

**MARY DYER OF RHODE ISLAND:
THE QUAKER MARTYR
THAT WAS HANGED ON BOSTON
COMMON, JUNE 1, 1660**

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Mary Dyer of Rhode Island: The Quaker Martyr That Was Hanged on Boston Common, June 1, 1660 by Horatio Rogers

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HORATIO ROGERS

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COMPLIMENTS OF

HORATIO ROGERS.

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MARY DYER

OF RHODE ISLAND

THE QUAKER MARTYR

THAT WAS HANGED ON BOSTON
COMMON, JUNE 1, 1660

BY

HORATIO ROGERS
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT
OF RHODE ISLAND

PROVIDENCE
PRESTON AND ROUNDS
1896

PREFACE

THE interest awakened by a paper read by me last fall before the Rhode Island Historical Society, of which I was then the President, has induced me to revise the matter then used, and to accept the offer of the publishers of this volume to issue it in its present form.

The material for a sketch of Mary Dyer is meagre, and necessarily has to be gathered, bit by bit, from many sources, the principal of which are George Bishop's *New England Judged by the Spirit of the Lord*, Part I., 1661, and Part II., 1667,—both parts, somewhat abbreviated, again printed in 1703; John Whiting's *Truth and Innocency Defended against Falshood and Envy, And the Martyrs of Jesus, and Sufferers for his sake*,

Vindicated, 1702; *A Call from Death to Life*, being an Account of the Sufferings of Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson and Mary Dyer, in New England, in the year 1659, printed by Friends in London, 1660, a private reprint of which was made in 1865, including Marmaduke Stephenson's *A Call from Death to Life*, and other papers, with an Introduction; Joseph Besse's *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, 1753; Sewel's *History of the People called Quakers*; Bowden's *History of the Society of Friends in America*; and the *Massachusetts Records*. In addition to these, however, many works, too numerous to mention, have been consulted and drawn from; for the labor involved in such a study is out of all proportion to the space occupied by the narrative.

H. R.

PROVIDENCE, R.I., February, 1896.

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I

AMONG the most pathetic chapters of New England history are those that recount the sufferings for conscience sake. Every gradation of cruelty known to Puritan persecution was practised upon the Quakers. Many of the victims of this religious intolerance were inhabitants of Rhode Island visiting neighboring colonies, for the hand of persecution could not reach across its border; the government of Rhode Island, in 1657, when urged by the Commissioners of the

United Colonies to expel the Quakers from its boundaries, writing in reply as follows: "And as concerning these quakers (so caled) which are now among us, we have no law among us whereby to punish any for only declaring by words, &c, their mindes and understandings concerning the things and ways of God, as to salvation and an eternal condition."¹

Massachusetts Bay was the most active of the New England persecutors, but Plymouth Colony and the colonies along the Connecticut River also shared the persecuting spirit. When the Quakers first arrived in Boston Harbor, in 1656, Massachusetts was without legislation specially aimed at the new sect; but lack of legislation did not stand in the way of intolerance, and then, too, the

¹ See Appendix I.