.

[377]. See above, pp. 19–20.

[378]. When in 1669 the Connecticut court asked the ministers their opinion as to this point, they answered in almost these words (see Taylor, *The Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut*, p. 58). This opinion is said to be in the hand-writing of the Rev. Gershom Bulkeley, the author of *Will and Doom*. But it does not follow that he was its author, much less that he was the originator of this dictum. Whatever its source, it is to be suspected that it had originally nothing to do with “spectral evidence,” but was only a protest against such pleas as that of the bishop who, caught under the bed of a nun, maintained later that the cul-prit was only the Devil impersonating him. On Bulkeley and his rational attitude toward later charges of witchcraft, see his *Will and Doom* (Conn. Hist. Soc., *Collections*, III.), introduction and pp. 233–235.

[379]. See above, p. 239, note 1.

[380]. See above, in paragraph 1.

[381]. What is meant, as is clear from Hale's later quotations, is Keble's *Assistance to Justices*. See above, p. 163, note 2.

[382]. See above, p. 304, note 5.

[383]. Mrs. Morse. See above, pp. 23–31.

[384]. Goody Glover. See above, pp. 100 ff.

[385]. See above, pp. 91 ff.

Chapter II.

I. In the latter end of the year 1691, ³⁸⁶ Mr. Samuel Paris, Pastor of the Church in Salem–Village, had a Daughter of Nine, and a Neice of about Eleven years of Age, sadly Afflicted of they knew not what Distempers; and he made his application to Physitians, yet still they grew worse: And at length one Physitian gave his opinion, that they were under an Evil Hand. This the Neighbours quickly took up, and concluded they were bewitched. He had also an Indian Man servant, and his Wife who afterwards confessed, that without the knowledge of their Master or Mistress, they had taken some of the Afflicted persons Urine, and mixing it with meal had made a Cake, and baked it, to find out the Witch, as they said. After this, the Afflicted persons cryed out of the Indian Woman, named Tituba, that she did pinch, prick, and grievously torment them, and that they saw her here and there, where no body else could. Yea they could tell where she was, and what she did, when out of their humane sight. These Children were bitten and pinched by invisible agents; their arms, necks, and backs turned this way and that way, and returned back again, so as it was impossible for them to do of themselves, and beyond the power of any Epileptick Fits, or natural Disease to effect. Sometimes they were taken dumb, their mouths stopped, their throats choaked, their limbs wracked and tormented so as might move an heart of stone, to sympathize with them, with bowels of compassion for them. I will not enlarge in the description of their cruel Sufferings, because they were in all things afflicted as bad as John Good–wins Children at Boston, in the year 1689. So that he that will read Mr. Mathers Book of *Memorable Providences*, page 3, etc., may Read part of what these Children, and afterwards sundry grown persons suffered by the hand of Satan, at Salem Village, and parts adjacent, *Anno* 1691, 2. Yet there was more in these Sufferings, than in those at Boston, by pins in–visibly stuck into their flesh, pricking with Irons, (As in part published in a Book Printed 1693, viz. *The Wanders of the Invisible World*). ³⁸⁷ Mr. Paris seeing the distressed condition of his Family, desired the presence of some Worthy Gentle–men of Salem, and some Neighbour Ministers to consult to–gether at his House; who when they came, and had enquired diligently into the Sufferings of the Afflicted, concluded they were preternatural, and feared the hand of Satan was in them.

II. The advice given to Mr. Paris by them was, that he should sit still and wait upon the Providence of God to see what time might discover; and to be much in prayer for the discovery of what was yet secret. They also Examined Tituba, who confessed the making a Cake, as is above mentioned, and said her Mistress in her own Country was a Witch, and had taught her some means to be used for the discovery of a Witch and for the prevention of being bewitched, etc. But said that she her self was not a Witch.

III. Soon after this, there were two or three private Fasts at the Ministers House, one of which was kept by sundry Neighbour Ministers, and after this, another in Publick at the Village, and several days afterwards of publick Humiliation, during these molestations, not only there, but in other Con–gregations for them. And one General Fast by Order of the General Court, observed throughout the Colony to seek the Lord that he would rebuke Satan, and be a light unto his people in this day of darkness. ³⁸⁸

But I return to the History of these troubles. In a short time after other persons who were of age to be witnesses, were molested by Satan, and in their fits cryed out upon Tituba and Goody O. and S. G. ³⁸⁹ that they or Specters in their Shapes did grievously torment them; hereupon some of their Village Neighbours complained to the Magistrates at Salem, desiring they would come and examine the afflicted and accused to–gether; the which they did: the effect of which examination was, that Tituba confessed she was a Witch, and that she with the two others accused did torment and bewitch the com–plainers, and that these with two others whose names she knew not, had their Witch–meeting together; relating the times when and places where they met, with many other cir–cumstances to be seen at large. Upon this the said Tituba and O. and S. G. were committed to Prison upon suspicion of acting Witchcraft. After this the said Tituba was again ex–amined in Prison, and owned her first confession in all points, and then was her self afflicted and complained of her fellow Witches tormenting of her, for her confession, and accusing them, and being searched by a Woman, she was found to have upon her body the marks of the Devils wounding of her.

