

APPENDIX 3

COLONEL JOHN GERHARD (GERRARD)

In the JBook FBJ has taken a small amount of space to outline a “second tradition” of the Jerrard family of Chideock, namely - that a member of the Samford Orcas family was executed for conspiracy. FBJ clearly states that “This John ‘Gerhard’ was the eldest son, (Visitation of London 1634)* of Nicholas Jerard of London, who was, (Visitation of Somerset 1623, p.4) a son of Robert Jerard of Samford Orcas.”¹ FBJ goes on to discount John Gerhard’s relationship with Lord Gerard of Brandon and John Gerhard’s brother Gilbert. I have to assume that some information was not available to FBJ because in my research I have turned up information that disproves FBJ and shows John’s relationship with his real family thus corroborating authorities FBJ found in existence and that FBJ discounts in his book.

It appears, from secondary sources² that John Gerhard did have brothers Charles and Gilbert and a cousin who was Lord Gerard of Brandon³. It would have been interesting to our family to have been connected with this John Gerhard but this is not to be. FBJ’s book is not materially affected by having this information clarified, however, a shadow is cast over “family traditions” and we must be much more circumspect when citing “family traditions” as prima facia proof that a fact or facts must be true.

For interest sake I have transcribed news pamphlets and articles describing the trial of John Gerhard and a pamphlet that describes the events just minutes before his death. Both these topics are adequately canvassed by the pamphlets and articles and give us an insight into the events of the day and the man who overcame them.

These articles are part of a collection, The Thomason Collection of Civil War Tracts, found in the British Library and are described by the Library as "Among the British Library's unrivalled collections for study of British history are the Thomason Tracts, one of the most important sources relating to the turbulent period of the English Civil War."⁴

THE TRYAL OF COLONEL JOHN GERARD, MR. PETER VOWEL, and MR. SOMERSET FOX⁵

Before the High Court of Justice in Westminster Hal on Fryday last. With the Charge of High Treason read and stated against them, by Mr. Attorney Generall Prideaux; and their speeches at the Bar of Justice, in answer thereunto.

1 JBook

2 Garrard, Garratt, Gerrard, Jarrett, Jerrard etc, Draft Pedigrees, Donor REF Garrett, 27/7/1966, AC30863

3 Garrard, Garratt, Gerrard, Jarrett, Jerrard etc, Draft Pedigrees, Donor REF Garrett, 27/7/1966, AC30863, Copy of Draft Pedigree #106 [cd],

4 The British library, Reading Room Information, May 2000 [cd]

5 The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 9 [cd]

Likewise, the Examination and Confession of Mr. Wiseman, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Charles Gerard, M. Wharton, and the rest of the Witnesses; and their several Depositions upon Oath.

As also the Speech of the Attorney General, to the Lord President and the rest of the Court, proving the aforesaid Gentlemen to be guilty of High Treason, and fit to be made Objects of Justice.

With the Order of the Court thereupo, and the bringing of them to their further Tryal on Tuesday next.

Imprinted at london by Robert Wood, 1654

The Tryal of Col. John Gerhard, Master Peter Vowel, and Mr. Somerset Fox, on Fryday last, being the 30 of this instant moneth of June, 1654. before the High Court of Justice sitting in Westminster Hal, &c.

On Fryday being the 30 day of this instant moneth of June, 1654. the High Court of Justice, in order to their Commission and Instructions from his Highness the Lord Protector, met in the Court of Chancery in westminster Hal, about 9 of the clock in the forenoon, where were present mr. Attorney General Prideaux, Sergeant Glin, and another Gentleman, Councillors at Law in behalf of the Commonwealth of England; and after silence in the Court, and O yes, O yes, O yes, being proclaimed, the Commissioners Names called over, the Lord President Lisle, and the rest of the Members of that honourable Court, having taken their places of Judicature; after some consultation, they Ordered, that the first prisoner should be brought in, which was Mr. Somerset Fox, who being brought to the Bar, and guarded by a Company od Souldiers, and some of the Warders of the Tower in his Highnesses Livery, the attorney General stated the Charge of High treason against him, and laid open the several Branches thereof, wherein he stood accused of High Treason, viz,

First, That he had confederated to enter into that bloody Assassination for murdering of his Highnes the Lord Protector.

Secondly, That he had been privy to several meetings of Mr. John Gerhard, Mr. Peter Vowel, Col. Dean, and others.

And thirdly, that he had conspired to levy and and draw in the London Prentices to this inhumane abd barbarous engagement, for the involving this Nation in another bloody and intestine war, and so to bring in Charles Stuart, and proclaim him King.

To which he pleaded guilty, and humbly desired the mercy of the Court.

After which, the Lord President, and the rest of the Commissioners ordered that Mr. John Gerhard, and Mr. Peter Vowel, should be brought to the bar, who accordingly was guarded thither by the lieutenant of the Tower, and some of the Warders and halberts; which being done, and silence in the Court proclaimed, the attorney General of the Common-wealth stated the Case of High Treason against the prisoners at the bar, which was, That the aforesaid Mr. Gerard had been at Paris in France with Charles Stuart, and that after return Mr. Hinshey from thence into England, the said Master Gerhard three weeks after arrived here himself, and had several meetings about the effecting of their Conspiracy; and that at last it was concluded on, that the said Mr. John Gerard with 25 horse should way-lay and murder his Highness as he was going to Hampton court, and then with his party to fall upon the Guards, and seize on White Hall; Colonel

Dean of Southwark to fall on St. Jameses, who had engaged to raise two thousand men; but said he was confident of nine hundred. Another party was to seize on the Muse: A fourth, was to seize upon the Tower of London: A fifth, upon the Lord Major and Court of Aldermen. And the sixth was designed against Colo. Ingoldsbyes Regiment in the Borough, &c.

