

THE BLUE LAWS.—*The Blue Laws* were a series of fanatical laws enacted by the Puritans of the colony of Connecticut. They were long enforced in this colony and in some of the other adjoining New England colonies. They are noted for their absurdity and their persecuting spirit. The following are a few extracts from the Code:

"No priest shall abide in this dominion; he shall be banished and *suffer death* on his return. Priests may be seized by any person without a warrant." (In force before 1656.)

"No one shall read Common prayer, keep *Christmas*, or *saints days*, make *mince pies*, *dance*, *play cards*, or play any musical instrument except the drum, trumpet and Jews-harp."

"The Sabbath shall begin at Sun-set on Saturday."

"Whosoever shall frequently neglect the public worship of God on the Lord's day, that is, approved of by this government, shall forfeit for every such offence ten shillings, especially where it appears to arise from negligence, idleness, or profaneness of spirit."

"Every person in this jurisdiction, according to the mind of God, shall duly resort and attend worship on the Lord's day at least, and upon public fasting and thanksgiving days; and if any such person, without just cause, shall absent or withdraw from the same, he shall for every such sinful miscarriage forfeit five shillings."

"No one shall *run* on the Sabbath day, or walk in his garden, or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting."

"No one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep house, cut hair, or shave on the Sabbath."

"If any man shall kiss his *wife*, or *wife her husband*, on the Lord's day, the party in fault shall be punished, at the discretion of the Court of Magistrates."

"No woman shall *kiss her child* on the Sabbath or fasting day."

"No man shall be admitted to the freedom of this jurisdiction, who is not a member of some church in New England, approved of by the magistrates and churches of this colony."—1656.

"This Court, taking notice of the great abuse and many misdemeanors committed by divers persons in these many ways, profaning the Sabbath, or Lord's day, to the great dishonoring of God, reproach of religion, and grief of the spirit of God's people, do therefore order, that whosoever shall profane the Lord's day by doing unnecessary servile work, by unnecessary traveling, or by sports and recreation, he or they that so transgress, shall forfeit for every such fault forty shillings, or be *publicly whipped*. But if it clearly appear that sin was proudly, presumptuously

and with a high hand committed against the known commands of the blessed God, such person therein displeasing and reproaching the Lord, *shall be put to death*, or grievously punished at the discretion of this Court."

"If any person commit burglary, or rob any person, he shall be branded on the right hand with the letter B; for the second offence, he shall be branded on the left hand, and whipped; and or the third offence he shall be put to death."

"If any person take tobacco whilst he is impaneled on a jury, to forfeit five shillings for every default, except they have given their verdict, or not to give till the next day."

"Ordered by the Court, that whosoever shall shoot off any gun on any unnecessary occasion, or at any game whatsoever, except at an *Indian* or a *wolf*, shall forfeit five shillings for every such shot, till further liberty be granted."

"It is enacted by the Court, that any person or persons that shall be found smoking tobacco on the Lord's day, going to or coming from the meetings, within two miles from the meeting-house, shall pay for every such default, twelve pence."

"Whoever wears cloth trimmed with gold, silver, or bone lace, above twelve shillings by the yard, shall be presented by the grand jurors, and the selectmen shall tax the offender at £300 estate."

"Every male shall have his hair cut round *according to a cap*."

The females gave offence in the colony of Massachusetts by wearing short sleeves and short skirts; hence it was enacted by the General Court, "That their garments should be lengthened to cover the arms to the wrists, and gowns to the shoe buckles"

Laws were further enacted against the wearing of "Knots of ribbon, broad shoulder bands, silk roses double ruffs and cuffs, and immoderate *great breeches*."

"No man shall court a maid in person, or by letter, without first obtaining the consent of her parents; five *pounds* for the first offence; ten *pounds* for the second; and for the third to be imprisoned during the pleasure of the Court."

"Married persons must live together, or be imprisoned."

The laws against the Quakers were severe in the extreme; it was enacted in Connecticut, that

"No Quaker, or dissenter from the established worship of this dominion, shall be allowed to give a vote for the election of magistrates or other officers."

"No food or lodging shall be given to a Quaker, Adamite, or other heretic."

"The Quakers," says Jortin, "were whipped, branded, and their ears cut off, their tongues bored with hot irons, and were banished, upon the pain of death in case of their return, and they were actually executed on the gallows."