IV. Here were these things rendered her confession credible. (1.) That at this examination she answered every question just as she did at the first. And it was thought that if she had feigned her confession, she could not have remembered her answers so exactly. A liar we say, had need of a good memory, but truth being always consistent with it self is the same to day as it was yesterday. (2.) She seemed very penitent for her Sin in covenanting with the Devil. (3.) She became a sufferer her self and as she said for her confession. (4.) Her confession agreed exactly (which was afterwards verified in the other confessors) with the accusations of the afflicted. Soon after these afflicted persons complained of other persons afflicting of them in their fits, and the number of the afflicted and accused began to increase. And the success of Tituba's confession encouraged those in Authority to examine others that were suspected, and the event was, that more confessed themselves guilty of the Crimes they were suspected for. And thus was this matter driven on.

V. I observed in the prosecution of these affairs, that there was in the Justices, Judges and others concerned, a conscientious endeavour to do the thing that was right. And to that end they consulted the Presidents³⁹⁰ of former times and precepts laid down by Learned Writers about Witchcraft. As Keeble on the *Common Law*, Chapt. Conjurat[i]on, (an Author approved by the Twelve Judges of our Nation.)³⁹¹ Also Sir Mathew Hales *Tryal of Witches*, Printed Anno 1682.³⁹² Glanvils *Collection of sundry tryals in England and Ireland*, in the years 1658, 61, 63, 64, and 81.³⁹³ Bernards Guide to Jurymen, ³⁹⁴ Baxter and R. Burton, their Histories about Witches and their discoveries.³⁹⁵ Cotton Mather's *Memorable Providences relating to Witchcrafts*, Printed Anno 1689.

VI. But that which chiefly carried on this matter to such an height, was the increasing of confessors till they amounted to near about Fifty: and four or six of them upon their tryals owned their guilt of this crime, and were condemned for the same, but not Executed. And many of the confessors confirmed their confessions with very strong circumstances: As their exact agreement with the accusations of the afflicted; their punctual agreement with their fellow confessors; their relating the times when they covenanted with Satan, and the reasons that moved them thereunto; their Witch meetings, and that they had their mock Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper, in some of them; their signing the Devils book: and some shewed the Scars of the wounds which they said were made to fetch blood with, to sign the Devils book; and some said they had Imps to suck them, and shewed Sores raw where they said they were sucked by them.

VII. I shall give the Reader a tast of these things in a few Instances. The Afflicted complained that the Spectres which vexed them, urged them to set their Hands to a Book represented to them (as to them it seemed) with threatnings of great torments, if they signed not, and promises of ease if they obeyed.

Among these D. H.³⁹⁶ did as she said (which sundry others confessed afterwards) being overcome by the extremity of her pains, sign the Book presented, and had the promised ease; and immediately upon it a Spectre in her Shape afflicted another person, and said, I have signed the Book and have ease, now do you sign, and so shall you have ease. And one day this afflicted person pointed at a certain place in the room, and said, there is D. H., upon which a man with his Rapier struck at the place, though he saw no Shape; and the Afflicted called out, saying, you have wounded her side, and soon after the afflicted person pointed at another place, saying, there she is; whereupon a man struck at the place, and the afflicted said, you have given her a small prick about the eye. Soon after this, the said D. H. confessed her self to be made a Witch by signing the Devils Book as above said; and declared that she had afflicted the Maid that complained of her, and in doing of it had received two wounds by a Sword or Rapier, a small one about the eye, which she shewed to the Magistrates, and a bigger on the side of which she was searched by a discreet woman, who reported, that D. H. had on her side the sign of a wound newly healed.

This D. H. confessed that she was at a Witch Meeting at Salem Village, where were many persons that she named, some of whom were in Prison then or soon after upon suspicion of Witchcraft: And the said G. B.³⁹⁷ preached to them, and such a Woman was their Deacon, and there they had a Sacrament.

VIII. Several others after this confessed the same things with D. H. In particular Goody F.³⁹⁸ said (*Inter alia*³⁹⁹) that she with two others (one of whom acknowledged the same) Rode from Andover to the same Village Witch meeting upon a stick above ground, and that in the way the stick brake, and gave the said F. a fall: whereupon, said she, I got a fall and hurt of which I am still sore. I happened to be present in Prison when this F. owned again her former confession to the Magistrates. And then I moved she might be further questioned about some particulars: It was answered, the Magistrates had not time to stay longer; but I should have liberty to Examine her farther by my self; The which thing I did; and I asked her if she rode to the Meeting on a Stick; she

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

said, yea. I enquired what she did for Victuals; she answered that she carried Bread and Cheese in her pocket, and that she and the Andover Company came to the Village before the Meeting began, and sat down together under a tree and eat their food, and that she drank water out of a Brook to quench her thirst. And that the Meeting was upon a plain grassy place, by which was a Cart path, and sandy ground in the path, in which were the tracks of Horses feet. And she also told me how long they were going and returning. And some time after told me, she had some trouble upon her spirit, and when I enquired what? she said, she was in fear that G. B. and M. C. ⁴⁰⁰ would kill her; for they appeared unto her (in Spectre, for their persons were kept in other Rooms in the Prison) and brought a sharp pointed iron like a spindle, but four square, and threatned to stab her to death with it; because she had confessed her Witchcraft, and told of them, that they were with her, and that M. C. above named was the person that made her a Witch. About a month after the said F. took occasion to tell me the same Story of her fears that G. B. and E.C. ⁴⁰¹ would kill her, and that the thing was much upon her Spirits.

