The Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut (1647-1697)

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First, because Witchcraft is a rife and common sinne in these our daies, and very many are intangled with it, beeing either practitioners thereof in their owne persons, or at the least, yielding to seeke for helpe and counsell of such as practise it. A Discovrse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft, PERKINS, 1610. "And just as God has his human servants, his church on earth, so also the Devil has his—men and women sworn to his service and true to his bidding. To win such followers he can appear to men in any form he pleases, can deceive them, enter into compact with them, initiate them into his worship, make them his allies for the ruin of their fellows. Now it is these human allies and servants of Satan, thus postulated into existence by the brain of a monkish logician, whom history knows as witches." The Literature of Witchcraft, BURR. Witchcraft in its generic sense is as old as human history. It has written its name in the oldest of human records. In all ages and among all peoples it has taken firm hold on the fears, convictions and consciences of men. Anchored in credulity and superstition, in the dread and love of mystery, in the hard and fast theologic doctrines and teachings of diabolism, and under the ban of the law from its beginning, it has borne a baleful fruitage in the lives of the learned and the unlearned, the wise and the simple. King and prophet, prelate and priest, jurist and lawmaker, prince and peasant, scholars and men of affairs have felt and dreaded its subtle power, and sought relief in code and commandment, bull and anathema, decree and statute—entailing even the penalty of death—and all in vain until in the march of the races to a higher civilization, the centuries enthroned faith in the place of fear, wisdom in the place of ignorance, and sanity in the seat of delusion.

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