

the instant the witch had been taken up. A bottle is preserved, which had been handed in to the Court at the time of the trial, full of pins, with which young women had been tormented. Some of the girls, from whose bodies these pins had been extracted, afterward confessed to a conspiracy. In the evening we walked to the place called Gallows Hill, in the suburbs of the city, where no less than nineteen persons were hanged as witches in the course of fifteen months.

It is impossible not to shudder when we reflect that these victims of a dark superstition were tried, so late as the year 1692, by intelligent men, by judges who, though they may have been less learned, are reputed to have been as upright as Sir Matthew Hale, who, in England, condemned a witch to death in 1665. The prisoners were also under the protection of a jury, and the forms of law, copied from the British courts, so favorable to the accused in capital offenses. We learn from history that an epidemic resembling epilepsy raged at the time in Massachusetts, and, being attributed to witchcraft, solemn fasts and meetings for extraordinary prayers were appointed, to implore Heaven to avert that evil, thereby consecrating and confirming the popular belief in its alleged cause. As the punishment of the guilty was thought to be a certain remedy for the disorder, the morbid imagination of the patient prompted him to suspect some individual to be the author of his sufferings, and his evidence that he had seen spectral apparitions of witches inflicting torments on him was received as conclusive. One hundred and fifty persons were in prison awaiting trial, and two hundred others had been presented to the magistrate, when the delusion was dissipated by charges being brought against the wife of the Governor Phipps, and some of the nearest relatives of Mather, an influential divine. It was then found that by far the greater number of atrocities had been prompted by fear; for during this short reign of terror the popular mind was in so disordered a state, that almost every one had to choose between being an accuser or a victim, and from this motive many afterward confessed that they had brought charges against the innocent.\* The last executions for witchcraft in England

\* See "Graham's History," vol. i. ch. v. p. 392.