IX. It was not long before M. L. ⁴⁰² Daughter of said F. confessed that she rode with her Mother to the said Witch Meeting, and confirmed the substance of her Mothers Confes-sion. At another time, M. L. junior the Grand Daughter, aged about seventeen years, confesseth the substance of what her Grand mother and Mother had related, and declareth, that when they with E. C. ⁴⁰³ rode on a stick or pole in the Air, She the said Grand-Daughter with R. C. ⁴⁰⁴ Rode upon another; (and she said R. C. acknowledged the same) and that they sat their hands to the Devils Book. And (*inter alia*) said, “O Mother, why did you give me to the Devil?” twice or thrice over. The Mother said, she was sorry at the heart for it, it was through that wicked one. Her Daughter bid her repent and call upon God. And said, “Oh Mother, your wishes are now come to pass! for how often have you wished that the Devil would fetch me away alive?” And then said, “Oh! my heart will break within me”; Then she wept bitterly, crying out, “O Lord comfort me, and bring out all the Witches.” And she said to her Grandmother, “O Grandmother, why did you give me to the Devil? Why did you perswade me, O Grand-mother do not deny it.” Then the Grandmother gave account of several things about their confederates and acts of Witch-crafts too long to rehearse.

Notes

[386]. *I. e.*, in February and March of the year we call 1692. As to all this story see above the parallel narratives of Lawson (pp. 147 ff.) and Calef (pp. 341 ff.).

[387]. See above, pp. 205 ff.

[388]. This fast, enacted on May 6, was celebrated on May 26, 1692 (Massachusetts *Acts and Resolves*, VII. 459).

[389]. Sarah Osborn and Sarah Good.

[390]. Precedents.

[391]. See above, p. 163, note 2. “Conjuration” is the heading given by Keble to his section on witchcraft (pp. 217–220).

[392]. The account is not Sir Matthew's own, nor yet an official record, but one taken down “for his own satisfaction” “by a Person then Attending the Court,” and so did not till 1682 find its way into print. As we have seen (p. 215, note 1) it was embodied by Cotton Mather in his *Wonders*.

[393]. See above, pp. 5–6.

[394]. See above, p. 304, note 5.

[395]. Baxter's *Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (1691), really a collection of witch stories, has been earlier described (p. 98, note 2). The name of “R. Bur-ton,” or “R. B.,” the pseudonym under which the prolific London publisher Nathaniel Crouch concealed his identity, is attached to a multitude of chap-books; but that here in question was undoubtedly his *The Kingdom of Darkness* (London, 1688), a pictorial “history of dæmons, specters, witches, apparitions, possessions, disturbances, and other wonderful and supernatural delusions, mischievous feats, and malicious impostures of the Devil,” “together with a preface obviating the common objections and allegations of the Sadduces and Atheists of the age.” It is, in other words, a credulous hodge-podge of all the older witch and devil tales that could be packed into its duodecimo pages; tales made vivid by its startling frontispiece and the crude but awful woodcuts that adorn its text.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[396]. Deliverance Hobbs — called by error “Deborah” on p. 347. The court record of her examination may be found in *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 186–192.

[397]. George Burroughs.

[398]. Ann Foster. See above, pp. 244, 366. As her son later alleged, she “suffered imprisonment twenty–one weeks and upon her Tryall was condemned for supposed witchcraft... and died in prison.”

[399]. “Among other things.”

[400]. Martha Carrier. See above, pp. 241–244.

[401]. Doubtless a printer's error for M. C. (Martha Carrier).

[402]. Mary Lacy. See pp. 244, 366. Though condemned, she escaped death.

[403]. Again a misprint for M. C. (see Mary Lacy's testimony in *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, II. 140: “her mother Foster, Goody Carrier and herself rid upon a pole to Salem Village meeting”).

[404]. Richard Carrier, son of Martha.

Chapter III.