The Case was further stated, that the aforesaid Mr. Hudson, and some other of his Competitors had met sundry times at one Mr. Hodsons, and that he had bought a case of pistols of one Mr. Day, and was designed with a party from islington to have seized the houses in Smithfield, &c. To which respective Charges, the prisoners at the bar both pleaded,

Not Guilty.

Then the Witnesses was cal'd for, and the first that was examined was one Mr. Wiseman, who being deposed upon Oath, attested that the prisoners at the bar had several times meetings for the carrying on of this barbarous design, &c.

The next was one Mr. Day who affirmed the buying of the aforesaid pistols. And the third was one Mr. Hudson, a blind man, who said, that he never saw Mr. Hudson at his house, neither could he positively affirm that he had acted any thing. But notwithstanding these delatory Expressions, by other evidence they were found guilty of high Treason: which Mr. Vowel endeavoured to evince & make forth to the contrary, and desire Council, and the priviledge of magna Carta: the like did Mr. Gerard: Whereupon the Attorney general made a speech to the court, clearing the scruples of the prisoners at the bar, and made it appear, that by the Law of all Nations, that the acting or contriving of any design against a Supreme Authority of a Nation, was high Treason, much more the conspiring against the supreme Head and Governor to murder him. So that by all Law and Reason he conceived the prisoners at the bar to be fit Objects of Justice, and humbly left them to receive the merits thereof, according to the Evidence given in against them. Whereupon about 5 of the clock in the afternoon, the Court adjourned to the Painted chamber, and ordered the the prisoners should be remanded back to the Tower, and to be brought again on Tuesday next.

Before the fitting of the Court, a proclamation was published by beat of Drum, and sound of Trumpet; which was

Signed by the Lord President of the Court, and the rest of the Court.

The Weekly Intelligencer of the Commonwealth – Faithfully communicating all Affairs both Martial and Civil

From Tuesday, June 27 to Tuesday July 4 1654

London, Printed by V. Neils in Aldersgate Street.⁶

-Friday, June 30 and Saturday July 1

This day Mr. John Gerrard, Mr. Summerset Fox, and Mr. Peter Vowel were brought down to their Tryal, Master Attorney, and Master Solicitor General. And Mr. Serjeant Glyn were of Council for his Highness: the Lieutenant of the Tower according to Order did first bring Mr. Fox to the Bar, where his Charge being read for attempting to murder his Highness the Lord Protector, as he should go to Hampton Court on a Saturday prefixed. The seizing of the Guards about White Hall, the Mews, and Saint James, and the making of themselves masters of the City of London, and the Tower, with all the Magazines within the same; the Proclaiming of Charles Stuart King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and other high Treasons, tending to involve the

⁶ The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 10 [cd]

Common-wealth in a new bloody War, the prisoner said but little, but made a confession to the Court of so much as he said he was guilty of, which was, to engage the Apprentices, and Citizens that there might be a rising in the City at the same time, when numerous and armed conspirators should fall upon the Guards at White Hall, St. Jameses, and Collonel Ingolesbies Regiment in Southwark, that no aid might come from the City to help any where else. Mr. Gerrard, and Mr. Vowel pleaded not Guilty pretending much ignorance, & desired Counsel, which was not granted, but several Witnesses were produced who proved upon Oath, that Mr. Gerrard was to command the party of thirty Horse, who were to murder his Highness as he was going to Hampton Court, and one Mr. Finch had eight hundred men a peece, who would be ready at a dayes warning. It was proved against Mr. Vowel that although he could not act himself, yet he would procure those that should, and did engage with one Captain Billingly, to provide Riders for the Horse that should be taken out of the pastures of islington, and that the said Vowel bought many pistols, &c. Gerrard, and Vowel denying that they knew any thing, the Witnesses being examined, the Evidences were drawup into several heads, and presented to the Court, the Prisoners were commanded back to the Tower, and the Court adjourned til Tuesday next.

Monday July 3

That which this week is most remarkable, is: The Tryal and Examination of Mr. John Gerrard, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Vowel before the High Court of Justice, and the open Confession of Summerset Fox, their murderous design discovered upon Oath by several witnesses, for the mrdering of his Highness the Lord Protector, and seizing upon the Guards, and the Tower of London. The titular King of Scots disliking the plot as dishonourable to him, and Prince Ruperts resolution to send the titular Duke of York with ten thousand Horse and Foot next August, who were to land in Sussex.

A Perfect Account of The Daily Inteligence from the Armies in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Navy at Sea.⁷ London: Printed by E. Alsop. 1654

Containing these insuing particulars:

The proceedings of the High Court of Justice on Tuesday last, concerning Mr. Gerard, Mr. Fox, M. Vowel and others.

Tuesday, July 4.

