

Pillars of Salt.

AN HISTORY

OF SOME

CRIMINALS Executed in this Land,

FOR

Capital Crimes.

With some of their Dying

Speeches;

Collected and Published,

For the WARNING of such as Live in
Destructive Courses of Ungodliness.

Whereto is added,

For the better Improvement of this History,
A Brief Discourse about the DreadfulJustice of God, in Punishing of
SINNERS, with SIN.

By Cotton Mather.

Deut. 19. 20.

Those which remain shall bear Fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such Evil among you.

BOSTON in New-England.

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at the Brick Shop near the Old-Meeting-House, 1699.

[COTTON MATHER]

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[1699]

It hath been Thought, that the *Dying Speeches* of such as have been Executed among us, might be of singular Use, to Correct and Reform, the *Crimes*, wherein too many do Live; and it has been wish'd, that at Least, some Fragments of those *Dying Speeches*, might be preserved and published. Upon this Advice, from some *Good Persons*, I have Stollen an Hour or Two, wherein I have Collected some Accounts, of several *Ill Persons*, which have been Cut off, by the Sword of *Civil Justice* in this Land: and this Collection, I suffer to go abroad, in Hopes, that among many other *Essays* to Suppress *growing Vice*, it may signifie something, with the Blessing of Heaven thereupon, to let the *Vicious* understand, what have been the Cries of our Miserables, when passing into another World. Behold, an *History of Criminals*, whom the Terrible Judgments of God have *Thunder struck*, into PILLARS OF SALT.

I

About the Year, 1646, here was one *Mary Martin*, whose Father going from hence to *England*, Left her in the House of a Married Man, who yet became so Enamoured on *her*, that he attempted her Chastity.

Such was her Weakness and Folly, that she yielded unto the Temptations of that miserable man; but yet with such horrible Regret of Mind, that begging of God, for Deliverance from her Temptations, her plea was, *That if ever she were Overtaken again, she would Leave herself unto His Justice, to be made a publick Example.*

Heaven will convince the Sinful Children of men, that the *Vowes*,

XI

In the Year, 1698. Was Executed at *Springfield*, one *Sarah Smith*.

Her Despising the continual Counsils and Warnings of her Godly Father-in-law laid the Foundation of her Destruction. When she was married, she added unto the Crime of *Adultery*, that of *Stealing*; which latter Crime occasioned her to fly unto *New Jersey*. Afterwards coming to Reside in *Deerfield*, her (second) Husband was carried captive unto *Canada*. But the woman, in Grievous Horror of mind, for the Breaches of the *Seventh* and *Eighth* Commandment, received many most suitable counsils, from Mr. *Williams*, the worthy Minister of that place. In conformity to his Counsils and Warnings, for a while she led a Reformed life, and seemed much affected with the word of God, in the publick Dispensations of it. But e're it was long, she lost her Seriousness, her Tenderness, her Convictions; and Relapsed into the Sin of *Adultery*. Her first Relapse into that Sin, was attended with a *Conception*, which, tho' she endeavoured for to render it an Abortive, the Holy providence of God would not suffer it to be so. She did, with much Obstinacy, Deny and Conceal her being with *Child*: and when the *Child* was Born, she smothered it: but the Neighbours found it out immediately. She then owned the matter, but made the usual pretence, *That the Child was Dead Born*: and remaind as poor Sinners undone by the *Sins of unchastity* use to be, under extream Hardness of Heart. Mr. *Williams* rarely visited her, but found her guilty of *New Lyes*; tho' sometimes violent pangs of Horror would come upon her, wherein she detected her own *Lying*, and seem'd greatly to Bewail it. The Honourable Judges, desired Mr. *Williams* to go down unto *Springfield*, (which was the place,) at the *Time* of her Execution; who then found her under an astonishing stupidity of Soul: and yet not pretending to Hopes of Happiness in another world. He found her guilty of *more Lyes*: which afterward she confessed so on the day of her Execution: and seem'd, the most unconcern'd of any in the Assembly: professing therewithal, *That she could not but wonder at her own unconcernedness*. At her Execution, she said but little, only, *That she desired to give Glory unto God, and to take shame unto her self, and that she would warn all others, to beware of the Sins, that had brought her unto this miserable End, especially, Stealing, Uncleaness, Lying, Neglecting to Read the Scriptures, and Neglecting to Pray unto God*. She had absented her self much from the word of God, on *Lords-Days*, and *Lecture Days*; and straid at home, till she had fallen into this capital Transgression: *Then*, she would come unto the meetings, with some seeming Devotion. She had Sinn'd away great

Convictions, and Awakenings; and Satan, with *Seven more unclean Spirits*, entred into her; and God, seem'd then to withhold from her, the Efficacy of the means of Grace and Good, which His Faithful Servants in the Neighbourhood, used with her.

XII

On *November 17. 1698*. There was executed in *Boston*, a miserable Young Woman, whose Extraordinary circumstances rung throughout all *New England*. On this Day of her Execution, was Preached the *Sermon*, which we have now placed, at the Beginning of this History, as an *Inscription* upon our, PILLARS OF SALT. Because the last passages of that *Sermon*, gave a summary Narrative, of what it is fit the publick should know concerning that Criminal, I have Transferr'd them, into this place. The *Sermon* Concluded in these words.

Be astonished, O Congregation of God, Stand astonished, at the Horrible *Spectacle*, that is now before You: This *House*, and perhaps this *Land*, never had in it a more Astonishing *Spectacle*.

Behold, a *Young Woman*, but an *Old Sinner*, going this Day to *Dy* before her time, for being *Wicked over-much*. Behold, One just *Nineteen* Years Old, and yet found *Ripe* for the *Vengeance* of a *Capital Execution*. Ah, Miserable Soul, *With what a swift progress of Sin and Folly, hast thou made Hast unto the Congregation of the Dead*. Behold a Person, whose Unchaste Conversation appear'd by one *Base Born* Child many months ago! *God then gave her a Space to Repent, and she repented not*: She Repeted her Whoredomes, and by an Infatuation from God upon her, She so managed the matter of her next *Base Born*, that she is found Guilty of its *Murder*: Thus the God, whose Eyes are like a Flame of Fire, is now casting her into a *Bad* of *Burning Tribulation*: And, ah, Lord, *Where wilt thou cast those that have committed Adultery with her, Except they Repent*. Since her Imprisonment, She hath Declared, That she believes, God hath Left her unto this *Undoing Wickedness*, partly for her staying so profanely at Home sometimes on *Lords-Days*, when she should have been Hearing the *Word of Christ*, and much more for her not minding that *Word*, when she heard it. And she has Confessed, That she was much given to *Rash Wishes*, in her *Mad Passions*, particularly using often that Ill Form of speaking, *I'll be Hanged*, if a thing be not thus or so, and, *I'll be Hanged*, if I do not this or that; which Evil now, to see it, coming upon her, it amazes her! But the chief Sin, of which this *Chief of Sinners*, now cries out, is, Her *Undutiful Carriage towards her Parents*. Her *Language* and her *Carriage* towards her Parents, was indeed