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have been Condemned and Executed for Murder, the Highway,  
Housebreaking, Street Robberies, Coining or other offences, by Arthur  
Lawrence Hayward**

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CRIMINALS WHO HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED FOR MURDER, THE HIGHWAY,  
HOUSEBREAKING, STREET ROBBERIES, COINING OR OTHER OFFENCES \*\*\*



The assailant is strangling his victim with a whip-thong; nearby is a typical roadside gallows with two highwaymen dangling from the cross-tree  
*(From the Newgate Calendar)*

**LIVES  
OF THE  
MOST REMARKABLE  
CRIMINALS**

**Who have been Condemned and Executed  
for Murder, the Highway, Housebreaking,  
Street Robberies, Coining or other offences**

*Collected from Original Papers and  
Authentic Memoirs, and  
Published in  
1735*

**EDITED BY**

**ARTHUR L. HAYWARD**

**NEW YORK**

**1927**

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### INTRODUCTION

*To close the scene of all his actions he*

*Was brought from Newgate to the fatal tree;*

*And there his life resigned, his race is run,*

*And Tyburn ends what wickedness begun.*

If there be a haunted spot in London it must surely be a few square yards that lie a little west of the Marble Arch, for in the long course of some six centuries over fifty thousand felons, traitors and martyrs took there a last farewell of a world they were too bad or too good to live in. From remote antiquity, when the seditious were taken *ad furcas Tyburnam*, until that November day in 1783 when John Austin closed the long list, the gallows were kept ever busy, and during the first half of the eighteenth century, with which this book deals, every Newgate sessions sent thither its thieves, highwaymen and coiners by the score.

There has been some discussion as to the exact site of Tyburn gallows, but there can be little doubt that the great permanent three-beamed erection—the Triple Tree—stood where now the Edgware Road joins Oxford Street and Bayswater Road. A triangular stone let into the roadway indicates the site of one of its uprights. In 1759 the sinister beams were pulled down, a moveable gibbet being brought in a cart when there was occasion to use it. The moveable gallows was in use until 1783, when the place of execution was transferred to Newgate; the beams of the old structure being sawn up and converted to a more genial use as stands for beer-butts in a neighbouring public-house.

The original gallows probably consisted of two uprights with a cross-piece, but when Elizabeth's government felt that more adequate means must be provided to strengthen its subjects' faith and enforce the penal laws against Catholics, a new type of gibbet was sought. So in 1571 the triangular one was erected, with accommodation for eight such miscreants on each beam, or a grand total of twenty-four at a stringing. It was first used for the learned Dr. John Story, who, upon June 1st, "was drawn upon a hurdle from the Tower of London unto Tyburn, where was prepared for him a new pair of gallows made in triangular manner". There is rather a gruesome

tale of how, when in pursuance of the sentence the executioner had cut him down and was "rifling among his bowels", the doctor arose and dealt him a shrewd blow on the head. Doctor Story was followed by a long line of priests, monks, laymen and others who died for their faith to the number of some three thousand. And the Triple Tree, the Three-Legged Mare, or Deadly Never-green, as the gallows were called with grim familiarity, flourished for another two hundred years.

In the early eighteenth century it appears to have been the usual custom to reserving sentencing until the end of the sessions, but as soon as the jury's verdict of guilty was known steps were taken to procure a pardon by the condemned man's friends. They had, indeed, much more likelihood of success in those times when the Law was so severe than in later days when capital punishment was reserved for the most heinous crimes. On several occasions in the following pages mention is made of felons urging their friends to bribe or make interest in the right quarters for obtaining a pardon, or commutation of the sentence to one of transportation. It was not until the arrival of the death warrant that the condemned man felt that the "Tyburn tippet" was really being drawn about his neck.

No better description can be given of the ride to Tyburn tree, from Newgate and along Holborn, than that furnished by one of the *Familiar Letters* written by Samuel Richardson in 1741:

I mounted my horse and accompanied the melancholy cavalcade from Newgate to the fatal Tree. The criminals were five in number. I was much disappointed at the unconcern and carelessness that appeared in the faces of three of the unhappy wretches; the countenance of the other two were spread with that horror and despair which is not to be wondered at in men whose period of life is so near, with the terrible aggravation of its being hastened by their own voluntary indiscretion and misdeeds. The exhortation spoken by the Bell-man, from the wall of St. Sepulchre's churchyard is well intended; but the noise of the officers and the mob was so great, and the silly curiosity of people climbing into the cart to take leave of the criminals made such a confused noise that I could not hear the words of the exhortation when spoken, though they are as follows:

All good people pray heartily to God for these poor sinners, who are  
  
now going to their deaths; for whom this great bell doth toll.

You that are condemned to die, repent with lamentable tears. Ask  
  
mercy of the Lord for the salvation of your own souls through the  
  
merits, death and passion of Jesus Christ, Who now sits at the right  
  
hand of God, to make intercession for as many of you as penitently  
  
return unto Him.

Lord, have mercy upon you! Christ have mercy upon you!

Which last words the Bell-man repeats three times.

All the way up to Holborn the crowd was so great as at every twenty or thirty yards to obstruct the passage; and wine, notwithstanding a late good order against this practice, was brought to the malefactors, who drank greedily of it, which I thought did not suit well with their deplorable circumstances. After this the three thoughtless young men, who at first seemed not enough concerned, grew most shamefully wanton and daring, behaving, themselves in a manner that would have been ridiculous in men in any circumstances whatever. They swore, laughed, and talked obscenely, and wished their wicked companions good luck with as much assurance as if their employment had been the most lawful.

At the place of execution the scene grew still more shocking, and the clergyman who attended was more the subject of ridicule than of their serious attention. The Psalm was sung amidst the curses and quarrelling of hundreds of the most abandoned and profligate of mankind, upon them (so stupid are they to any sense of decency) all the preparation of the unhappy wretches seems to serve only for subject of a barbarous kind of mirth, altogether inconsistent with humanity. And as soon as the poor creatures were half dead, I was much surprised to see the populace fall to hauling and pulling the carcasses with so much earnestness as to occasion several warm rencounters and broken heads. These, I was told, were the friends of the persons executed, or such as, for the sake of to-night, chose to appear so: as well as some persons sent by private surgeons to obtain bodies for dissection. The contests between these were fierce and bloody, and frightful to look at; so I made the best of my way out of the crowd, and with some difficulty rode back among the large number of people who had been upon the same errand as myself. The face of every one spoke a kind of mirth, as if the spectacle they had beheld had afforded pleasure instead of pain, which I am wholly unable to account for....

One of the bodies was carried to the lodging of his wife, who not being in the way to receive it, they immediately hawked it about to every surgeon they could think of; and when none would buy it they rubbed tar all over it, and left it in a field scarcely covered with earth.

In a few words, too, Swift draws a vivid picture of a rogue on his last journey through the London streets:

His waistcoat, and stockings, and breeches were white;

His cap had a new cherry ribbon to tie't.

The maids to the doors and the balconies ran,

And said, "Lack-a-day, he's a proper young man!"

But as from the windows the ladies he spied,

Like a beau in a box, he bow'd low on each side.

Execution day, or Tyburn Fair, as it was jocularly called, was not only a holiday for the ragamuffins and idlers of London; folk of all classes made their way thither to indulge a morbid desire of seeing the dying agonies of a fellow being, criminal or not. There were grand stands and scaffoldings from which the more favoured could view the proceedings in comfort, and every inch of window space and room on the neighbouring roofs was worth a pretty penny to the owners. In his last scene of the career of the Idle Apprentice Hogarth drew a picture of Tyburn Tree which no description can amplify.

As the procession drew near the hangman clambered to the cross-piece of the gallows and lolled there, pipe in mouth, until the first cart drew up beneath him. Then he would reach down, or one of his assistants would pass up, one after the other, the loose ends of the halters which the condemned men had had placed round their necks before leaving Newgate. When all were made fast Jack Ketch climbed down and kicked his heels until the sheriff, or maybe the felons themselves, gave him the sign to drive away the cart and leave its occupants dangling in mid-air. The dead men's clothes were his perquisite, and now was his time to claim them. There is a graphic description of how, on one occasion, when the murderer "flung down his handkerchief for the signal for the cart to move on, Jack Ketch, instead of instantly whipping on the horse, jumped on the other side of him to snatch up the handkerchief, lest he should lose his rights. He then returned to the head of the cart and jehu'd him out of the world".

As the cart drew away a few carrier pigeons, which were released from the galleries, flew off City-ward to bear the tidings to Newgate.

Perhaps as good a description of the actual event as can be obtained is contained in a letter from Anthony Storer to his friend George Selwyn, a morbid cynic whose cruel and tasteless bon-mots were hailed as wit by Horace Walpole and his cronies. The execution was that of Dr. Dodd, the "macaroni parson", whose unfortunate vanity led him to forgery and Tyburn. The date—June 27, 1777—is considerably after the period of our book, but the description applies as well as if it had

been written expressly for it.

Upon the whole, the piece was not very full of events. The doctor, to all appearances, was rendered perfectly stupid from despair. His hat was flapped all round, and pulled over his eyes, which were never directed to any object around, nor even raised, except now and then lifted up in the course of his prayers. He came in a coach, and a very heavy shower of rain fell just upon his entering the executioner's cart, and another just at his putting on his nightcap. During the shower an umbrella was held over his head, which Gilly Williams, who was present, observed was quite unnecessary, as the doctor was going to a place where he might be dried.