This day about two of the clock in the afternoon the High Court of Justice met again in the Painted chamber, and sate there upon depositions and other things in order to the bringing of several persons now in custody to their tryal, after which they adjourned till another time. It was expected that sentence should have been given this day upon Mr. John Gerard, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Vowel, but they were not brought up, neither did the Court this day sit openly in Westminster-Hall.

Mercurious Politicus

Comprising the Sum of all Intelligence, with the Affairs and Designs now on foot in the three Nations of England, Scotland, & Ireland: London, Printed by The Newcastle, 1654

In defence of the Commonwealth, and for Information of the People.

From Thursday, June 29 to Thursday July 6 1654⁸

Westminster, Friday June 30

7 The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 12 [cd]

8 The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 13 [cd]

The High Court of Justice met this day in the Painted chamber Mr. Bond prayed with them about half an hour. The Court then sat, and presently adjourned to the Court of Chancery prepared for their sitting. The Lord Commissioner Lisle was president, Mr Phelps clerk, Serjeant Glyn, Mr Prideaux, Mr Ellis council for the Commonwealth.

The Court was called (each member by name) and the Ordinance empowering them read. The Prisoners to be tried were

Mr John Gerhard, Gentleman.

Mr. Peter Vowell Schoolmaster of Islington.

And Summerset Fox.

Summerset Fox was first called to the Bar, and an Indictment of High Treason read against him, for joyning in a trayterous Design to have murdered his Highness the Lord Protector, and divers of his Council, proclaimed Charles Stuart King, ??? on the present Guards and Forces, involved the Nation in a bloody war, &c.

Summerset Fox did ingenuously confess the Charge against him upon the main, to be true, and that he is guilty.

Then Mr John Gerhard, and Mr Peter Vowell were brought to the Bar, and an Indictment to the same purpose, as that against Summerset Fox, read against them.

They pleaded not guilty, and denied every thing.

The sum of the business was opened to this effect by Mr Attorney. That the plot was to seize on the Lord protector and murder him and some of the Council and others, and to proclaim and bring in Charles Stuart son of the late King to be King: which bloody design was to be effected thus.

That the first hatching of the Plot was about Lent, in England. By Mr Hinshaw, who was one of the chief plotters, and others; Mr Hinshaw went over from England to France, to acquaint Charles Stuart (whom they called their King) with the design, and Mr. John Gerhard about that time went over to France also, who had told Mr Henshaw that he would do nothing in ??? until he had first had approbation from Charles Stuart. Mr Wiseman was aslo then in France with them.

Address was made to Prince Rupert, and the design made known to him, desiring him to communicate it to (him they called) the King, who accordingly did, and brought Mr Henshaw to him, But Charles Stuart at the first delivered his Judgement in the thing, that he was at present unsatisfied at that time to go on in that design for three reasons,

1. Because it would be dishonourable to him in the esteem of other Princees, in csae such a thing should be known, and should not be effected, to come in in such a way.
2. Because it did not seem to him to be feable, but unlikely to be effected.
3. Because it was not at the time seasonable, he not being ready to second it.

But Prince Rupert afterwards did much encourage and persuade that the design might be carried on, and promised all assistance.

Mr Henshaw and Mr Wiseman returned to England; Mr Gerhard staid there a while longer, but some weeks after came back also.

Mr Henshaw declared to his confederates here in England, what overtures had been made with Charles Stuart, and that Prince Rupert had engaged to send ten thousand Scots, English and French, and the Duke of York to come with them to land in Sissex and other places and that there would be Forces enough ready to assist and joyn with them.

Dr. Hudson was thought on as a fit man to truth, in whose chamber they met, and he wrote to Charles Stuart about it: and that which fe desired in case the Plot had taken, was to be made the

master of Suttons Hospital, which Mr Henshaw promised him.

One Mr Philips also, and others were treated with about it and Mr. Gerhard returning from France, the Plot was resolved to be carried on, which was to be effected thus,

1. They were to seize on the Lord Protector and murder him, and to do this work they should take the opportunity of his going to Hampton Court, which he used to do every Saturday, with a small number slenderly armed, and those that were to do this were Mr Henshaw and Mr John Gerhard with thirty horse, Mr John Gerhard to bring 25 horse, and Mr Henshaw 5, which either of them were to engage; Mr Gerhard was something cautious, not to discover who they were he engaged, before an Oath of Secresie was given, but 25 he had undertaken for.
Mr Henshaw's five were himself, Mr Thucdore the Apothecary, mr Wiseman, Col Aldridge, and another, and then to seize on the Tower of London, and to go on with their work.
2. If that failed, To seize on all the Guards about Westminster, they thought two thousand five hundred sufficient to do it, and carry on their work here about London; and for that purpose Mr. Henshaw M. Gerhard and others viewed the Mews and the rest, and was heard to say, what a pity it was that so slender Guards should not be seized on, & that when the Soulders were at Nine pins in the Mews it was but shooting off a pistol and presently to fall on.
3. The last way to have effected was thus; That when the Foot Regiments that are for the Guards about London were mustering in Tuttle fields, as they use several times to do, to come into Tuttle-Fields, and meet them there as of their own party; and when they have laid down their Arms, to seize upon them, and have others to be ready at the same time every where to perfect the work. And for this purpose, if they acted this way, Col Finch with a party of two hundred was to fall into London and do the work in the City.

