

THE ARRAIGNMENT, JUDGEMENT, CONFESSION, AND EXECUTION OF HUMPHREY STAFFORD, GENTLEMAN¹ (1607). For additional excerpts and a brief discussion of the pamphlet and its legal and cultural contexts, see the print anthology, pp. 59-69.

TO THE WORLD,
SOME SPECIAL REASONS FOR THE PUBLICATION HEREOF.

1. The worthy example of impartial justice in dooming to death so heinous an offender appears more perspicuously in him, being a gentleman of high birth and honourably descended, than if it had been executed upon a meaner² offender.

2. As he was a gentleman of good birth, so his much company-keeping³ could not choose but make his vicious life known unto many thousands, unto whom happily⁴ the report of his repentant death might never come, it being as great and just a cause of his friends' joy and comfort in that he made so godly an end, as it was a cause of grief and sorrow in that he lived so ungodly a life.

3. That his fall may be a warning to all such as shall read it, to beware they run not such a race as he did,⁵ lest thereby their lives be shortened as his was.

4. Because that some out of error, either of their own hearing or understanding, have given it out that he would have died desperately⁶ by casting himself from the ladder, for the truth of which their assertion they could not gather in all the time of his being upon the ladder any the least reason to induce them so to think; for so far was he from casting himself off that not but by the strength of the executioner's arm he could be turned off, because he would by no means be guilty of his own death.⁷

Lastly, know that some more particulars of his arraignment and also of his execution I could have set down, but the former with modesty cannot be well expressed here, although necessity constrained them to be uttered there,⁸ and the latter being things impertinent⁹ to this treatise concerning his repentance, I willingly forbear. Yet are neither so sparingly touched but that as much may be thereout gathered as concerns either thee to know or me to write.

Farewell.

¹ *Humphrey Stafford* unidentified.

² *meaner* less socially elevated.

³ *company-keeping* understood as having been a friend of morally dissolute men.

⁴ *happily* by chance, perchance, maybe.

⁵ *run such a race* See 1 Cor. 9.24 and 2 Tim. 4.7.

⁶ *died desperately* i.e., have committed suicide [rather than be hanged].

⁷ See the print anthology (p. 68) for Stafford's explicit rejection of any action that might suggest he dies in despair.

⁸ *there* in the court, and later on the scaffold.

⁹ *impertinent* irrelevant.