He was a considerable time in praying, which some people standing about seemed rather tired with; they rather wished for a more interesting part of the tragedy. The wind, which was high, blew off his hat, which rather embarrassed him, and discovered to us his countenance, which we could scarcely see before. His hat, however, was soon restored to him, and he went on with his prayers. There were two clergymen attending on him, one of whom seemed very much affected. The other, I suppose, was the Ordinary of Newgate, as he was perfectly indifferent and unfeeling in everything he did and said.

The executioner took both the hat and wig off at the same time. Why he put on his wig again I do not know, but he did; and the doctor took off his wig a second time, and then tied on the nightcap which did not fit him; but whether he stretched that or took another, I did not perceive. He then put on his nightcap himself, and upon his taking it he certainly had a smile on his countenance, and very soon afterwards there was an end of all his hopes and fears on this side of the grave. He never moved from the place he first took in the cart; seemed absorbed in despair and utterly dejected; without any other sign of animation but in praying. I stayed until he was cut down and put in the hearse.

But the hangman's work was not always done when he had turned off his man. The full sentence for high treason, for example, provided him with much more occupation. In the first place, the criminal was drawn to the gallows and not carried or allowed to walk. Common humanity had mitigated this sentence to being drawn upon a hurdle or sledge, which preserved him from the horrors of being dragged over the stones. Having been hanged, the traitor was then cut down alive, and Jack Ketch set about disembowelling him and burning his entrails before he died. The head was then completely severed, the body quartered and the dismembered pieces taken away for exhibition at Temple Bar and other prominent places.

Here is the account of one such execution. "After the traitor had hung six minutes he was cut down, and having life in him, as he lay upon the block to be quartered, the executioner gave him several blows on his breast, which not having the effect designed, he immediately cut his throat; after which he took his head off; then ripped him open and took out his bowels and heart, and then threw them into a fire which consumed them. Then he slashed his four quarters and put them with the head into a coffin.... His head was put on Temple Bar and his body and limbs suffered to be buried."

Such proceedings were exceptional, however. In the majority of executions the body was taken down when life was considered to be extinct, and carried away to Surgeon's Hall for dissection. Sometimes the relatives used their influence to have the corpse handed over to them (often not even in a coffin) and they then carried it away in a coach for decent burial, or to try resuscitation. Occasionally, indeed, hanged men came to life again. In 1740 one *Duel*, or *Dewell*, was hanged for a rape, and his body taken to Surgeons' Hall in the ordinary routine. As one of the attendants was washing it he perceived signs of life. Steps were taken immediately and *Duel* was brought to, and eventually taken away in triumph by the mob, who had got wind of the affair and refused to allow the Law to re-hang their man. A little earlier something of the same sort had happened to *John Smith*, who had been hanging for five minutes and a quarter, during which time the hangman "pulled him by the legs and used other means to put a speedy period to his life", when a reprieve arrived and he was cut down. He was hurried away to a neighbouring tavern where restoratives were given, blood was let, and after a time he came to himself, "to the great admiration of the spectators". According to his own account of the affair, he felt a terrible pain when first the cart drew away and left him dangling, but that ceased almost at once, his last sensation being that of a light glimmering fitfully before his eyes. Yet all his previous agony was surpassed when he was being brought to, and the blood began to circulate freely again. A last ignominy, and one strangely dreaded by some of the most hardened criminals, was hanging in irons. When life was extinct the corpse was placed in a sort of iron cage and thus suspended from a gibbet, usually by the highway or near the place where the crime had been committed. There it hung until it fell to pieces from the effects of Time and the weather, and only a few hideous bones and scraps of dried flesh remained as evidence of the strong hand of the Law.

With the exception of minor alterations in punctuation and spellings this book is a complete reprint of three volumes printed and sold by *John Osborn*, at the *Golden Ball*, in *Paternoster Row*, 1735.

A. L. H.

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# LIVES OF THE CRIMINALS

## VOLUME ONE

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### THE PREFACE

*The clemency of the Law of England is so great that it does not take away the life of any subject whatever, but in order to the preservation of the rest both by removing the offender from a possibility of multiplying his offences, and by the example of his punishment intending to deter others from such crimes as the welfare of society requires should be punished with the utmost severity of the Law. My intention in communicating to the public the lives of those who, for about a dozen years past have been victims to their own crimes, is to continue to posterity the good effects of such examples, and by a recital of their vices to warn those who become my readers from ever engaging in those paths which necessarily have so fatal an end. In the work itself I have, as well as I am able, painted in a proper light those vices which induce men to fall into those courses which are so justly punished by the Legislature.*

*I flatter myself that however contemptible the Lives of the Criminals, etc., may seem in the eyes of those who affect great wisdom and put on the appearance of much learning, yet it will not be without its uses amongst the middling sort of people, who are glad to take up with books within the circle of their own comprehension. It ought to be the care of all authors to treat their several subjects so that while they are read for the sake of amusement they may, as it were imperceptibly, convey notions both profitable and just. The adventures of those who, for the sake of supplying themselves with money for their debaucheries, have betaken themselves to the desperate trade of knights of the road, often have in them circumstances diverting enough and such as serve to show us what sort of amusements they are by which vice betrays us to ruin, and how the fatal inclination to gratify our passions hurries us finally to destruction.*

*I would not have my readers imagine however, because I talk of rendering books of this kind useful, that I have thrown out any part of what may be styled interesting. On the contrary, I have carefully preserved this and as far as the subject would give me leave, improved it, but with this caution always, that I have set forth the entertainments of vice in their proper colours, lest young people might be led to take them for innocent diversions, and from figures not uncommon in modern authors, learn to call lewdness gallantry, and the effects of unbridled lust the starts of too warm an imagination. These are notions which serve to cheat the mind and represent as the road of pleasure that which is indeed the highway to the gallows. This, I conceived, was the use proper to be made of the lives, or rather the deaths of malefactors, and if I have done no other good in writing them, I shall have at least this satisfaction, that I have preserved them from being presented to the world in such a dress as might render the Academy of Thieving their proper title, a thing once practised before, and if one may guess from the general practice of mankind, might probably have been attempted again, with success. How a different method will fare in the world, time only can determine, and to that I leave it. Yet considering the method in which I treat this subject, I readily foresaw one objection which occasioned my writing so long a preface as this, in order that it might be fully obviated.*

*Though in the body of the work itself I have carefully traced the rise of those corrupt inclinations which bring men to the committing of facts within the cognizance of the Law, it still remains necessary that my readers also become acquainted, at least in general, with what those facts are which are so severely punished. In doing this I shall not speak of matters in the style of a lawyer, but preserve the same plainness of language which, as I thought it the most proper, I have endeavoured throughout the whole piece.*

*The order of things requires that I should first of all take notice how the Law comes to have a right of punishing those who live under it with Death or other grievous penalties, and this in a few words arises thus. We enter into society for the sake of protection, and as this renders certain laws necessary, we are justly concluded by them in other cases for the protection of others; but of all the criminal institutions which have been settled in any nation, never was any more just, more reasonable, or fuller of clemency, than that which is called the Crown Law in England. In speaking of this it may not be improper to explain the meaning of that term, which seems to take its rise from the conclusion of indictments, which run always contra pacem dicti domini regis, coronam et dignitatem suam (against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity) and therefore, as the Crown is always the prosecutor against such offenders, the Law which creates the offence is with propriety enough styled the Crown Law.*

*The first head of Crown Law is that which concerns offences committed against God, and anciently there were three which were capital, viz., heresy, witchcraft and sodomy; but the law passed in the reign of King Charles the Second for taking away the writ de Hæretica comburendo, leaves the first not now punishable with death, even in its highest degree. However, by a statute made in the reign of King William, persons educated in the Christian religion who are convicted of denying the Trinity, the Christian religion, or the authority of the Scriptures, are for the first offence to be adjudged incapable of office, for the second to be disabled from suing in any action, and over and above other incapacities to suffer three years' imprisonment. As to witchcraft, it was formerly punished in the same manner as heresy. In the time of Edward the Third, one taken with the head and face of a dead man and a book of sorcery about him, was*

brought into the King's Bench, and only sworn that he would not thenceforth be a sorcerer, and so dismissed, the head, however, being burnt at his charge. There was a law made against conjurations, enchantments and witchcraft, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, but it stands repealed by a statute of King James's time, which is the law whereon all proceedings at this day are founded. By this law, any person invoking or conjuring any evil spirit, covenanting with, employing, feeding, or rewarding them, or taking up any dead person out of their grave, or any part of them, and making use of it in any witchcraft, sorcery, etc., shall suffer death as a felon, without benefit of clergy, and this whether the spirits appear, or whether the charm take effect or no. By the same statute those who take upon them by witchcraft, etc., to tell where treasure is hid, or things lost or stolen should be found, or to engage unlawful love, shall suffer for the first offence a year's imprisonment, and stand in the pillory once every quarter in that year six hours, and if guilty a second time, shall suffer death; even though such discoveries should prove false, or charms, etc., should have no effect. Executions upon this Act were heretofore frequent, but of late years, prosecutions on these heads in which vulgar opinion often goes a great way have been much discouraged and discontinued. As for the last head it remains yet capital, by virtue of a statute made in the reign of Henry VIII, which had been repealed in the first of Queen Mary, and was revived in the fifth of Queen Elizabeth, by which statute, after reciting that the laws then in being in this realm were not sufficient for punishing that detestable vice, it is enacted that such crimes for the future, whether committed with mankind or beasts, should be punished as felonies without benefit of clergy.