Major John Gerhard to fall on White-Hall,

Col. Henshaw to fall on the Mews,

Col. Daniel with two hundred to fall on Jameses,

Another to fall into Southwark.

And one Billingsly a Butcher at Smithfield barres, with a party to fall upon Islington; and it was pressed that the opportunity might not be neglected.

And that the work might be more seasonable, they considered how as many of the Souldiery as might be, might be engaged in the business. And the Papists (who had a great hand in the design) gave information of two Souldiers of the Army, that used sometimes to come and hear Masse, and these two they sent a Papist Woman to, who engaged them, and their direction was. To give intelligence at Mr. Hudsons house, whither Master Henshaw and others of them frequented.

Master Vowel was coutious and his work was not to bear Arms but to be as a Privie Counsellor to them, and he was to engage Mr. Bilingsly, the Butcher with a Party to seize the Lord Protectors Horse at Islington, and him Mr. Fowel recommended to be a very fit man for the work.

And they had this Art to endeavour to make the Lord Protector odious to the people, in turning the design unto him by a Libel which was scattered up and down London that his Highness and the Army had a design to Massacre all but their Friends in all parts of England, and this Libell was written by Mr henshaw, which was got printed by one in

Newgate-Market, and Mr Vowel had one of them. Then the against the the prisoners at the Bar were produced, which were Mr wiseman half-brother to Mr Henshaw, Dr Hudson, brother to that Hudson whoo travailed with the late King when he went disguised from Oxford to the Scots Army, Robert Dale, John Hipwel, Col. Aldrich, Charles Gerard, John Man, Francis Fox, Mr Whatten, Mr Barnes, & Mr minors; whose testimonies did fully answer to each particular which had been before opened by Mr Attorney. I shall not stand to repeat each testimony, nor mention any of them, they being to large. Then the Attorney Generall summing up the Evidence, prayed Justice against them. The Court having ordered the Prisoners Pen, Ink and paper, withdrew into the painted Chamber, where they adjourned till Tuesday July 4.

The weekly Intelligencer of The Commonwealth, Faithfully communicating all Affairs both Martial and Civil.¹

From Tuesday, July 4 to Tuesday, Jult 11. 1754

London, Printed by F. Neile in Aldersgate-Street.

Thursday, July 6

The High Court of Justice sat this afternoon again in Westminster-Hall, and there was brought before them Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Vowel, and Mr. Fox; the prisoners were demanded what they had more to say for themselves, and mr. Gerrard, and Mr. Vowel spake many words by way of Exenuation of the Offences, but little to the purpose as to the matter of Fact which had been proved against them. Then the Lord President Lisle made a learned Speech, to convince them of the desperate wickedness of their design, and how fully the particulars of the Charge had been proved, with what punishments the Law had provided in such cases, after which, the sentence of the Court was read severally against all three, to this effect. That upon mature consideration of the Treasons, and Murthers plotted, and contrived by them against his Highness the Lord Protector, and the Common-wealth, and raising a bloody War in the same, the court did adjudg them to be hanged by the neck until they be dead.

Friday, July 7

This evening by order of the High Court of Justice, mr. Bond was sent to the three Prisoners in the Tower, to advise with them concerning the estate of their souls, and to offer his best assistance to sit and prepare them for their approaching sissolution, Mr. Peter Vowel was very obstinate, and would scarce admit any discourse with him, but Mr. Gerrard shewed himself more free, but as to the matter of the F??& for which he is to dye, he seemed not to entertain ane resentment, or to feel any compunction in his soul, but rather excused himself by professing his great affection to the King.

Mr. Fox indeed seemed very sorrowful, and his Highness the Lord Protector hath since granted him a Reprieve; the other two are to be Executed on Monday next at the place where Charing cross stood.

Monday, July 10

This afternoon Mr. Vowel was hanged in the same place where Charing Cross stood, he seemed to extenuate his offence, and insisted on the Oblation of the Oath of Allegiance to the late king, and to his Heirs, and complained much of one of his Witnesses whom said he had releived with his daily Bread.

¹ The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 18 [cd]

This evening about six of the clock Mr. John Gerrard was Beheaded on the Tower Hill; his Speech he made but short, and something in relation to Mr. Vowels: He dying, desired the prayers of all the people, his Head was struck off at one blow.

The Speeches of Colonel John Gerhard upon The Scaffold at Tower-hill, on Monday last, and Mr. Peter Vowel at charing-Cross, on Monday last, being the 11 of this instant July, 1654. With their Declarations to the People touching the ????, their Protessions sealed with their blood; and their prayers immediately before the fatal stroke of Death was struck.. Taken by an eye witness, and impartially communicated for general satisfaction. Imprinted at london for C. Horton, 1654²

About five of the clock in the Afternoon, Col. Gerard was guarded from the Tower to the scaffold on Tower-hill, being accompanied by the Lieutenant, and divers other Gentlemen; but coming to the stairs, he nimbly ran up, and smiling saluted Col. Barkstead with a cup of Sack, and then walked up and down the scaffold with an undanted spirit. After which, he called the Executioner to him, desiring to see the block, which he took in his hand, and saluted it: Then he went to the head of the Scaffold, and putting off his hat to the Auditors spake as followeth:

