



L I F E,

Last Words and Dying

S P E E C H

OF

STEPHEN SMITH.

A BLACK MAN, who was EXECUTED at BOSTON this Day being THURSDAY, October 12, 1797 for BURGLARY.

STEPHEN SMITH, was born in Virginia, in the County of Suflex, belonging to Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN. My Father was a religious Man, and gave me good Advice, which if I had followed would have prevented my DISGRACEFUL END. But my Mother encouraged me to *Steal*. My name was *Stephen*, the name of *Allen* I took from my Master, but changed it to that of *Smith*, that I might escape from my Master.

In my Youth I was guilty of many small Thefts. The first great Crime I committed was breaking up my Master's Tan Fass, and taking some Leather; for which he sent me to the West-Indias to be Sold. I concealed myself and returned to Virginia, in the same Vessel, and determined not to be carried back to my Master by the Captain. I stole the Boat and went on Shore unperceived, landed on an Island, and hid myself in the Woods till I was almost starved. I then broke into a House, got something to Eat, and Stole the Man's Shoes and Shirts, and returned to the Woods again, tarried two days, and then went to a Man's House to get some Victuals, but they tryed to take me: I run to the Woods and they shot at me and wounded me in the Leg. A few days alter, they took me and carried me to my Master again, who gave me to his Son, but quarrelling with his Overseer, he sent me again to the West-Indies. From thence I went to St. John's in Nova-Scotia, then to St. Ann's, where I was tried on four *Indictments*; one for striking a Lawyer; a second for striking the Goal Keeper: to these I plead Guilty, and was pardoned by the Governor, on condition that I should leave the Kingdom.

The *third Indictment* was for Shop-breaking; the *fourth* for breaking into a House; to these I pleaded not Guilty, and was cleared! though I confess I was Guilty of breaking into the House, but not the Shop.

I then came to Boston, where I lived seven Months, at which time I was taken and committed to Prison on four *Indictments*: two for House-breaking, and two for burning Houses; to which (though I was guilty of the whole) I pleaded not Guilty, but was cast on my Trial and CONDEMNED.

I set FIRE to the Houses of Mr. Turner, and Mr. Goldsbury, and robbed them; but I had no accomplice in these crimes, nor was I hired or encouraged by any one to commit them, nor had I any Malice against any Body; my only Object

was to obtain Money, for wicked Purposes. For this Lie of pleading *not Guilty*, I am ashamed before GOD, whom I have offended, and before Man. I took some Goods out of a Shop in Boston, in the Day Time; from Mr. Cushing a Bottle of Wine, and from Mr. Thomas Brewer a Bottle of Porter, with both whom I lived. With bad Women I have been connected, who have been a great cause of my *wretched END*. The Sabbath I broke, and neglected publick Worship. Such has been my wicked Life. I ask forgiveness of all whom I have injured: Although I have been such a great *Sinner* I hope GOD will forgive me for the sake of JESUS CHRIST: I trust in him for my Salvation. When I think how I have sinned against the great GOD, my heart breaks, and tears runs from my Eyes. To the Ministers who visited, and instructed me about my poor Soul, and the way of being saved, and who have often prayed with me, I give my sincere thanks. I forgive every Body, and hope that GOD will have mercy on me.

Now in the 28th Year of my Age I commit my spirit into the hands of a merciful and just GOD and hope he will receive me for his great mercy's sake. I die in peace with all mankind, and beg that all people will take warning by my Awful END.

STEPHEN SMITH.

The Prisoner about 15 minutes before two o'clock, set the Jail for the place of Execution. He was proceeded by Sheriff ALLEN, and his Deputies Messrs. HARTSHORN, SYMES, and BELL, on Horseback; and accompanied by the Rev. Doctors STILLMAN and THATCHER, on foot. At 2 o'clock the procession reached the place of execution, which was at the bottom of the common. The Sheriff read the warrant which authorized the Prisoner's Execution. Doctor THATCHER then addressed the fountain of mercy in a pertinent pathetic prayer. After a short conversation between the Rev. Gentlemen and Culprit, Dr. THATCHER, at his request, addressed the numerous croud which the awful occasion had collected, desired them to be warned by the fate of the Criminal, assured them that he received his Trial fair, forgave all who had ever injured him, and died in peace with the family of Mankind. After a lengthy pause, the Gentlemen of the Clergy having retired, SMITH, addressed himself to Sheriff ALLEN, Mr. HARTSHORN (as jailer) and Mr. LEWIS a Constable, and thanked them for their particular attention and kindness to him. The last moment drew near, the HALTER was put round the Culprit's neck, the white CAP drawn over his eyes, and, after an instant's pause, which HE appeared to devote to fervent though silent prayer, HE was led to the scaffold, the supporting line unfurled, and the executioner launched into ETERNITY. After HALF AN HOUR, HE was cut down, and put into his COFFIN.