It is wide of my purpose to dwell any longer on those crimes which are by the laws styled properly against God, seeing none of the persons mentioned in the following work were executed for doing anything against them. Let us therefore pass on to the second great branch of the Crown Law, viz., offences immediately against the King, and these are either treasons or felonies. Of treasons there are four kinds, all settled by the Statute of the 25th of Edward the Third. The two latter only, viz., offences against the King's great or privy seal, and offences in counterfeiting money, have anything to do with our present design, and therefore we shall speak particularly of them. Not only the persons who actually counterfeit those seals, but even the aiders and consenters to such counterfeiting, are within the Act, and by a statute made in the reign of Queen Mary, counterfeiting the sign manual or privy signet, is also made high treason. By the same statute of Edward the Third, the making of false money, or the bringing it into this realm, in deceit of our Lord the King and his people, was also declared to be high treason, but this Act being found insufficient, clippers being not made guilty either of treason or of misprison of treason, it was helped in that respect by several other Acts; but the fullest of all was the Act made in the reign of the late King William, and rendered perpetual by a subsequent Law made in the reign of her late Majesty [Anne], whereby it is enacted, that whoever shall make, mend, buy, sell, or have in his possession, any mould or press for coining, or shall convey such instruments out of the King's Mint, or mark on the edges of any coin current or counterfeit, or any round blanks of base metal, or colour or gild any coin resembling the coin of this kingdom, shall suffer death as in case of high treason. At the time when these laws were made coining and clipping were at a prodigious height, and practised not only by mean and indigent persons but also by some of tolerable character and rank, insomuch that these executions were numerous for some years after passing the said Act, which as it created some new species of high treason, so it also made felony some other offences against the coin which were not so, or at least were not clearly so before, viz., to blanch copper for sale; or to mix blanch copper with silver, or knowingly or fraudulently to buy any mixture which shall be heavier than silver, and look, touch, and wear like gold, but be manifestly worse; or receive, or pay any counterfeit money at a lower rate than its denomination doth import, shall be guilty of felony.

A third head under which, in this cursory account of Crown Law, I shall range other offences that are punished capitally, are those against our fellow subjects, and they are either committed against their lives, their goods or their habitations. With respect to those against life, if one person kill another without any malice aforethought, then that natural tenderness of which the Law of England is full, interposes for the first fact, which in such a case is denominated manslaughter. Yet there is a particular kind of manslaughter which, by the first of King James, is made felony without benefit of clergy, and that is, where a person shall stab or thrust any person or persons that have not any weapon drawn (or that have not first struck the party which shall so stab or thrust), so that the person or persons so stabbed or thrust shall die within six months next following, though it cannot be proved that the same was done of malice aforethought. This Act it is which is commonly called the Statute of Stabbing.

As to murder properly so called, and taking it as a term in the English Law, it signifies the killing of any person whatsoever from malice aforethought, whether the person slain be an Englishman or not, and this may not only be done directly by a wound or blow, but also by deliberately doing a thing which apparently endangers another's life, so that if death follow thereon he shall be adjudged to have killed him. Such was the case of him who carried his sick father from one town to another against his will in a frosty season. It would be too long for this Preface, should I endeavour to distinguish the several cases which in the eye of the Law come under this denomination; having, therefore, a view to the work itself, I shall distinguish two points only from which malice prepense is presumed in Law.

(1) Where an express purpose appears in him who kills, to do some personal injury to him who is slain; in which case malice is properly to be expressed.

(2) Where a person in the execution of an unlawful action kills another, though his principal



*intent was not to do any personal injury to the person slain; in which case the malice is said to be implied.*

*As to duels where the blood has once cooled, there is no doubt but he who kills another is guilty of wilful murder; or even in case of a sudden quarrel, if the person killing appear by any circumstance to be master of his temper at the time he slew the other, then it will be murder. Not that the English Law allows nothing to the frailties of human nature, but that it always exerts itself where there appears to have been a person killed in cool blood. For this reason the seconds at a premeditated duel have been held guilty of murder, nor will the justice of the English Law be defeated where a person appears to have intended a less hurt than death, if that hurt arose from a desire of revenge in cool blood; for if the person dies of the injury it will be murder. So, also, where the revenge of a sudden provocation is executed in a cruel manner, though without intention of death, yet if it happen, it is murder.*

*We come now to those kinds of killing in which the Law, from the second method of reasoning we have spoken of, implies malice, and into which slaying of others, those unfortunate persons of whom we speak in the following sheets were mostly led either through the violence of their passions, or through the necessity into which they are often drawn by the commission of thefts and other crimes. Thus, were a person to kill another in doing a felony, though it be by accident, or where a person fires at one who resists his robbing him and by such firing kills another against whom he had no design, yet from the evil intention of the first act, he becomes liable for all its consequences, and the fact, by an implication of malice, will be adjudged murder. Nay, though there be no design of committing felony, but only of breaking the peace, yet if a man be slain in the tumult they will all be guilty of murder, because their first act was a deliberate breach of the Law. There is yet another manner of killing which the Law punishes with the utmost severity, which is resisting an officer, civil or criminal, in the execution of his office (arresting a person) so that he be slain, yet though he did not produce his warrant, the offence will be adjudged murder. And if persons who design no mischief at all, do unadvisedly commit any idle wanton act which cannot but be attended with manifest danger, such as riding with a horse known to kick amongst a crowd of people, merely to divert oneself by putting them in a fright, and by such riding a death ensues, there such a person will be judged guilty of murder. Yet some offences there are of so transcendent a cruelty that the Law hath thought fit to difference them from the other murders, and these are of three sorts, viz., where a servant kills his master; where a wife kills her husband; where an ecclesiastical man kills his prelate to whom he owes obedience. In all these cases the Law makes the crimes Petit Treason.*

*From crimes committed against the lives of men we descend next to offences against their goods, in which, that we may be the more clearly understood, we shall begin with the lowest kind of thefts. The Law calls it larceny where there is felonious and fraudulent taking and carrying away the mere personal goods of another, so long as it be neither from his person nor out of his house. If the value of such goods be under twelvepence, then it is called petty larceny, and is punishable only by whipping or other corporal punishments; but if they exceed that value, then it is grand larceny, and is punishable with death, where benefit of clergy is not allowed.*

*There are a multitude of offences contained under the general title of grand larceny, and, therefore, as I intend only to give my readers such a general idea of Crown Law as may serve to render the following pages more intelligible, so I shall dwell on such particulars as are more especially useful in that respect, and leave the perfect knowledge of the pleas of the Crown to be attained by the study of the several books which treat of them directly and fully. There was until the reign of King William, a doubt whether a lodger who stole the furniture of his lodgings were indictable as a felon, inasmuch as he had a special property in the goods, and was to pay the greater rent in consideration of them. To clear this, a Statute was made in the afore-mentioned reign, by which it is declared larceny and felony for any person to steal, embezzle, or purloin any chattel or furniture which by contract he was to have the use of in lodging; and by a Statute made in the reign of Henry VIII, it is enacted that all servants being of the age of eighteen years, and not apprentices, to whom goods and chattels shall be delivered by their masters or mistresses for them to keep, if they shall go away with, or shall defraud or embezzle any part of such goods or chattels, to the value of forty shillings or upwards, then such false and fraudulent act be deemed and adjudged felony.*

*But besides simple larceny, which is divided into grand and petty, there is a mixed larceny which has a greater degree of guilt in it, as being a taking from the person of a man or from his house. Larceny from the person of a man either puts him in fear, and then it is a robbery, or does not put him in fear, and then it is a larceny from the person, and of this we shall speak first. It is either committed without a man's knowledge, and in such a case it is excluded from benefit of clergy, or it is openly done before the person's face, and then it is within the benefit of clergy, unless it be in a dwelling-house and to the value of forty shillings, in which case benefit is taken away by an Act made in the reign of the late Queen. Larceny from the house is at this day in several cases excluded from benefit of clergy, but in others it is allowed.*

*Robbery is the taking away violently and feloniously the goods or money from the person of a man, putting him in fear; and this taking is not only with the robber's own hands, but if he compel, by the terror of his assault, the person whom he robs to give it himself, or bind him by such terrible oaths, that afterwards in conscience he thinks himself obliged to give it, is a taking within the Law, and cannot be purged from any delivery afterwards. Yea, where there is a gang of several persons, only one of which robs, they are all guilty as to the circumstance of putting in fear, wherever a person attacks another with circumstances of terror, as though fear obliged him*

*to part with his money though it be without weapons drawn, and the person taking it pretend to receive it as an alms. And in respect of punishment, though judgment of death cannot be given in any larceny whatsoever, unless the goods taken exceed twelve pence in value, yet in robbery such judgment is given, let the value of the goods be ever so small.*

*As to crimes committed against the habitations of men, there are two kinds, viz., burglary and arson.*

*Burglary is a felony at Common Law, and consists in breaking and entering the mansion house of another in the night time with an intent of committing a felony therein, whether that intention be executed or not. Here, from the best opinions, is to be understood such a degree of darkness as hinders a man's countenance from being discerned. The breaking and entering are points essential to be proved in order to make any fact burglary; the place in which it is committed must be a dwelling house, and the breaking and entering such a dwelling house must be an intent of committing felony, and not a trespass; and this much I think is sufficient to define the nature of this crime, which notwithstanding the many examples which have been made of it, is still too much practised. As to arson, by which the Law understand maliciously and voluntarily burning the house of another by night or by day; to make a man guilty of this it must appear that he did it voluntarily and of malice aforethought.*