GENTLEMEN,

Providence having allotted me the time of my death, the manner of my death, and the hour of my death, I am bound out of Chirstian Duty, and a loyal Conscience, to acknowledge these singular favours, and to return all due honour and praise for these his great mercies; but for what I stand impeached for by my Judges, in reference to high Treason, my innocency therein does justly acquit me of guilt thereof; so that I cannot but make this inference and construction upon the Judgement passed against me in Court, that I was not thought worthy to live, because I liv'd to love the King my Master. And thus much I do here ingenuously declare, that I had as many lives as haire upon my head, willingly should I sacrifice them in his Cause; and under his Banner, my Loyalty shall now issue forth with streams of blood, being assured, that after my passing through the violent Billows of this raging sea, I shal then arrive at the eternal Haven of happiness, and there sing hallelujah with my glorious father in heaven, who is the most high and omnipotenet Protector of all the low and inferior Protectors here on Earth. And after some conference and prayer with the Minister, with an affable countenance, he cast off his Bouklet, and putting on a white Wastcoat, and a linnen Cap, he then went to prayers, where immediately after taking leav of his friends, he prostrated himself before the block, and laying his head down, rose up again, and said, Gentlemen, when I am dead and gone, remember you have a Royal Sovereign; and the lord unite your hearts and affections unto him After which, he willingly submitted himself to the block, and the Executioner coming to him, to ask forgiveness, and know the sign; He replied, the Lord forgive thee for I cannot. But when I lift up my right hand, do thy office, and accordingly the sign being given, the Executioner did his office, and at one blow severed his head from his shoulders; which being done, the head and the body were both put into a Coffin, & so carryed off the Scaffold.

One thing more is observable, that these two Gentlemen, which this day underwent the fatall stroke [the Portugal Ambassador was beheaded after Col. Gerrard], were the first that began the dispute at the Exchange; and moreover, that Mr. Gerards hands when he was in the Coffin, were seen to move, and lift up the Lid thereof.

A Perfect Account of The daily Intelligence from the Armies in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Navy at Sea.

Containing the insuing particulars.

The Speeches at large of Mr. John Gerrard upon the Scaffold at Tower Hill, and Mr. Peter Vowel at Cahring-Cross.

From Wednesday July 5 to Wednesday July 12 1654.³

Thursday July 6

This afternoon also the High Court of Justice sate in Westminster Hall, and there were brought them Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Vowel, and Mr. Fox; the prisoners were demanded what they had to say for themselvs, and Mr. Gerrard and Mr. Vowel lyke much to excuse themselvs, notwithstanding what had been pronoucing unto them. After which the L. President Lisle made a learned speech to convince of the desperate wickedness of their design, and how fully the particulars of the charge had been proved with what punishment the Law had provided in such cases: After which the sentence of the Court was read severally against all three, to this effect. That upon mature consideration of the Treasons and Murders plotted and contrived by them against his Highness the Lord Protector, and the Common-wealth and raising a bloody war in the same, the Court did adjudge them to be hanged by the neck until they be dead. Mr. Gerrard desired the Court that the Execution might be altered, and that he might either be beheaded, shot to death like a souldier; a Petition to this purpose was also presented to the Lord Protector.

Monday July 10

This day (according to the sentence of the High Court of Justice) Mr. Vowel was guarded to the place where Charing cross formerly stood, being the appointed place for execution, where he behaved himself with an undaunted resolution; and coming into the cart, directed his Speech to the people, to this effect, ...

This execution thus finished, about five a clock in the Afternoon, Col. Gerrard was brought from the Tower to the Scaffold on Tower Hill, where he nibbly ran up the stairs, seeming not in the least to be dismayed, & addressing himself to the people, he said, That he gloried to die for so good a Master as king Charles the Second, and that he had been a faithfull servant unto him, wishing him all happiness and prosperity. Then laying his neck to the block he looked up, and said, Gentlemen, When I am dead and gone, remember you have a Sovereign. Then lying down again, he lifted up his right hand (which was the sign) and the Executioner at one blow severed his head from body.

Mr. Somerset Fox appearing ingenious to the Court in his confession, was looked upon with an eye of mercy above the rest, and is reprieved by his Highness the Lord Protector, as was also ...

Mercurius Politicus

Comprising the Sum of all Intelligence, with the Affairs and Designs now on foot in the three Nations of England, Scotland, & Ireland

In defence of the Commonwealth, and for the Information of the People.

From Thursday, July 6 to Thursday July 13 1654⁴

Friday, July 7

³ The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 21 [cd]

⁴ The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E745 item 22 [cd]

The High Court of Justice were pleased to send Mr. Bond master of the Savoy, to the three persons by them sentenced the day before, to advise and prepare them for another world; In which Christian work having offer'd his best assistance he found master Vowel, the Schoolmaster of Islington, very stiff and conceited in his way, as he had appeared at the time of his Tryall, and so utterly refused to entertaine any discourse at all about the concernment of his soul.

Somerset Fox did now, as at his Tryall, behave himself with much ingenuity and sorrow for his offence, to that mercy hath been shown him, and it pleased his Highness the Lord Protector to grant him a Reprieve.

As for Mr. John Gerrard, he carried himself to the Minister, with hondsomnes and Freedom, but appeared perfect Cavalier, alledging his affection to the Late King, and that Interest. Fox being reprieved, it was determined the other 2 should be hanged together on Monday morning, July 10 upon a gallows to be erected at Charing-Crosse.