Nextly I will insert the Confession of a man about Forty years of Age, W. B., ⁴⁰⁵ which he wrote himself in Prison, and sent to the Magistrates, to confirm his former Confession to them, *viz.*

God having called me to Confess my sin and Apostasy in that fall in giving the Devil advantage over me appearing to me like a Black, in the evening to set my hand to his Book, as I have owned to my shame. He told me that I should not want so doing. At Salem Village, there being a little off the Meeting–House, about an hundred five Blades, ⁴⁰⁶ some with Rapiers by their side, which was called and might be more for ought I know by B and Bu. ⁴⁰⁷ and the Trumpet sounded, and Bread and Wine which they called the Sacrament, but I had none; being carried over all on a Stick, never being at any other Meeting. I being at Cart a Saturday last, all the day, of Hay and English Corn, the Devil brought my Shape to Salem, and did afflict M. S. [408] and R. F. ⁴⁰⁹ by clitching my Hand; and a Sabbath day my Shape afflicted A. M. ⁴¹⁰ and at night afflicted M. S. and A. M. E. I. ⁴¹¹ and A. F. ⁴¹² have been my Enticers to this great abomination, as one have owned and charged her to her Sister with the same. And the design was to Destroy Salem Village, and to begin at the Ministers House, and to destroy the Church of God, and to set up Satans Kingdom, and then all will be well. And now I hope God in some measure has made me something sensible of my sin and apostasy, begging pardon of God, and of the Honourable Magistrates and all Gods people, hoping and promising by the help of God, to set to my heart and hand to do what in me lyeth to destroy such wicked worship, humbly begging the prayers of all Gods People for me, I may walk humbly under this great affliction and that I may procure to my self, the sure mercies of David, and the blessing of Abraham.

Concerning this Confession. (1) Note it was his own free act in Prison. (2) He saith the Devil like a Black. This he had before explained to be like a Black man. (3) That on a certain day was heard in the Air the sound of a Trumpet at Salem Village nigh the Meeting–House, and upon all enquiry it could not be found that any mortal man did sound it. (4) The three persons he saith the Devil in his Shape afflicted, had been as to the times and manner afflicted as he confesseth. (5) That E. I. confessed as much as W. B. chargeth her with. (6) Many others confessed a Witch Meeting, or Witch meetings at the Village as well as he.

Note also that these Confessors did not only witness against themselves, but against one another; and against many if not all those that Suffered for that Crime. As for example, when G. B. ⁴¹³ was Tryed, seven or eight of these Confessors severally called, said, they knew the said B. and saw him at a Witch–Meeting at the Village, and heard him exhort the Company to pull down the Kingdom of God, and set up the Kingdom of the Devil. He denied all, yet said he justified the Judges and Jury in Condemning of him; because there were so many positive witnesses against him: But said he dyed by false Witnesses. I seriously spake to one that witnessed (of his Exhorting at the Witch Meeting at the Village) saying to her; You are one that bring this man to Death, if you have charged any thing upon him that is not true, recal it before it be too late, while he is alive. She answered me, she had nothing to charge her self with, upon that account.

M. C. ⁴¹⁴ had to witness against her, two or three of her own Children, and several of her Neighbours that said they were in confederacy with her in their Witchcraft.

A. F. ⁴¹⁵ Had three of her Children, and some of the Neighbours, her own Sister, and a Servant, who confessed themselves Witches, and said, she was in confederacy with them: But alas, I am weary with relating particulars; those that would see more of this kind, let them have recourse to the Records.

By these things you see how this matter was carried on, *viz.* chiefly by the complaints and accusations of the Afflicted, Bewitched ones, as it was supposed, and then by the Confessions of the Accused, condemning themselves, and others. Yet experience shewed that the more there were apprehended, the more were still Afflicted by Satan, and the number of Confessors increasing, did but increase the number of the Accused, and the Executing some, made way for the apprehending of others; for still the Afflicted complained of being tormented by new objects as the former were removed. So that those that were concerned, grew amazed at the numbers and quality of the persons accused and feared that Satan by his wiles had inwrapped innocent persons under the

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

imputation of that Crime. And at last it was evidently seen that there must be a stop put, or the Generation of the Children of God would fall under that condemnation.

Henceforth therefore the Juries generally acquitted such as were Tried, fearing they had gone too far before. And Sir William Phips, Governour, Reprieved all that were Condemned, even the Confessors, as well as others. And the Confessors generally fell off from their Confessions; some saying, they remembred nothing of what they said; others said they had belied themselves and others. Some brake Prison and ran away, and were not strictly searched after, some acquitted, some dismissed and one way or other all that had been accused were set or left at liberty.

And although had the times been calm, the condition of the Confessors might have called for a *melius inquirendum*,⁴¹⁶ yet considering the combustion⁴¹⁷ and confusion this matter had brought us unto; it was thought safer to under do than over do, especially in matters Capital, where what is once compleated cannot be retrieved: but what is left at one time, may be corrected at another, upon a review and clearer discovery of the state of the Case. Thus this matter issued somewhat abruptly.

Notes

[405]. William Barker, of Andover.

[406]. Bravoes.

[407]. Bishop and Burroughs?

[408]. Martha Sprague.

[409]. Rose Foster.

[410]. Abigail Martin.

[411]. Elizabeth Johnson. Her daughter, of the same name, was also accused and confessed (see p. 382, note 4, above).

[412]. Abigail Falkner. She and her sister Elizabeth Johnson were daughters of the Rev. Francis Dane (or Deane), senior pastor at Andover, who seems from the first to have stood against the panic and who was largely instrumental in ending it. All those here accused were Andover folk, neighbors of Barker. See as to them Mrs. Bailey's chapter on "Witchcraft at Andover" (in her *Historical Sketches of Andover*).

[413]. George Burroughs.

[414]. Martha Carrier.