*Besides these, there are several other felonies which are made so by Statute, such as rapes committed on women by force, and against their will. This offence was anciently punished by putting out the eyes and cutting off the testicles of the offenders; it was afterwards made a felony, and by a statute in Queen Elizabeth's reign, excluded from benefit of clergy. By an Act made in the reign of King Henry the Seventh, taking any woman (whether maid, wife or widow) having any substance, or being heir apparent to her ancestors, for the lucre of such substance, and either to marry or defile the said woman against her will, then such persons and all those procuring or abetting them in the said violence, shall be guilty of felony, from which, by another Act in Queen Elizabeth's reign, benefit of clergy is taken. Also by an Act in the reign of King James the First, any person marrying, their former husband or wife being then alive, such persons shall be deemed guilty of felony, but benefit of clergy is yet allowed for this offence.*

*As it often happens that boisterous and unruly people, either in frays or out of revenge, do very great injuries unto others, yet without taking away their lives, in such a case the Law adjudges the offender who commits a mayhem to the severest penalties. The true definition of a mayhem is such a hurt whereby a man is rendered less able in fighting, so that cutting off or disabling a man's hand, striking out his eye, or foretooth, were mayhems at Common Law. But by the Statute of King Charles the Second, if any person or persons, with malice aforethought, by lying in wait, unlawfully cut out or disable the tongue, put out an eye, slit the nose, or cut off the nose or lip of any subject of his Majesty, with an intention of maiming or disfiguring, then the person so offending, their counsellors, aiders and abettors, privy to the offence, shall suffer death, as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy; which Act is commonly called the Coventry Act, because it was occasioned by the slitting of the nose of a gentleman of that name, for a speech made by him in Parliament.<sup>[1]</sup>*

*As nothing is of greater consequence to the commonwealth than public credit, so the Legislature hath thought fit, by the highest punishments, to deter persons from committing such facts for the lucre of gain, as might injure the credit of the nation. For this purpose, an Act was made in the reign of the late King William, by which forging or counterfeiting the common seal of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, or of any sealed bank-bill given out in the name of the said Governor and Company for the payment of any sum of money, or of any bank-note whatsoever, signed by the said Governor and Company of the Bank of England, or altering or raising any bank-bill, or note of any sort, is declared to be felony, without benefit of clergy. Upon this Statute there have been several convictions, and it is hoped men are pretty well cured of committing this crime, by that care those in the direction of the Bank have always taken to bring offenders of this kind to justice.*

*By an Act also passed in the reign of King William, persons who counterfeit any stamp which by its mark relates to the Revenue, shall be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, and upon this also there have been some executions.*

*But as the public companies established in this kingdom have often occasion to borrow money under their common seal, which bonds, so sealed, are transferable and pass currently from hand to hand as ready money, so for the greater security of the subject the counterfeiting the common seal of the South Sea Company, or altering any bond or obligation of the said company, is rendered felony without benefit of clergy. Some other statutes of the same nature in respect to lottery tickets, etc., have been made to create felonies of the counterfeiting thereof, but of these and some other later Statutes, I forbear mentioning here, because I have spoken particularly of them in the cases where persons have been punished for transgressing them.*

*As I have already exceeded the bounds which I at first intended should have restrained my Preface, so I forbear lengthening it in speaking of lesser crimes, few of which concern the persons whose lives are to be found in the following volume. Therefore I shall conclude here, only putting my readers once more in mind that by this work the intent of the Law, in punishing malefactors, is more perfectly fulfilled, since the example of their deaths is transmitted in a proper light to posterity.*

<sup>[1]</sup>

Sir John Coventry, M. P. for Weymouth, in the course of a debate on a proposed levy on playhouses, asked "whether did the king's pleasure lie among the men or the women that acted?" This open allusion to Charles's relations with Nell Gwynn and Moll Davies enraged the Court party, and on Dec. 21, 1670, as Sir John was going to his house in Suffolk Street, he was waylaid by a brutal gang under Sir Thomas Sandys, dragged from his carriage, and his nose slit to the bone. This outrage caused great indignation, and the Coventry Act mentioned in the text was passed, 22 & 23 Car. II. The perpetrators of the deed escaped.

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## **The Life of JANE GRIFFIN, who was Executed for the Murder of her Maid, January 29, 1719-20**

Passion, when it once gains an ascendant over our minds, is often more fatal to us than the most deliberate course of vice could be. On every little start it throws us from the paths of reason, and hurries us in one moment into acts more wicked and more dangerous than we could at any other time suffer to enter our imagination. As anger is justly said to be a short madness, so, while the frenzy is upon us, blood is shed as easily as water, and the mind is so filled with fury that there is no room left for compassion. There cannot be a stronger proof of what I have been observing than in the unhappy end of the poor woman who is the subject of this chapter.

Jane Griffin was the daughter of honest and substantial parents, who educated her with very great tenderness and care, particularly with respect to religion, in which she was well and rationally instructed. As she grew up her person grew agreeable, and she had a lively wit and a very tolerable share of understanding. She lived with a very good reputation, and to general satisfaction, in several places, till she married Mr. Griffin, who kept the Three Pigeons in Smithfield<sup>[2]</sup>.

She behaved herself so well and was so obliging in her house that she drew to it a very great trade, in which she managed so as to leave everyone well satisfied. Yet she allowed her temper to fly out into sudden gusts of passion, and that folly alone sullied her character to those who were witnesses of it, and at last caused a shameful end to an honest and industrious life.

One Elizabeth Osborn, coming to live with her as a servant, she proved of a disposition as Mrs. Griffin could by no means agree with. They were continually differing and having high words, in which, as is usual on such occasions, Mrs. Griffin made use of wild expressions, which though she might mean nothing by them when she spoke them, yet proved of the utmost ill consequence, after the fatal accident of the maid's death. For being then given in evidence, they were esteemed proofs of malice prepense, which ought to be a warning to all hasty people to endeavour at some restraint upon their tongues when in fits of anger, since we are not only sure of answering hereafter for every idle word we speak, but even here they may, as in this case, become fatal in the last degree.

It was said at the time those things were transacted that jealousy was in some degree the source of their debates, but of that I can affirm nothing. It no way appeared as to the accident which immediately drew on her death, and which happened after this manner.

One evening, having cut some cold fowl for the children's supper, it happened the key of the cellar was missing on a sudden, and on Mrs. Griffin's first speaking of it they began to look for it. But it not being found, Mrs. Griffin went into the room where the maid was, and using some very harsh expression, taxed her with having seen it, or laid it out of the way. Instead of excusing herself modestly, the maid flew out also into ill language at her mistress, and in the midst of the fray, the knife with which she had been cutting lying unluckily by her, she snatched it up, and stuck it into the maid's bosom; her stays happening to be unluckily open, it entered so deep as to give her a mortal wound.

After she had struck her Mrs. Griffin went upstairs, not imagining that she had killed her, but the alarm was soon raised on her falling down, and Mrs. Griffin was carried before a magistrate, and committed to Newgate. When she was first confined, she seemed hopeful of getting off at her trial, yet though she did not make any confession, she was very sorrowful and concerned. As her trial drew nearer, her apprehensions grew stronger, till notwithstanding all she could urge in her defence, the jury found her guilty, and sentence was pronounced as the Law directs.

Hitherto she had hopes of life, and though she did not totally relinquish them even upon her conviction, yet she prepared with all due care for her departure. She sent for the minister of her own parish, who attended her with great charity, and she seemed exceedingly penitent and heartily sorry for her crime, praying with great favour and emotion.

And as the struggling of an afflicted heart seeks every means to vent its sorrow, in order to gain ease, or at least an alleviation of pain, so this unhappy woman, to soothe the gloomy sorrows that oppressed her, used to sit down on the dirty floor, saying it was fit she should humble herself in dust and ashes, and professing that if she had an hundred hearts she would freely yield them all to bleed, so they might blot out the stain of her offence. By such expression did she testify those inward sufferings which far exceed the punishment human laws inflict, even on the greatest crimes.

When the death warrant came down and she utterly despaired of life, her sorrow and contrition

became greater than before, and here the use and comfort of religion manifestly appeared; for had not her faith in Christ moderated her afflictions, perhaps grief might have forestalled the executioner, but she still comforted herself with thinking on a future state, and what in so short an interval she must do to deserve an happy immortality.

The time of her death drawing very near, she desired a last interview with her husband and daughter, which was accompanied with so much tenderness that nobody could have beheld it without the greatest emotion. She exhorted her husband with great earnestness to the practice of a regular and Christian life, begged him to take due care of his temporal concerns, and not omit anything necessary in the education of the unhappy child she left behind her. When he had promised a due regard should be had to all her requests she seemed more composed and better satisfied than she had been. Continuing her discourse, she reminded him of what occurred to her with regard to his affairs, adding that it was the last advice she should give, and begging therefore it might be remembered. She finished what she had to say with the most fervent prayers and wishes for his prosperity.

Turning next to her daughter, and pouring over her a flood of tears, *My dearest child*, she said, *let the afflictions of thy mother be a warning and an example unto thee; and since I am denied life to educate and bring thee up, let this dreadful monument of my death suffice to warn you against yielding in any degree to your passion, or suffering a vehemence of temper to transport you so far even as indecent words, which bring on a custom of flying out in a rage on trivial occasions, till they fatally terminate in such acts of wrath and cruelty as that for which I die. Let your heart, then, be set to obey your Maker and yield a ready submission to all His laws. Learn that Charity, Love and Meekness which our blessed religion teaches, and let your mother's unhappy death excite you to a sober and godly life. The hopes of thus are all I have to comfort me in this miserable state, this deplorable condition to which my own rash folly has reduced me.*

The sorrow expressed both by her husband and by her child was very great and lively and scarce inferior to her own, but the ministers who attended her fearing their lamentations might make too strong an impression on her spirits, they took their last farewell, leaving her to take care of her more important concern, the eternal welfare of her soul.

