

to writ in his book.' On evidence like this people were taken from their homes and imprisoned more than half a year"—he might have added, and many were hanged. "The first thing which opened the eyes of the prosecutors, was the crying out against the Rev. Jeremiah Shepard, minister of the church at Lynn, as a wizard! Everybody saw the absurdity of the charge, and the Court were convinced that if the matter went much farther themselves might not be safe."

By this and another item from the same History, which follows below, it will be seen that our Puritan ancestors were still in Lynn, as in Charlestown, in 1648, dominated by those twin scourges of mankind, superstition and bigotry. It says, "1694 the Society of Friends having increased, Mr. Shepard became alarmed at their progress, and appointed the nineteenth of July as a day of fasting and prayer, that the spiritual plague might proceed no further."*

Deacon Thomas Burrage died March 11, 1717,† in

* The same work says, "In 1708, a fast was held, 23d June, and prayers offered for deliverance from the devastations committed by insects on fruit trees. They appear to have been caterpillars and canker-worms. And we had, in 1863, another grievous instance of the destruction that may be accomplished through the combined industry of those voracious little spoilers. But this unbelieving generation, instead of resorting to prayers and fasting, resorted to burning brimstone and other stifling appliances."

† Old style, in which the year commenced March 25. From the fourteenth century till the change of style in 1752, the year began at March 25. After this change was adopted, events that had occurred in January, February, or before March 25, in the old legal year, would, according to the new arrangement, be reckoned in the next subsequent year. Hence the date was sometimes written thus: "March 11, 1717-18." This explains and reconciles the date of Deacon Burrage's death and the date of the vote, September, 1717, giving him liberty to set up a pew in the church.