[415]. Abigail Falkner (see pp. 366, 420). "She was urged," says the record, "to confes the truth for the credit of hir Town," but "she refused to do it, saying God would not require her to confess that that she was not guilty of" (*Records of [unclear:] Witchcraft* , II. 128–135, where may also be found the evidence against her). She was condemned, but not executed.

[416]. "Better investigation" — *i.e.*, a writ for a fresh inquiry.

[417]. Excitement.

Chapter IV.

Here was generally acknowledged to be an error (at least on the one hand) but the Querie is, Wherein?

[A.] 1. I have heard it said, That the Presidents ⁴¹⁸ in England were not so exactly followed, because in those there had been previous quarrels and threatnings of the Afflicted by those that were Condemned for Witchcraft; but here, say they, not so. To which I answer.

1. In many of these cases there had been antecedent personal quarrels, and so occasions of revenge; for some of those Condemned, had been suspected by their Neighbours several years, because after quarrelling with their Neighbours, evils had befallen those Neighbours. As may be seen in the Printed Tryals of S. M. and B. B. ⁴¹⁹ and others: See Wonders of the *Invisible World*, Page 105 to 137. ⁴²⁰ And there were other like Cases not Printed.

2. Several confessors acknowledged they engaged in the quarrels of other their confederates to afflict persons. As one Timothy Swan suffered great things by Witchcrafts, as he supposed and testified. And several of the confessors said they did so torment him for the sake of one of their partners who had some offence offer'd her by the said Swan. And others owned they did the like in the behalf of some of their confederates. ⁴²¹

3. There were others that confessed their fellowship in these works of darkness, was to destroy the Church of God (as is above in part rehearsed) which is a greater piece of revenge then ⁴²² to be avenged upon one particular person.

[A.] 2. It may be queried then, How doth it appear that there was a going too far in this affair.

1. By the numbers of the persons accused which at length increased to about an hundred and it cannot be imagined that in a place of so much knowledge, so many in so small a compass of Land should so abominably leap into the Devils lap at once.

2. The quality of several of the accused was such as did bespeak better things, and things that accompany salvation. Persons whose blameless and holy lives before did testify for them. Persons that had taken great pains to bring up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: Such as we had Charity for, as for our own Souls: and Charity is a Christian duty commended to us. 1 Cor. 13 Chapt., Col. 3. 14, and in many other Scriptures.

3. The number of the afflicted by Satan dayly increased, till about Fifty persons were thus vexed by the Devil. This gave just ground to suspect some mistake, which gave advantage to the accuser of the Brethren ⁴²³ to make a breach upon us.

4. It was considerable ⁴²⁴ that Nineteen were Executed, and all denied the Crime to the Death, and some of them were knowing persons, and had before this been accounted blameless livers. And it is not to be imagined, but that if all had been guilty, some would have had so much tenderness as to seek Mercy for their Souls in the way of Confession and sorrow for such a Sin. And as for the condemned confessors at the Bar (they being reprieved) we had no experience whether they would stand to their Self-condemning confessions, when they came to dye.

5. When this prosecution ceased, the Lord so chained up Satan, that the afflicted grew presently well. The accused are generally quiet, and for five years since, we have no such molestations by them.

6. It sways much with me that I have since heard and read of the like mistakes in other places. As in Suffolk in England about the year 1645 was such a prosecution, until they saw that unless they put a stop it would bring all into blood and confusion. ⁴²⁵ The like hathbeen in France, till 900 were put to Death, ⁴²⁶ And in some other places the like; So that N. England is not the only place circumvented by the wiles of the wicked and wisely Serpent in this kind.

Wierus *de Proestigiis Demonum*, p. 678, ⁴²⁷ Relates, That an Inquisitor in the Subalpine Valleys, enquired after Women Witches, and consumed above an hundred in the Flames, and daily made new offerings to Vulcan of those that needed Helebore more than Fire, ⁴²⁸ Until the Country peole rose and by force of Arms hindred him, and refer the matter to the Bishop. Their Husbands, men of good Faith, affirmed that in that very time they said of them, that they played and danced under a tree, they were in bed with them.

R. Burton of Witches, etc. p. 158, ⁴²⁹ Saith, That in Chelmsford in Essex, *Anno* 1645, were Thirty tryed at once before Judge Coniers, and Fourteen of them hanged, and an hundred more contained in several Prisons in Suffolk and Essex.

If there were an Error in the proceedings in other places, and in N. England, it must be in the principles proceeded upon in prosecuting the suspected, or in the misapplication of the principles made use of. Now as to the case at Salem, I conceive it proceeded from some mistaken principles made use of; for the evincing whereof, I shall instance some principles made use of here, and in other Countrys also, which I find defended by learned Authors writing upon that Subject. ⁴³⁰

Notes

[418]. Precedents.

[419]. Susannah Martin and Bridget Bishop.

[420]. At pp. 223–236, above.

[421]. Timothy Swan, aged thirty, died early in February, 1692/3 (*N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg.*, II. 380; Mrs. Bailey, *Historical Sketches of Andover*, p. 237).

[422]. Than.