Some malicious people (as is too often the custom) spread stories of this unfortunate woman, as if she had been privy to the murder of one Mr. Hanson, who was killed in the Farthing-Pie House fields<sup>[3]</sup>; and attended this with so many odd circumstances and particulars, which tales of this kind acquire by often being repeated, that the then Ordinary of Newgate thought it became him to mention it to the prisoner. Mrs. Griffin appeared to be much affected at her character being thus stained by the fictions of idle suspicions of silly mischievous persons. She declared her innocence in the most solemn manner, averred she had never lived near the place, nor had heard so much as the common reports as to that gentleman's death.

Yet, as if folks were desirous to heap sorrow on sorrow, and to embitter even the heavy sentence on this poor woman, they now gave out a new fable to calumniate her in respect to her chastity, averring on report of which the first author is never to be found, that she had lived with Mr. Griffin in a criminal intimacy before their marriage. The Ordinary also (though with great reluctance) told her this story. The unhappy woman answered it was false, and confirmed what she said by undeniable evidence, adding she freely forgave the forgers of so base an insinuation.

When the fatal day came on which she was to die, Mrs. Griffin endeavoured, as far as she was able, to compose herself easily to submit to what was not now to be avoided. She had all along manifested a true sense of religion, knowing that nothing could support her under the calamities she went through but the hopes of earthly sufferings atoning for her faults, and becoming thereby a means of eternal salvation. Yet though these thoughts reconciled this ignominious death to her reason, her apprehensions were, notwithstanding, strong and terrible when it came so near.

At the place of execution she was in terrible agonies, conjuring the minister who attended her and the Ordinary of Newgate, to tell her whither there was any hopes of her salvation, which she repeated with great earnestness, and seeming to part with them reluctantly. The Ordinary entreated her to submit cheerfully to this, her last stage of sorrow, and in certain assurance of meeting again (if it so pleased God) in a better slate.

The following paper having been left in the hands of a friend, and being designed for the people, I thought proper to publish it.

I declare, then, with respect to the deed for which I die, that I did it without any malice or anger aforethought, for the unlucky instrument of my passion lying at hand, when first words arose on the loss of the key, I snatched it up suddenly, and executed that rash act which hath brought her and me to death, without thinking.

I trust, however, that my most sincere and hearty repentance of this bloody act of cruelty, the sufferings which I have endured since, the ignominious death I am now to die, and above all the merits of my Saviour, who shed His blood for me on the Cross, will atone for this my deep and heavy offence, and procure for me eternal rest.

But as I am sensible that there is no just hope of forgiveness from the Almighty

without a perfect forgiveness of those who have any way injured us, so I do freely and from the bottom of my soul, forgive all who have ever done me any wrong, and particularly those who, since my sorrowful imprisonment, have cruelly aspersed me, earnestly entreating all who in my life-time I may have offended, that they would also in pity to my deplorable state, remit those offences to me with a like freedom.

And now as the Law hath adjudged, and I freely offer my body to suffer for what I have committed, I hope nobody will be so unjust and so uncharitable as to reflect on those I leave behind me on my account, and for this, I most humbly make my last dying request, as also that ye would pray for my departed soul.

She died with all exterior marks of true penitence, being about forty years of age, the 29th of January, 1719-20.

[2]

This tavern was in Butcher Hall Lane (now King Edward Street, Newgate Street), and was a favourite resort of the Paternoster Row booksellers.

[3]

The Farthing-Pie House was a tavern in Marylebone. It was subsequently re-christened The Green Man.

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### **The Lives of JOHN TRIPPUCK, the Golden Tinman, a Highwayman; RICHARD CANE, a Footpad; THOMAS CHARNOCK, a thief; and RICHARD SHEPHERD, a Housebreaker, who were all executed at Tyburn, the 29th of January, 1719-20**

The first of these offenders had been an old sinner, and I suppose had acquired the nickname of the Golden Tinman as a former practitioner in the same wretched calling did that of the Golden Farmer.<sup>[4]</sup> Trippuck had robbed alone and in company for a considerable space, till his character was grown so notorious that some short time before his being taken for the last offence, he had, by dint of money and interest, procured a pardon. However, venturing on the deed which brought him to his death, the person injured soon seized him, and being inexorable in his prosecution, Trippuck was cast and received sentence. However, having still some money, he did not lose all hope of a reprieve, but kept up his spirits by flattering himself with his life being preserved, till within a very few days of the execution. If the Ordinary spoke to him of the affairs of the soul, Trippuck immediately cut him short with, *D'ye believe I can obtain a pardon? I don't know that, indeed, says the doctor. But you know one Counsellor Such-a-one, says Trippuck, prithee make use of your interest with him, and see whether you can get him to serve me. I'll not be ungrateful, doctor.*

The Ordinary was almost at his wits' end with this sort of cross purposes; however, he went on to exhort him to think of the great work he had to do, and entreated him to consider the nature of that repentance which must atone for all his numerous offences. Upon this, Trippuck opened his breast and showed him a great number of scars amongst which were two very large ones, out of which he said two musket bullets had been extracted. *And will not these, good doctor, quoth he, and the vast pains I have endured in their cure, in some sort lessen the heinousness of the facts I may have committed? No, said the Ordinary, what evils have fallen upon you in such expeditions, you have drawn upon yourself, and do not imagine that these will in any degree make amends for the multitude of your offences. You had much better clear your conscience by a full and ingenious confession of your crimes, and prepare in earnest for another world, since I dare assure you, you need entertain no hopes of staying in this.*

As soon as he found the Ordinary was in the right, and that all expectation of a reprieve or pardon were totally in vain, Trippuck began, as most of those sort of people do, to lose much of that stubbornness they mistake for courage. He now felt all the terrors of an awakened conscience, and persisted no longer in denying the crime for which he died, though at first he declared it altogether a falsehood, and Constable, his companion, had denied it even to death. As is customary when persons are under their misfortune, it had been reported that this Trippuck was the man who killed Mr. Hall towards the end of the summer before on Blackheath, but when the story reached the Golden Tinman's ears he declared it was an utter falsity; repeating this assertion to the Ordinary a few moments before his being turned off, and pointing to the rope about him, he said, *As you see this instrument of death about me, what I say is the real truth.* He died with all outward signs of penitence.

Richard Cane was a young man of about twenty-two years of age, at the time he suffered. Having a tolerable genius when a youth, his friends put him apprentice twice, but to no purpose, for having got rambling notions in his head, he would needs go to sea. There, but for his unhappy temper, he might have done well, for the ship of war in which he sailed was so fortunate as to take, after eight hours sharp engagement, a Spanish vessel of immense value; but the share he got did him little service. As soon as he came home Richard made a quick hand of it, and when the usual train of sensual delights which pass for pleasures in low life had exhausted him to the last farthing, necessity and the desire of still indulging his vices, made him fall into the worst and

most unlawful methods to obtain the means which they might procure them.

Sometime after this, the unhappy man of whom we are speaking fell in love (as the vulgar call it) with an honest, virtuous, young woman, who lived with her mother, a poor, well-meaning creature, utterly ignorant of Cane's behaviour, or that he had ever committed any crimes punishable by Law. The girl, as such silly people are wont, yielded quickly to a marriage which was to be consummated privately, because Cane's relations were not to be disobliged, who it seems did not think him totally ruined so long as he escaped matrimony. But the unhappy youth not having enough money to procure a licence, and being ashamed to put the expense on the woman and her mother, in a fit of amorous distraction went out from them one evening, and meeting a man somewhat fuddled in the street, threw him down, and took away his hat and coat. The fellow was not so drunk but that he cried out, and people coming to his assistance, Cane was immediately apprehended, and so this fact, instead of raising him money enough to be married, brought him to death in this ignominious way.

While he lay in Newgate, the miserable young creature who was to have been his wife came constantly to cry with him and deplore their mutual misfortunes, which were increased by the girl's mother falling sick, and being confined to her bed through grief for her designed son-in-law's fate. When the day of his suffering drew on, this unhappy man composed himself to submit to it with great serenity. He professed abundance of contrition for the wickedness of his former life and lamented with much tenderness those evils he had brought upon the girl and her mother. The softness of his temper, and the steady affection he had for the maid, contributed to make his exit much pitied; which happened at Tyburn in the twenty-second year of his age. He left this paper behind him, which he spoke at the tree.

Good People,

The Law having justly condemned me for my offence to suffer in this shameful manner, I thought it might be expected that I should say something here of the crime for which I die, the commission of which I do readily acknowledge, though it was attended with that circumstance of knocking down, which was sworn against me. I own I have been guilty of much wickedness, and am exceedingly troubled at the reflection it may bring upon my relations, who are all honest and reputable people. As I die for the offences I have done, and die in charity forgiving all the world, so I hope none will be so cruel as to pursue my memory with disgrace or insult an unhappy young woman on my account, whose character I must vindicate with my last breath, as all the justice I am able to do her, I die in the communion of the Church of England and humbly request your prayers for my departing soul.