Whitehall July 10

As concerning the Prisoners lately condemned at the Upper Bench about the Portugall Riot and Murder at the New Exchange, and those that were the same day also sentenced by the high Court of Justice for Treason, they are thus disposed of. It pleases his Highness the Lord Protector to reprieve Summerset Fox, because of his ingenuous Confession, but this day the other 2 were executed for their Treasons against his Highness and Common wealth, Vowel, a Schoolmaster that lived at Islington, was in the morning executed upon a Gallows erected at Charing-Crosse, and in the same place it was expected Gerhard should have suffered the same death, but that he had the favour granted him to loose his head. Vowel spake little of the crime for which he suffered but the main of his discourse was to proclaim how great a Zelot he was to the old way of Religion, and to the cause of the late King and his family; wherein he let fall divers expressions tending to sedition, and few of repentence for his fault, touching which he would not speak out, but willed the executioner to do his office, and so after half an hours hanging he was cut down, and conveyed away in a Coach.

About 4 in the afternoon John Gerhard was brought to the Scaffold on Tower-hill, his behaviour was sprightly, the substance of his discourse Cavalier like, boasting himself to be the profession of Religion which was established by 2 Elizabeth; K. James and Charles, to which family he declared his affection. He acknowledged himself guilty of former sins (but named them not) for which he had deserved death heretofore; but as touching the crime for which he was to die, he spent not many words only he confessed that he knew of the plot. At length he submitted his neck to the Executioner; who at once sever'd the Head from the Body.

THE TRUE AND IMPARTIAL RELATION OF THE DEATH OF M. JOHN GERHARD, WHO WAS BEHEADED ON TOWER-HILL, JULY 10 MDCLIV. [1654]⁵

It was thought needless by the friends of M. Gerhard to declar any thing concerning his sufferings to the world more than in their sighs, had not the sacrilegious malice of the last weekly pamphlet thrown some stains upon his name, and so incensed them to a vindication as pious as his death was. Tis most certain that there can no blots stick upon true honour, which such weak fellows endeavour against it: These are cursed beasts, but their horns are short; sepulchral dogs that scrape up graves and violate the dead and are fierce and ravenous but yet dogs still. And all

⁵ The British Library, London, England, Thomason Tracts E810 item 10 [cd]

worthy people will call their railing praise, and what they intend a barking infamy the greatest merit. Yet because every understanding is not of the same brightness and those purrid libels may by ill chance fall into some innocent hand hereafter (and yet sure such vermin should not be endured long) therefore let wise and good men pardon him that hath undertaken this justice for that Gentleman, and be pleased to read this sad story, not for their satisfaction sake, but their sorrows: It may dry up a friendly tear perhaps, and still a murmuring groan to see the comly posture of his passion, how well all was carryed by him, and how honourably, and the honest circumstances may not improbable take off from the sadness. Why should I grieve that death which had such a living glory in it? Or dishonour that blood with feeble tears, which was shed so like the holy Martyrs? All that knew this person cannot but witness his general resolution, and whether his great courage fell less then if self (as that viper hisseth) or did not rather rise greater now, when the Christian was twisted with the Gentleman, let this faithful relation witness. In which, all tems and syllables may not be exactly the same, yet if there be a material falshood, or a wilful flattery, may his neck that wrote it feel a viler destiny then axes are or halters. Amicus Gerardus sed magis ansica veritius.

From the first day of his imprisonment he foresaw the heavie sentence hovering upon him, and therefore gave all diligence to secure himself against it; that however he underwent a temporary cndemnatio, he might escape an eternal. But after that sad doom was pronounced, then he bestirred himself amain, and made double hast for heaven, It was for his life, and therefore he would lose no minute, but the same night gave directions to a dear friend for a Minister (whom he knew to have long honoured his family) to be brought to him early next morning; and it pleased Authority to gratifie him in this great desire so that an order was sent freely for the quiet admission of any such person to him. With this spiritual friend he spent some hours every day in prayer, and other ghostly refreshments, which (God be praised) were not without sweet effect and impressions upon his soul. There were some other Ministers of great observation for grvity and godliness in these times, who visited him, and who I am confident will put their feal to this truth with me, that they found him meek, humblemodest penitent, comforted, and not far from the kingdom of God, if nor already in it; but I have good hope he was in possession, and so had he, through grace. Upon the morning (which was the last he must see until that of the Resurrection) he submitted to some wholsom orders of the Church, and received her comforts by them. That done, he proceeded to (the highest enjoyment of grace that can be administered upon earth) the holy communion, whereof with hs brother Sir Gilbert Gerard he was a partaker, with as much reverence, zeal, thankfulness, holy sorrows, and holy joys as a devout soul could eveidence He wept as if he would have washed his Savious wounds, which his faith preferred, in his tears; and yet he said he was admirablt ravished with all inward peace and comfort in his own conscience. This passed, he had now nothing to do but to dy, which he expected that morning very speedily; But by the pleasure of Authority, both the time and the place of his execution was altered, so that he was to wait a little longer, that evening, for his release. Many friends and persons of honour came to take their last leave of him, who can gladly witness his undisturbedness and civil cheerfulness to every one of them. His brother tarryed continually with him and they ate together; and though some eruptions od passion could not be restarined now and then where nature was so much concerned, yet they were generally pleasant, and at last passed (about half an hour before he was led forth to death) with as much calmness and placidness, as if they had been to meet again anon safe and unhurt as they had done formerly. So have I seen a windy and stormy day conclude in stillness and Sun-shine, as if weary and desiring