[423]. *I. e.*, Satan (see Rev. xii. 10).

[424]. Deserving of consideration.

[425]. The famous witch–hunt in which Matthew Hopkins was the leading spirit (1645–1646).

[426]. What is in thought is doubtless the boast of Nicolas Remy (Remigius), on the title–page of his *Daemonolatreia* (1595), that his book rests on the trials of nine hundred, put to death for witchcraft within fifteen years; but this was in Lorraine, not yet a part of France, though in close relations with it.

[427]. Lib. VI., cap. 20, of this notable book by which the eminent Rhenish physician Wierus (Johann Weyer, 1515–1588) gave to the zeal of the witch–haters its first effective check. This passage, however, he borrows bodily from the *Parergon Juris* (VIII. 22) of an earlier opponent of witch persecution, the Italian jurist Andrea Alciati.

[428]. *I. e.*, those crazed more than criminal: hellebore was counted a cure for insanity.

[429]. See p. 416, note 5. “Burton” has merely inserted into his *Kingdom of Darkness* (pp. 148–159) the contents of the contemporary *True and Exact Relation* (1645) which narrates this Essex persecution.

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

[430]. The following chapters (V.–XVII.) are devoted to the nature of witchcraft and the proper means for its detection.

Chapter XVIII.

I shall conclude this Discourse with some Application of the whole.

1. We may hence see ground to fear, that there hath been a great deal of innocent blood shed in the Christian World, by proceeding upon unsafe principles, in condemning persons for Malefick Witchcraft. ⁴³¹

2. That there have been great sinful neglects in sparing others, who by their divinings about things future, or discovering things secret, as stollen Goods, etc., or by their informing of persons and things absent at a great distance, have implored the assistance of a familiar spirit, yet coloured over with specious pretences, and have drawn people to enquire of them: A sin frequently forbidden in Scripture, as Lev. 19. 31 and 20. 6, Isa. 8. 19, 20. and yet let alone, and in many parts of the World, have been countenanced in their diabolical skill and profession; because they serve the interest of those that have a vain curiosity, to pry into things God hath forbidden, and concealed from discovery by lawful means. And of others that by their enchantments, have raised mists, strange sights, and the like, to beget admiration, and please Spectators, etc., When as ⁴³² these divinations and operations are the Witchcraft more condemned in Scripture than the other.

3. But to come nigher home, we have cause to be humbled for the mistakes and errors which have been in these Colonies, in their Proceedings against persons for this crime, above fourty years ago and downwards, upon insufficient presumptions and presidents ⁴³³ of our Nation, whence they came. I do not say, that all those were innocent, that suffered in those times upon this account. But that such grounds were then laid down to proceed upon, which were too slender to evidence the crime they were brought to prove; and thereby a foundation laid to lead into error those that came after. May we not say in this matter, as it is, Psal. 106. 6. *We have sinned with our fathers?* And as, Lam. 5. 7. *Our fathers have sinned and are not, and we have born their iniquities?* And whether this be not one of the sins the Lord hath been many years contending with us for, is worthy our serious enquiry. If the Lord punished Israel with famine three years for a sin of misguided zeal fourty years before that, committed by the breach of a Covenant made four hundred years before that: 2 Sam. 21. 1, 2, Why may not the Lord visit upon us the misguided zeal of our Predecessors about Witchcraft above fourty years ago, even when that Generation is gathered to their Fathers.

4. But I would come yet nearer to our own times, and bewail the errors and mistakes that have been in the year 1692. In the apprehending too many we may believe were innocent, and executing of some, I fear, not to have been condemned; by following such traditions of our fathers, maxims of the Common Law, and Presidents² and Principles, which now we may see weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, are found too light. I heartily concur with that direction for our publick prayers, emitted December 17, 1696, by our General Assembly, in an order for a general Fast, viz. “That God would shew us what we know not, and help us wherein we have done amiss, to do so no more: And especially that whatever mistakes on either hand, have been fallen into, either by the body of this people, or any order of men, referring to the late tragedy raised among us by Satan and his Instruments, through the awful Judgment of God: He would humble us therefore, and pardon all the errors of his Servants and People, that desire to love his Name, and be attoned to his land.” I am abundantly satisfied that those who were most concerned to act and judge in those matters, did not willingly depart from the rules of righteousness. But such was the darkness of that day, the tortures and lamentations of the afflicted, and the power of former presidents, that we walked in the clouds, and could not see our way. And we have most cause to be humbled for error on that hand, which cannot be retrieved. So that we must beseech the Lord, that if any innocent blood hath been shed, in the hour of temptation, the Lord will not lay it to our charge, but be merciful to his people whom he hath redeemed, Deut. 21. 8, And that in the day when he shall visit, he will not visit this sin upon our land, but blot it out, and wash it away with the blood of Jesus Christ.