Richard Shepherd was born of very honest and reputable parents in the city of Oxford, who were careful in giving him a suitable education, which he, through the wickedness of his future life, utterly forgot, insomuch that he knew scarce the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, at the time he had most need of them. When he grew a tolerable big lad his friends put him out as apprentice to a butcher, where having served a great part of his time, he fell in love, as they call it, with a young country lass hard by, and Dick's passion growing outrageous, he attacked the poor maid with all the amorous strains of gallantry he was able. The hearts of young uneducated wenches, like unfortified towns, make little resistance when once besieged, and therefore Shepherd had no great difficulty in making a conquest. However the girl insisted on honourable terms, and unfortunately for the poor fellow they were married before his time was out; an error in conduct, which in low life is seldom retrieved.

It happened so here. Shepherd's master was not long before he discovered this wedding. He thereupon gave the poor fellow so much trouble that he was at last forced to give him forty shillings down, and a bond for twenty-eight pounds more. This having totally ruined him, Dick unhappily fell into the way of dishonest company, who soon drew him into their ways of gaining money and supplying his necessities at the hazard both of his conscience and his neck; in which, though he became an expert proficient, yet could he never acquire anything considerable thereby, but was continually embroiled in debt. His wife bringing every year a child, contributed not a little thereto. However, Dick rubbed on mostly by thieving and as little by working as it was possible to avoid.

When he first began his robberies, he went housebreaking, and actually committed several facts in the city of Oxford itself. But those things not being so easily to be concealed there as at London, report quickly began to grow very loud about him, and Dick was forced to make shift with pilfering in other places; in which he was (to use the manner of speaking of those people) so unlucky that the second or third fact he committed in Hertfordshire, he was detected, seized, and at the next assizes capitally convicted. Yet out of compassion to his youth, and in hopes he might be sufficiently checked by so narrow an escape from the gallows, his friends procured him first a reprieve and then a pardon.

But this proximity to death made little impression on his heart, which is too often the fault in persons who, like him, receive mercy, and have notwithstanding too little grace to make use of it. Partly driven by necessity, for few people cared after his release to employ him, partly through the instigations of his own wicked heart, Dick went again upon the old trade for which he had so lately been like to have suffered, but thieving was still an unfortunate profession to him. He soon after fell again into the hands of Justice, from whence he escaped by impeaching Allen and Chambers, two of his accomplices, and so evaded Tyburn a second time. Yet all this signified

nothing to him, for as soon as he was at home, so soon to work he went in his old way, till apprehended and executed for his wickedness.

No unhappy criminal had more warning than Shepherd of his approaching miserable fate, if he would have suffered anything to have deterred him; but alas! what are advices, terrors, what even the sight of death itself, to souls hardened in sin and consciences so seared as his. He had, when taken up and carried before Col. Ellis, been committed to New Prison for a capital offence. He had not remained there long before he wrote the Colonel a letter in which (provided he were admitted an evidence) he offered to make large discoveries. His offers were accepted, and several convicted capitally at the Old Bailey by him were executed at Tyburn, whither for his trade of housebreaking, Shepherd quickly followed them.

While in Newgate Shepherd had picked up a thoughtless resolution as to dying, not uncommon to those malefactors who, having been often condemned, go at last hardened to the gallows. When he was exhorted to think seriously of making his peace with God, he replied 'twas done and he was sure of going to Heaven.

With these were executed Thomas Charnock, a young man well and religiously educated. By his friends he had been placed in the house of a very eminent trader, and being seduced by ill-company yielded to the desire of making a show in the world. In order to do so, he robbed his master's counting-house, which fact made him indeed conspicuous, but in a very different manner from what he had flattered himself with. They died tolerably submissive and penitent, this last malefactor, especially, having rational ideas of religion.

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William Davis, the Golden Farmer, was a notorious highwayman, who obtained his sobriquet from a habit of always paying in gold. He was hanged in Fleet Street, December 20, 1689. His adventures are told at length in Smith's *History of the Highwaymen*, edited by me and published in the same series as this volume.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM BARTON, a Highwayman**

This William Barton was born in Thames Street, London, and seemed to have inherited a sort of hereditary wildness and inconstancy, his father having been always of a restless temper and addicted to every species of wickedness, except such as are punished by temporal laws. While this son William was a child, he left him, without any provision, to the care of his mother, and accompanied by a concubine whom he had long convened with, shipped himself for the island of Jamaica, carrying with him a good quantity of goods proper for that climate, intending to live there as pleasantly as the place would give him leave. His head being well turned, both for trading and planting, it was, indeed, probable enough he should succeed.

Now, no sooner was his father gone on this unaccountable voyage, but William was taken home and into favour by his grandfather, who kept a great eating-house in Covent Garden. Here Will, if he would, might certainly have done well. His grandfather bound him to himself, treated him with the utmost tenderness and indulgence, and the gentlemen who frequented the house were continually making him little presents, which by their number were considerable, and might have contented a youth like him.

But William, whose imagination was full of roving as his father's, far from sitting down pleased and satisfied with that easy condition into which Fortune had thrown him, began to dream of nothing but travels and adventures. In short, in spite of all the poor old man, his grandfather, could say to prevent it, to sea he went, and to Jamaica in quest of his father, who he fancied must have grown extravagantly rich by this time, the common sentiments of fools, who think none poor who have the good luck to dwell in the West Indies.

On Barton's arrival at Jamaica he found all things in a very different condition from what he had flattered himself with. His father was dead and the woman who went over with him settled in a good plantation, 'tis true, but so settled that Will was unable to remove her; so he betook himself to sea again, and rubbed on the best way he was able. But as if the vengeance of Heaven had pursued him, or rather as if Providence, by punishments, designed to make him lay aside his vices, Barton had no sooner scraped a little money together, but the vessel in which he sailed was (under the usual pretence of contraband goods) seized by the Spaniards, who not long after they were taken, sent the men they made prisoners into Spain. The natural moroseness of those people's temper, makes them harsh masters. Poor Barton found it so, and with the rest of his unfortunate companions, suffered all the inconveniences of hard usage and low diet, though as they drew nearer the coast of Spain that severity was a little softened.

When they were safely landed, they were hurried to a prison where it was difficult to determine which was worst, their treatment or their food. Above all the rest Barton was uneasy, and his head ever turned towards contriving an escape. When he and some other intriguing heads had meditated long in vain, an accident put it in their power to do that with ease which all their prudence could not render probable in the attempt, a thing common with men under misfortune, who have reason, therefore, never to part with hope.

Finding an old wall in the outer court of the prison weak, and ready to fall down, the keeper caused the English prisoners, amongst others, to be sent to repair it. The work was exceedingly

laborious, but Barton and one of his companions soon thought of a way to ease it. They had no sooner broke up a small part of the foundation which was to be new laid, but stealing the Spanish soldiers' pouches, they crowded the powder into a small bag, placing it underneath as far as they could reach, and then gave it fire. This threw up two yards of the wall, and while the Spaniards stood amazed at the report, Barton and his associates marched off through the breach, without finding the slightest resistance from any of the keeper's people, though he had another party in the street.

But this would have signified very little, if Providence had not also directed them to a place of safety by bringing them as soon as they broke out of the door to a monastery. Thither they fled for shelter, and the religious of the place treated them with much humanity. They succoured them with all necessary provision, protected them when reclaimed by the gaoler, and taking them into their service, showed them in all respects the same care and favour they did to the rest of their domestics.

Yet honest labour, however recompensed, was grating to these restless people, who longed for nothing but debauchery, and struggled for liberty only as a preparative to the indulging of their vices; and so they began to contrive how they should free themselves from hence. Barton and his fellow engineer were not long before they fell on a method to effect it, by wrenching open the outer doors in the night, and getting to an English vessel that lay in the harbour ready to sail.

They had not been aboard long ere they found that the charitable friars had agreed with the captain for their passage, and so all they gained by breaking out was the danger of being reclaimed, or at least going naked and without any assistance, which to be sure they would have met with from their masters, if they could but have had a little patience. But the passion of returning home, or rather a vehement lust after the basest pleasures, hurried them to whatever appeared conducive to that end, however fatal in its consequence it might be.

When they were got safe into their native country again, each took such a course for a livelihood as he liked best. Whether Barton then fell into thievery, or whether he learned not that mystery before he had served an apprenticeship thereto in the Army I cannot say, but in some short space after his being at home 'tis certain that he listed himself a soldier, and served several campaigns in Flanders, during the last War. Being a very gallant fellow, he gained the love of his officers, and there was great probability of his doing well there, having gained at least some principle of honour in the service, which would have prevented him doing such base things as those for which he afterwards died. But, unhappily for him, the War ended just as he was on the point of becoming paymaster-sergeant, and his regiment being disbanded, poor Will became broke in every acceptance of the word. He retained always a strong tincture of his military education, and was peculiarly fond of telling such adventures as he gained the knowledge of, while in the Army.

Amongst other stories that he told were one or two which may appear perhaps not unentertaining to my readers. When Brussels came towards the latter end of the War to be pretty well settled under the Imperialists, abundance of persons of distinction came to reside there and in the neighborhood from the advantage natural to so fine a situation. Amongst these was the Baron De Casteja, a nobleman of a Spanish family, who except for his being addicted excessively to gaming, was in every way a fine gentleman. He had married a lady of one of the best families in Flanders, by whom he had a son of the greatest hopes. The baron's passion for play had so far lessened their fortune that they lived but obscurely at a village three leagues from Brussels, where having now nothing to support his gaming expenses, he grew reformed, and his behaviour gained so high and general esteem that the most potent lord in the country met not with higher reverence on any occasion. The great prudence and economy of the baroness made her the theme of general praise, while the young Chevalier de Casteja did not a little add to the honours of the family.