to rest without a breath of trouble. The Minister only waiting on him to the last; and about five a clock enters the Lieut. of the Tower, and the Sherif of London; Two sure friends, that will not leave him as long as he hath life remaining in him: They told him a sower message that they were come to conduct him to his death's blow: He reply'd they were very welcom, and received them so fearless and untroubled that the Sherif told the Minister, "He was sorry to see him so unfit for that condition"; but (under favour) he mistook his condition. That which he accounted fitness to dy, our Pamphlet monger would have called slugging and cowardise. So hard a thing it is to satisfie all curiosities, even with our blood, and nothing more ingenious then to carry this bitter cupeven, when so many misconstructions shake it. At his lodging he desired the Sherif that he would permit the Minister and three others that were his friends and servants to go upon the Scaffold with him; which as it was a reasonable wisdom in him to desire, so was it a fortunate kindness from them that granted it, else it may be their testimony might have been wanting to injured his reoutation. He took leave particularly of the household where he was a prisoner, and was to clearly collect in every thing he did, that he went out of his way into the kitchin to bid his Landlady farewel, giving thanks for her respects during his bonds, which he said he should dy into her. As he passed by the Guards in the Tower, he gave them money twice, and told them, he should trouble them no longer, being on his remove to better guards. He walked along to the Scaffold on Tower-hil, shewing a great deal both of humility and respect to the people, who generally lamented him, and prayed for him. As he went he was bare-headed for the most part, carrying his hat in his hand, and sometimes resting it in a careless bravery on his left side. When he came to (or rather leap'd upon) the Scaffold (for he was so far from flagging when to tread that Tragical Stage that many observ'd how sprightly he seemed to skip up the steps to it, as if he had gone to dance there rather then dy) his grim executioner presented himself to him, to whom he gave a cheerful smile he said, "Welcome honest friend"; And desiring to see his Ax, he took it into his hands, and kissing it, with a pretty glance of his eye (which was a natural loveliness in him) towards the Minister, he said, "This will do the Deed I warrant it." The Scaffold was very much crowded with people, yet as well as he could he made some turns too and fro upon it, with a paper (which he had taken out of his pocket) in his hand, wherein it seems he had prepared some heads of a speech which he intended to have delivered; but the Sherif and Lieutenant told him, if he spoke any thing, it must be very brief, and that they must not suffer him to speak any thing seditious; "Well Gentlemen", said he, "your will be done; but (God be praised) I never yet had to do with any thing that was seditious! I would fain have spoken something to clear myself to the world, according to the custom, if it might have been: But Sir," says he, turning to the Minister, "Let you and I speak to him that will give us leave"; and so kneeling down together in a corner of the stage, the Minister pray'd with him a short time, which done, they stood up again. Then turning himself to the people and putting off his hat, he told them, that "he was not permitted to speak a few words according to his intention, yet he doubted not but what he would have said would come to their eyes, though it must not come to their ears: But thou I desire all to take notice of," (and this he spoke with a double vehemence), "that I dy a faithful subject and servant to K. Charls the 2nd whom I pray God to bless, and restore to his rights; and had I ten thousand thousand lives, I would gladly lay them all down thus for his service." Here he was interrupted and the Sherif wished him rather to confess what he knew concerning the horrid plot he was condemned for? He answered. "That he had confessed all that he knew concerning any Plot: that he thought they knew more of the Plot that condemned him, then he did; but he heartly forgave them." The Minister told him, it was well done to forgive and pardon those that persecute us: That was an act of true Christian love, but as his case stood, love