5. I would humbly propose whether it be not expedient, that some what more should be publickly done then ⁴³⁴ yet hath, for clearing the good name and reputation of some that have suffered upon this account, against whom the evidence of their guilt was more slender, and the grounds for charity for them more convincing. And this (in order to our obtaining from the Lord farther reconciliation to our land,) and that none of their surviving relations,

may suffer reproach upon that account. I have both read and heard of several in England, that have been executed for Capital crimes, and afterwards upon sence of an error in the process against them, have been restored in blood and honour by some publick act. My Lord Cook ⁴³⁵ relates a story. A man going to correct a Girle his Neice, for some offence, in an upper room, the Girle strove to save her self, till her nose bled, and wiping it with a cloath, threw the bloody cloath out at the window, and cryed Murder; and then ran down staires, got away and hid her self. Her Uncle was prosecuted by her friends upon suspicion of Murdering her, because she could not be found. He declared that she made her escape, as above said. Then time was allowed him to bring her forth, but he could not hear of her within the time, and fearing he should dy if she could not be found, procures another Girle very like her, to appear in Court, and declare she was his Neice that had been missing: But her relations examine this counterfeit, until they find her out, and she confeseth she was suborned and counterfeited the true Neice. Upon these presumptions the man was found guilty of Murdering his Neice, and thereupon executed. And after his execution his true Neice comes abroad and shews her self alive and well. Then all that saw it were convinced of the Uncles innocency, and vanity of such presumptions. The Printing and Publishing of this relation Vindicates the good name of the Uncle, from the imputation of the crime of Murder. And this is one end of this present discourse, to take off (so far as a discourse of this nature can) infamy from the names and memory of such sufferers in this kind, as do not deserve the same.

6. Here it may be suitable for us to enquire, What the Lord speaks to us by such a stupendous providence, in his letting loose Satan upon us in this unusual way? *Ans.* 1. We may say of this, as our Saviour said of his washing his disciples feet, Joh. 13. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. The Judgments of the Lord are a great deep,* Psal. 36. 6. *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.* 2. Yet somewhat of his counsel at present for our instruction may be known, by comparing the Word and works of God together.

1. As when Joshua the high Priest though an holy chosen man of God, stood before the Angel, Satan stood at his right hand to resist him, or to be his adversary: And the advantage Satan had was by the filthy garments Joshua was clothed with before the Angels: That is, some iniquity which yet was not passed away, Zech. 3. 1, 3, 4. So we may say here were among Gods own Children filthy garments. The sins of Lukewarmness, loss of our first love, unprofitableness under the Gospel, slumbering and sleeping in the wise, as well as foolish Virgins, worldliness, pride, carnal security, and many other sins. By these and such like sins the accuser of the Brethren got advantage to stand at our right hand (the place of an Accuser in Courts of Justice) and there accuse us and resist us.

2. When the Egyptians refused to let Israel go to sacrifice and keep a feast to the Lord in the Wilderness: The Lord cast upon [them] the fierceness of his wrath, by sending Evil Angels among them, Psal. 78. 49. Egypts sins were (1.) Coveteousness; they would not let Israel go, because they gained by their labours. (2.) Contempt of God and his Instituted Worship, and Ordinances. They did not count them of such concernment, that Israel should go into the Wilderness to observe them. Both these sins have too much increased in our Land. (1.) Coveteousness, an inordinate love of the World gave Satan advantage upon us. (2.) Contempt of Gods Worship and Instituted Ordinances. The Errand of our Fathers into this Wilderness, was to Sacrifice to the Lord; that is, to worship God in purity of heart and life, and to wait upon the Lord, walking in the faith and order of the Gospel in Church fellowship; that they might enjoy Christ in all his Ordinances. But these things have been greatly neglected and despised by many born, or bred up in the Land. We have much forgotten what our Fathers came into the Wilderness to see. The sealing Ordinances of the Covenant of Grace in Church–Communion have been much slighted and neglected; and the fury of this Storm raised by Satan hath fallen very heavily upon many that lived under these neglects. The Lord sends Evil Angels to awaken and punish our negligence: And to my knowledge some have been hereby excited to enter into the Chamber of Gods Ordinances, to hide themselves, until the indignation be over past.

3. David when he removed the Ark from Kirjathjearim, had the Ark put into a new Cart, which should have been carried by the Kohathites. Numb. 3. 31. And David thought this was right, until the Lord slew Uzza for touching the Ark: But then he looked more exactly into the will of God; and confeseth that the Lord made a breach upon them, because they sought him not after the due order, 1 Chron. 13. 5, 7, 9, 10, and 15. 11, 12, 13. Had not the Lord made that breach upon them, they had persisted securely in their error. So I may say in this case. In the prosecution of Witchcraft, we sought not the Lord after the due order; but have proceeded after the methods

used in former times and other places, until the Lord in this tremendous way made a breach upon us. And hereby we are made sensible that the methods formerly used are not sufficient to prove the guilt of such a crime. And this I conceive was one end of the Lords letting Satan loose to torment and accuse so many; that hereby we may search out the truth more exactly. For had it not been for this dreadful dispensation, many would have lived and dyed in that error, which they are now convinced of.

4. The Lord delivered into the hand of Satan the Estate, Children, and Body of Job, for the tryal of Jobs faith and patience, and proof of his perfection and uprightness. So the Lord hath delivered into Satans hand mens Children and Bodies, yea names and estates into Satans hand for the tryal of their faith and patience, and farther manifestation of the sincerity of their professions.