It happened the baron had a younger brother in the Emperor's service, whose merit having raised him to a considerable rank in his armies, he had acquired a very considerable estate, to the amount of upwards of one hundred thousand crowns, which on his death he bequeathed him. Upon this accession of fortune, the Baron Casteja, as is but too frequent, fell to his old habit, and became as fond of gaming as ever. The poor lady saw this with the utmost concern, and dreaded the confounding this legacy, as all the baron's former fortune had been consumed by his being the dupe of gamblers. In deep affliction at the consideration of what might in future times become the Chevalier's fortune, she therefore entreated the baron to lay out part of the sum in somewhat which might be a provision for his son. The baron promised both readily and faithfully that he would out of the first remittance. A few weeks later he received forty thousand crowns and the baroness and he set out for Brussels, under pretence of enquiring for something proper for his purpose, carrying with him twenty thousand crowns for the purchase. But he forgot the errand upon the road, and no sooner arrived at Brussels, but going to a famous marquis's entertainment, in a very few hours lost the last penny of his money. Returning home after this misfortune, he was a little out of humour for a week, but at the end of that space, making up the other twenty thousand privately he intended to set out next day.

The poor lady, at her wit's end for fear this large sum should go the same way as the other, bethought herself of a method of securing both the cash and her son's place. She communicated her design to her major domo, who readily came into it, and having taken three of the servants and the baroness's page into the secret, he sent for Barton and another Englishman quartered near them, and easily prevailed on them for a very small sum, to become accomplices in the undertaking. In a word, the lady having provided disguises for them, and a man's suit for herself,



caused the touch-holes of the arms which the baron and two servants carried with him to be nailed up, and then towards evening sallying at the head of her little troop from a wood, as he passed on the road, the baron being rendered incapable of resistance, was robbed of the whole twenty thousand crowns. With this she settled her son, and the baron was so far touched at the loss of such a provision for his family, that he made a real and thorough reformation, and Barton from this exploit fell in love with robbing ever after.

Another adventure he related was this. Being taken prisoner by the French, and carried to one of their frontier garrisons, a treaty shortly being expected to be settled, to relieve the miseries he endured, Barton got into the service of a Gascon officer who proved at bottom almost as poor as himself. However, after Barton's coming he quickly found a way to live as well as anybody in the garrison, which he accomplished thus. All play at games of chance was, in the score of some unlucky accidents proceeding from quarrels which it had occasioned, absolutely forbidden, and the provosts were enjoined to visit all quarters, in order to bring the offenders to shameful punishments. The Gascon captain took advantage of the severity of this order, and having concerted the matter with a countryman and comrade of his, a known gamester, plundered all the rest who were addicted to that destructive passion; for gaining intelligence of the private places where they met, from his friend, he putting himself, Barton and another person into proper habits, attacked these houses suddenly almost every night with a crowd of the populace at his heels, and raised swinging contributions on those who being less wicked than himself never had any suspicion of his actions, but took him and his comrades for the proper officer and his attendants.

Barton's greatest unhappiness was his marriage. He was too uxorious, and too solicitous for what concerned his wife, how well so ever she deserved of him; for not enduring to see her work honestly for her bread he would needs support her in an easy state of life, though at the hazard of the gallows. There is, however, little question to be made but that he had learned much in his travels to enable him to carry on his wicked designs with more ease and dexterity, for no thief, perhaps, in any age, managed his undertakings with greater prudence and economy. And having somewhere picked up the story of the Pirate and Alexander the Great, it became one of Will's standing maxims that the only difference between a robber and a conqueror was the value of the prize.

Being one day on the road with a comrade of his, who had served also with him abroad in the Army, and observing a stage coach at a distance, in right of the seniority of his commission as a Knight of the Pad, Barton commanded the other to ride forward in order to reconnoitre. The young fellow obeyed him as submissively as if he had been an aide de camp, and returning, brought him word that the force of the enemy consisted of four beau laden with blunderbusses, two ladies and a footman. *Then, quoth Will, we may e'en venture to attack them. Let us make our necessary disposition. I will ride slowly up to them, while you gallop round that hill, and as soon as you come behind the coach, be sure to fire a pistol over it, and leave the rest to me.*

Things thus adjusted, each advanced on his attack. Barton no sooner stopped the coach and presented his pistol at one window, than his companion, after firing a brace of balls over the coachman's head, did the like at the other, which so surprised the fine gentlemen within, that without the least resistance they surrendered all they had about them, which amounted to about one hundred pounds, which Barton put up. *Come, gentlemen, says he, let us make bold with your fire-arms too, for you see we make more use of them than you.* So, seizing a brace of pistols inlaid with silver, and two fine brass blunderbusses, Will and his subaltern rode off.

But alas, Will's luck would not last (as his roguishness used to express it). For, attempting a robbery in Covent Garden, where he was too well known, he was surprised, committed to Newgate and on his conviction ordered to be transported for seven years to his Majesty's Plantations, whither he was accordingly carried.

When he was landed, a planter bought him after the manner of that country, and paid eighteen pounds for him. Barton wanting neither understanding nor address, he soon became the darling of his master, who far from employing him in those laborious works which are usually talked of here, put upon him nothing more than merely supervising his slaves and taking care of them, when business obliged him to be absent.

One would have thought that so easy a state of life, after the toil and miseries such a man as him of whom we are speaking must have run through, would have been pleasing, and that it might have become a means of reclaiming him from those vices so heinous in the sight of God, and for which he had barely escaped the greatest punishment that can be inflicted by man. At first, it indeed made some impressions not very different from these; Barton owning that his master's treatment was such that if a man had not absolutely bent his mind on such courses as necessarily must make him unhappy, he might have enjoyed all he could have hoped for there. Of which he became so sensible that for some time he remained fully satisfied with his condition.

But alas! Content, when its basis rests not upon virtue, like a house founded on a sandy soil is incapable of continuing long. No sooner had Barton leisure and opportunity to recollect home, his friends, and above all his wife, but it soon shocked his repose, and having awhile disturbed and troubled him, it pushed him at last on the unhappy resolution of returning to England, before the expiration of his time for which he was banished. This project rolled for a very considerable space in the fellow's head. Sometimes the desire of seeing his companions, and above all things his wife, made him eager to undertake it; at others, the fear of running upon inevitable death in case of a discovery, and the consideration of the felicity he now had in his power made him timorous,

at least, if not unwilling to return.

At last, as is ordinary amongst these unhappy people, the worst opinion prevailed, and finding a method to free himself from his master, and to get aboard a ship, he came back to his dearly beloved London, and to those measures which had already occasioned so great a misfortune, and at last brought him to an ignominious death. On his return, his first care was to seek out his wife, for whom he had a warm and never ceasing affection, and having found her, he went to live with her, taking his old methods of supporting them, though he constantly denied that she was either a partner in the commission, or even so much as in the knowledge of his guilt. But this quickly brought him to Newgate again, and to that fatal end to which he, like some other flagitious creatures of this stamp, seem impatient to arrive; since no warning, no admonition, no escape is sufficient to deter them from those crimes, which they are sensible the laws of their country with Justice have rendered capital.

Barton's return from transportation was sufficient to have brought him to death had he committed nothing besides; but he, whether through necessity, as having no way left of living honestly, or from his own evil inclinations, ventured upon his old trade, and robbing amongst others the Lord Viscount Lisbourn, of the Kingdom of Ireland, and a lady who was with him in the coach, of a silver hilted sword, a snuff-box and about twelve shillings in money, he was for this fact taken, tried and convicted at the Old Bailey.

He immediately laid by all hopes of life as soon as he had received sentence, and with great earnestness set himself to secure that peace in the world to come, which his own vices had hindered him from in this. He got some good books which he read with continual devotion and attention, submitted with the utmost patience to the miseries of his sad condition, and finding his relations would take care of his daughter and that his wife, for whom he never lost the most tender concern, would be in no danger of want, he laid aside the thoughts of temporal matters altogether expressing a readiness to die, and never showing any weakness or impatience of the nearest approach of death.

Much of that firmness with which he behaved in these last moments of his life might probably be owing to natural courage, of which certainly Barton had a very large share. But the remains of virtue and religion, to which the man had always a propensity, notwithstanding that he gave way to passions which brought him to all the sorrows he knew, yet the return he made, when in the shadow of death, to piety and devotion, enabled him to suffer with great calmness, on Friday the 12th of May, 1721, aged about thirty-one years.

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### **ROBERT PERKINS, Thief**

I should never have undertaken this work without believing it might in some degree be advantageous to the public. Young persons, and especially those in a meaner state, are, I presume, those who will make up the bulk of my readers, and these, too, are they who are more commonly seduced into practices of this ignominious nature. I should therefore think myself unpardonable if I did not take care to furnish them with such cautions as the examples I am giving of the fatal consequences of vice will allow, at the same time that I exhibit those adventures and entertaining scenes which disguise the dismal path, and make the road to ruin pleasing. They meet here with a true prospect of things, the tinsel splendour of sensual pleasure, and that dreadful price men pay for it—shameful death. I hope it may be of use in correcting the errors of juvenile tempers devoted to their passions, with whom sometimes danger passes for a certain road to honour, and the highway seems as tempting to them as chivalry did to Don Quixote. Such and some other such like, are very unlucky notions in young heads, and too often inspire them with courage enough to dare the gallows, which seldom fails meeting with them in the end.

