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Anabaptists in London, 1575.

Evans i. 160. Peel i. 103.

ON Easter the third of April 1575, thirty Dutch men & women at prayer were arrested "by so small a guard that some could easily have escaped, if they could have felt liberty of conscience to do so." On the way to prison after the first examination, ten did escape, but afterwards freely gave themselves up. "An evil report arose that they denied God & Christ, & rejected all government, and all respect for the magistrates and civil power, as ungodly and unChristian. Therefore they sent a petition to her majesty, together with their confession. . . . Meantime the bishop issued certain articles in her majesty's name, one of which [37?] was that a Christian magistrate may with propriety punish obstinate heretics with the sword, and commanded all strangers to sign it." The two oldest, a poor man of 50 and a bridegroom goldsmith of 26, were burned on 22 July, on the supposition that "they rejected all worldly policy, laws and government, and incited the people to mutiny & sedition, because they taught that the magistracy is ungodly and unChristian." Thereupon two others tried to escape by filing the iron bar at the window, but failed & were more closely guarded. They gave in at an early stage a confession of faith, where the article concerning oaths publicly confessed their belief that man should not swear at all. Except in that detail, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church wrote that he would have subscribed every tenet.

He tells us that in June, about 14 women and one man were committed to Newgate, and then were repatriated to Holland and Zealand, though this favour was not allowed to most of the men. In Newgate they met many Englishmen, including a carpenter, with initials S.B., whom they won to their faith. A long correspondence of his with a baker named White survives in Dr. Williams' Library, & from Dr. Peel's calendar we gather that S.B. had long thought it unlawful to wear weapons, & when pressed in controversy he said that if a thief or murderer came to rob or kill, he would try to persuade him, or fly, but would not use weapon, wear weapon, or resist in any way. The arguments on this point, on taking oaths, & on the authority of magistrates, are developed at great length.