7. ⁴³⁶ From that part of the discourse which shews the power of Satan to torment the bodies, and disturb the minds of those, he is let loose upon, Chap. 6, I would infer, that Satan may be suffered so to darken the minds of some pious Souls, as to cause them to destroy themselves by drowning, hanging, or the like. And when he hath so far prevailed upon some, that formerly lived a Christian life, but were under the prevalency of a distracting Melancholy at their latter end, We may have Charity that their Souls are Saved, notwithstanding the sad conclusion of their lives. I speak not to excuse any that having the free use of their reason willingly destroy themselves, out of pride, discontent, impatience, etc. Achitophel who out of height of Spirit because his Counsel was not followed, and to prevent Davids executing of him, for his rebellion and treason, destroyed himself, hath left his name to stink unto all generations. ⁴³⁷ And Judas who for his unparalleled treachery in betraying his Master, and the Lord of life, was justly left to hange himself; and the rope breaking or slipping he fell down head long, or with his face down ward, so that he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out, Math. 27. 5. with Act. 1. 13, left by his sin and punishment in the last act of his life the black character of a Son of perdition. But those that being out of their right minds, and hurried by an evil Spirit, as persons under a force to be their own executioners, are not always to be ranked with these.

8. Seeing we have been too fierce against supposed Malefick Witchcraft, let us take heed we do not on the contrary become too favourable to divining Witchcraft: And become like Saul who was too zealous against the Gibeonites, and at last turned to seek after one that had a familiar Spirit, to his own destruction. Let us not, if we can help it, suffer Satan to set up an ensuring office for stolen Goods. That after he hath brought the curse of God into the house of the thief, by tempting him to steal, he may not bring about the curse into the houses of them from whom the goods were stolen, by alluring them to go to the god of Ekron to enquire. That men may not give their Souls to the Devil in exchange, for his restoring to them their goods again, in such a way of divination. The Lord grant it may be said of New England, as is prophecied of Judah, Mic. 5. 12. *I will cut off Witchcrafts out of thine hand, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers.*

9. Another extream we must beware of, is, *viz.* Because our fathers in the beginning times of this Land, did not see so far into these mysteries of iniquity, as hath been since discovered, Let us not undervalue the good foundations they laid for God and his people, and for us in Church and Civil Government. For Paul that eminent Apostle knew but in part; no wonder then, if our Fathers were imperfect men. In the purest times in Israel, there were some Clouds of ignorance over-shadowing of them. Abraham, David, and the best Patriarchs were generally ignorant of the sin of Polygamy. And although Solomon far exceeded Nehemiah in wisdom; yet Nehemiah saw farther into the evil of Marrying Outlandish Women, than that wisest of Kings, and meer fallen men. Neh. 13. 26. Josiah kept the Passeover more exactly, than David, and all the Reforming Kings of Judah, 2 Chron. 35. 18.

All the godly Judges and Kings of Judah were unacquainted with, and so negligent of the right observation of the feast of Tabernacles, until it came to Nehemiahs time: And he understood and revived an ordinance of God, that lay buried in oblivion, near about a thousand years. Now he that shall reject all the good in doctrine and practice, which was maintained, professed and practiced by so many Godly leaders, because of some few errors found among them, will be found to fight against God. A dwarf upon a giants shoulders, can see farther than the giant.

It was a glorious enterprize of the beginners of these Colonies, to leave their native Country to propagate the Gospel: And a very high pitch of faith, zeal, and courage that carryed them forth, to follow the Lord into this wilderness, into a land that was not sown. Then was New England holiness to the Lord, and all that did devour them, or attempted so to do, did offend, and evil did come upon them. And the Lord did graciously remember this kindness of their Youth, and love of their Espousals; In granting them many eminent tokens of his favour; by his

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706

presence with them in his Ordinances, for the Conversion of Souls, and edifying and comforting the hearts of his Servants: By signal answering their prayers in times of difficulty: By protecting them from their Enemies; By guiding of, and providing for them in a Desart. And the Lord will still remember this their kindness unto their Posterity, unless that by their Apostasy from the Lord, they vex his Holy Spirit, to turn to be their Enemy: And thereby cut off the Entail of his Covenant Mercies; which God forbid. *Oh that the Lord may be with us, as he was with our Fathers; and that he may not leave us, nor forsake us!*

Finis.

Notes

[431]. “Black Witches, or Malefick Witches,” explains Hale a little earlier, are those “who by their enchantments do call in the Devils aid, for revenge, to do hurt to the bodies and health of their neighbours, or to their cattle, goods, and the like. These are the persons commonly called Witches, and against whom the spirits of men and the laws of men are most bent, for their prosecution and punishment.”

[432]. *I. e.*, “whenas”: whereas.

[433]. Precedents.

[434]. Than.

[435]. Sir Edward Coke.

[436]. Such is the numbering of the original.

[437]. The story of Ahithophel is to be found in II Samuel xv.–xvii.
THE VIRGINIA CASE OF GRACE SHERWOOD, 1706