was not enough; He ought to deal in this business (upon which his life lay) with all candour and sincerity, not concealing any thing of that nature as was charged against him, as far as he might glorify God and serve the public good. Upon which, lifting up his eyes toward heaven, and laying his hand upon breast, "Oh Sir," says he, "if there had been any such thing in his breast, would I not have revealed it before this time! I protest in the sight of Almighty God, I know no more of any such design, but only what I have often acknowledged, that it was motioned to me by Henshaw, (who I confidently believe is in their hands) and debated twice or thrice when I was with him: but I never entertained it at all, and at the last flatly disown'd it, and told him I would have nothing to do in it. He was many times pressing me to nominate what persons I knew I could bring, and to have their names: but let them show any such thing if they can against me. Put I am certain he is in their hands." Pausing here a little, and fetching a turn or two on the Scaffold, being very hot (as he had been all that morning) he called for some small beer, which he had given order to be ready, and was brought thither in a stone bottle, of which he drank a little once or twice. Then the Minister went to him, and minded him that something might be expected from him as to his Religion, and disposition to dye. To which (gathering up an extraordinary resolution in his face) he replied. "I dye a Christian, a true Christian, according to that Faith and Religion, which was professed of the Church of England in the time of our late King of blessed memory. And I praise God I am so suited and ready to dye, that I am confident by the merits of Christ Jesus, that my sins are pardoned, and my salvation is in thine hand." Then turning about he called for his wastcoat and cap, and throwing of (sic) his doublet put them on, whilst his servants helped to put up his hair. His wastcoat was not very clean, which he took notice of to his man: "but 'tis no great matter said he, if the heart be clean all's well enough." Being thus prepar'd, he calls for the Block: and viewing it (as with delight) laid himself down upon it, to see how it would fit, and was so far from sinking at the sight of it, that he almost played with it: and rising quickly pulls a little paper book out of his pocket, which he gave to the Minister, willing him to finde that particular Prayer which was proper for that occasion, but the crowd being great, he could not quickly finde it, so that he kneeled down with the book open a while in his hand as if he read; but quickly shut it, and prayed with great expressions of fervency by himself. When he had done the Lievetenant said something to him (as it seems) concerning his Brother "Charles" that had witnessed against him; I know not what the Lievetenant said. (for he spake low) but Mr. Gerard spake aloud, and replied passionately. "Oh Christ Sir I love my poor brother with all my heart he is but a youth and was terrified. I know how he was dealt with; tell him I love him as well as ever I lov'd him in my life. And commend me to my brother Sir Gilbert, whose release I beseech you Sir to affect: there being no more cause, that I know of for his imprisonment then onely that he was found in the same bed with me, which sure is no capital crime." Having said this, he took his leave with him, and the Sherif, and all he new on the Stage: and turning about once more to the people, desired them to pray for him, himself kneeling down with the Minister, laid his hand on his bosom, and they prayed together the last time. After this he bids them all arewell again, "and besought them to remember they had a poor sovereign abroad who deserved to be remembered." Then forgiving the Executioner, and saluting the Minister with his last embrace and kisses, he bow'd himself to the stroke of death, with as much Christian meekness and noble courage mix'd together, as I believe was ever seen in any that had bled upon that Alter. And this all the people that were spectators, did seem to understand and acknowledged beholding his fatal blow with a universal sadness and silence; whereas, when the other Gentleman fell quickly, after upon another stroke of blood and rye, they give great and general shout, as applauding the Justice of the "Portugals" death; but pitying and bewailing the untimely fall of so brave and

magnanimous a spirit, as did (through all the clouds of death) shine gloriously in this unfortunate Gentleman.

HIS SPEECH

Gentlemen:

As this kind of spectacle is no new entertainment to your ye, for you have a late glut of such objets: So it is no strange thing to me to be made such a spectacle; for I have been bred upon the Theater of death, and have learned that part so well, though I confess a very hard one, as to perform it pretty handsomly, both as becomes a Gentleman, and a Christian.

Only I must desire you to expect no fine prologue, or speech from me; I never studied to make orations: a very unfit man to lay plots against a State, who are feare able to lay a few lines of plain English together, as I ought: Put though I cannot speak happily, I doubt not but I shall dy happily.

I confess my self a great sinner, who is innocent? God be merciful to me a miserable sinner. I adore the justice of God in all this that is come upon me: I have desired to dy long since; and blessed be God who hath given me such time to prepare. But for this Crime, I stand condemned for today, I do protest mine own innocency, as to any consent or engagement to act in it.

I hope you will beleive me, when you consider upon what slender proofs and testimonies I suffer; none of them lega, or positive, but circumstantial.

For my Brother Charls, Alas poor youth! how he was wrought upon! But I desire all my friends to think honourably of him.

For my Brother Sir Gilbert,

This imagination of a Plot is said to have hatched in France, but I fear the nest was at Whitehall.

As for the King --- so far from concurring to such a Deed, that I am only unsatisfied in this, whether I shall dy right in his favour because suspected of any thing so unworthy of him.

I fear he lost his Kingdom by such practises; but whether he would recover them so, is a question: God hath better ways when it shall be good in his sight to plead his caus.

I was lately in France but on mine own score; for I have commanded thre, and probably might.

For my past life it hath been but a troublesome one, but now I hope I shall rest! Since I was any thing, I have served the King, as I was bound: And I with all that did so, had done it as faithfully!

He was condemned for a Tyrant, but God _____

For my Religion, though a Souldier, I am able to profess I am a christian Souldier, a true son of the Church of England, as constituted under Q. Elizabeth, K. James, and K. Charls of blessed memory. Her Doctrine and Government I embrace: Her Truth and Peace I pray God to restore.

I humbly give thanks to God Almighty for providing me the comfort of a Minister, on whose fidelity I might repose my soul.

And I pray God to bless the poor faithful Ministers of this Church, and give you hearts to esteem them; the want whereof is no small cause of our misery.

My days have been few and evil, yet God be blessed in all vanities and folly of youth, I have been far from Atheisme, or contempts of God worship; I had alwaies awful impressions of Gods honour and service; which is now my comfort.

And now dear Countryman fare you well, i pray God bless you all, this whole Nation.

Alas poor England! When will these black days be over! When will there be blood enough! I with mine might fill up the measure. I forgive all.

Once more fare you well; Commend me to all my friends, Pray for me.

I pray God make you as faithful and loyal as I have lived, and as happy as I shall be by and by

when I am dead.

Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Father of mercies have mercy on me!

Saviour of the world, save my soul.

O Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, hear my prayers!

Into thy hands O Lord I commend my Spirit.

Lord Jesus receive my soul.

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