As to the particulars of the person's life we are now speaking of, they will be sufficient to warn those who are so unhappy as to suffer from the ill-usage of their parents not to fall into courses of so base a nature, but rather to try every honest method to submit rather than commit dishonest acts, thereby justifying all the ill-treatment they have received, and by their own follies blot out the remembrance of their cruel parents' crimes. For though it sometimes happens that they are reduced to necessities which force them, in a manner, on what brings them to disgrace, yet the ill-natured world will charge all upon themselves, or at most will spare their pity till it comes too late; and when the poor wretch is dead will add to their reflections on him, as harsh ones as on those from whom he is descended.

Robert Perkins was the son of a very considerable innkeeper, in or near Hempsted, in Hertfordshire, who during the life-time of his wife treated him with great tenderness and seeming affection, sending him to school to a person in a neighbouring village, who was very considerable for his art of teaching, and professing his settled resolution to give his son Bob a very good education.

But no sooner had death snatched away the poor woman by whom Mr. Perkins had our unhappy Robin, then his father began to change his measures. First of all the unfortunate lad experienced the miseries that flow from the careless management of a widower, who forgetting all obligations to his deceased wife, thought of nothing but diverting himself, and getting a new helpmate. But Robin continued not long in this state; his hardships were quickly increased by the second marriage of his father, upon which he was fetched home and treated with some kindness at first.

But in a little time perceiving how things were going, and perhaps expressing his suspicions too freely, his mother-in-law soon prevailed to have him turned out, and absolutely forbidden his father's house, the ready way to force a naked uninstructed youth on the most sinful courses. Whether Robin at that time did anything dishonest is not certain, but being grievously pinched with cold one night, and troubled also with dismal apprehensions of what might come to his sister, he got a ladder and by the help of it climbed in at his mother's window. This was immediately exaggerated into a design of cutting her throat, and poor Bob was thereupon utterly discarded.

A short time after this, old Mr. Perkins died and left a fortune of several thousand pounds behind him, for which the poor young man was never a groat the better, being bound out 'prentice to a baker, and left, as to everything else, to the wide world. His inclination, joined to the rambling life which he had hitherto led, induced him to mind the vulgar pleasures of drinking, gaming, and idling about much more than his business, which to him appeared very laborious. There are everywhere companions enough to be met with who are ready to teach ignorant youths the practice of all sorts of debauchery. Perkins fell quickly among such a set, and often rambled abroad with them on the usual errands of whoring, shuffle-board, or skittle-playing, etc. The thoughts of that estate which in justice he ought to have possessed, did not a little contribute to make him thus heedless of his business, for as is usual with weak minds, he affected living at the rate his father's fortune would have afforded him, rather than in the frugal manner which his narrow circumstance actually required; methods which necessarily pushed him on such expeditions for supply as drew on those misfortunes which rendered his life miserable and his death shameful.

One day, having agreed with some young lads in the neighbourhood to go out upon the rake, they steered their course to Whitechapel, and going into a little alehouse, began to drink stoutly, sing bawdy songs, and indulge themselves in the rest of those brutal delights into which such wretches are used to plunge under the name of pleasure. In the height, however, of all their mirth, the people of the house missing out of the till a crown piece with some particular marks, they sent for a constable and some persons to assist him, who caused all the young fellows instantly to be separated and searched one by one; on which the marked crown was found in Robert Perkin's pocket, and he was thereupon immediately carried before a Justice, who committed him to Newgate. The sessions coming on soon after, and the case being plain, he was cast and ordered for transportation, having time enough, however, before he was shipped, to consider the melancholy circumstances into which his ill-conduct had reduced him, and to think of what was fitting for him to do in the present sad state he was in. At first nothing ran in his head but the cruelties which he had met with from his family, but as the time of his departure drew nearer he meditated how to gain the captain's favour, and to escape some hardships in the voyage.

Robin had the good luck to make himself tolerably easy in the ship. His natural good nature and obliging temper prevailing so far on the captain of the vessel that he gave him all the liberty and afforded him whatever indulgence it was in his power to permit with safety. But our young traveller had much worse luck when he came on shore at Jamaica, where he was immediately sold to a planter for ten pounds, and his trade of baker being of little use there, his master put him upon much the same labour as he did his negroes, Robin's constitution was really incapable of great fatigue; his master, therefore, finding in the end that nothing would make him work, sold him to another, who put him upon his own employment of baking, building an oven on purpose. But whether this master really used him cruelly or whether his idle inclinations made him think all labour cruel usage, is hard to say, but however it was, Bob ran away from this master and got on board a ship which carried him to Carolina, from whence he said he travelled to Maryland and shipped himself there, in a vessel for England. After being taken by the Spaniards, and enduring many other great hardships, he at last with much difficulty got home, as is too frequently the practice of these unhappy wretches who are ready to return from tolerable plenty to the gallows.

After his arrival in England, he wrought for near two years together at his own business, and had the settled intention to live honestly and forsake that disorderly state of life which had involved him in such calamities; but the fear he was continually in of being discovered, rendered him so uneasy and so unable to do anything, that at last he resolved to go over into the East Indies. For this purpose he was come down to Gravesend, in order to embark, when he was apprehended; and being tried on an indictment for returning from transportation, he was convicted thereon, and received sentence of death. During the time he lay under conviction, the principles of a good education began again to exert themselves, and by leading him to a thorough confidence in the mercies of Christ weaned him from that affection which hitherto he had for this sinful and miserable world, in which, as he had felt nothing but misery and affliction, the change seemed the easier, so that he at last began not only to shake off the fear of death, but even to desire it. Nor was this calmness short and transitory, but he continued in it till the time he suffered, which was on the 5th of July, 1721, at Tyburn. He said he died with less reluctance because his ruin involved nobody but himself, he leaving no children behind him, and his wife being young enough to get a living honestly.

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### **BARBARA SPENCER, Coiner, etc.**

Before we proceed to mention the particulars that have come to our hands concerning this unhappy criminal, it may not be amiss to take notice of the rigour with which all civilised nations

have treated offenders in this kind, by considering the crime itself as a species of treason. The reason of which arises thus. As money is the universal standard or measure of the value of any commodity, so the value of money is always regulated, in respect of its weight, fineness, etc., by the public authority of the State. To counterfeit, therefore, is in some degree to assume the supreme authority, inasmuch as it is giving a currency to another less valuable piece of metal than that made current by the State. The old laws of England were very severe on this head, and carried their care of preventing it so far as to damage the public in other respects, as by forbidding the importation of bullion, and punishing with death attempts made to discover the Philosopher's Stone which forced whimsical persons who were enamoured of that experiment to go abroad and spend their money in pursuit of that project there. These causes, therefore, upon a review of the laws on this head, were abrogated; but the edge in other respects was rather sharpened than abated. For as the trade of the nation increased, frauds in the coin became of worse consequence and not only so, but were more practised.

In the reign of King William and Queen Mary, clipping and coining grew so notorious and had so great and fatal influences on the public trade of the nation, that Parliament found it necessary to enter upon that great work of a recoinage<sup>[5]</sup> and in order to prevent all future inconveniences of a like nature, they at the same time enacted that not only counterfeiting, chipping, scaling, lightening, or otherwise debasing the current specie of this realm, should be deemed and punished as high treason, but they included also under the same charge and punishment the having any press, engine, tool, or implement proper for coining, the mending, buying, selling, etc., of them; and upon this Act, which was rendered perpetual by another made in the seventh year of the reign of Queen Anne, all our proceedings on this head are at this day grounded. Many executions and many more trials happened on these laws being first made, dipping, especially, being an ordinary thing, and some persons of tolerable reputation in the world engaged in it; but the strict proceedings (in the days of King William, especially) against all, without distinction, who offended in that way, so effectually crushed them that a coiner nowadays is looked upon as an extraordinary criminal, though the Law still continues to take its course, whenever they are convicted, the Crown being seldom or never induced to grant a pardon.

As to this poor woman, Barbara Spencer, she was the daughter of mean parents and was left very young to the care of her mother, who lived in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate. This old creature, as is common enough with ordinary people, indulged her daughter so much in all her humours, and suffered her to take so uncontrolled a liberty that all her life-time after, she was incapable of bearing restraint, but, on every slight contradiction flew out into the wildest excesses of passion and fury. When but a child, on a very slight difference at home, she must needs go out 'prentice, and was accordingly put to a mantua-maker, who having known her throughout her infancy, fatally treated her with the same indulgence and tenderness. She continued with her about two years, and then, on a few warm words happening, went away from so good a mistress, and came home again to her mother, who by that time had set up a brandy shop.

On Miss Barbara's return, a maid had to be taken, for she was much too good to do the work of the house. The servant had not been there long before they quarrelled, the mother taking the wench's part. Away went the young woman, but matters being made up and the old mother keeping an alehouse in Cripplegate parish, she once more went to live with her. This reconciliation lasted longer, but was more fatal to Barbara than her late falling out.

One day, it seems, she took into her head to go and see the prisoners die at Tyburn, but her mother meeting her at the door, told her that there was too much business for her to do at home, and that she should not go. Harsh words ensuing on this, her mother at last struck her, and said she should be her death. However, Barbara went, and the man who attended her to Tyburn, brought her afterwards to a house by St. Giles's Pound<sup>[6]</sup> where after relating the difference between herself and her mother, she vowed she would never return any more home. In this resolution she was encouraged, and soon after was acquainted with the secrets of the house, and appointed to go out with their false money, in order to vend, or utter it; which trade, as it freed her from all restraint, she was at first mightily pleased with. But being soon discovered she was committed to Newgate, convicted and fined.

About this time she first became acquainted with Mrs. Miles, who afterwards betrayed her, and upon this occasion was, it seems, so kind as to advance some money for her. On the affair for which she died, the evidence could have hardly done without Miles's assistance, which so enraged poor Barbara that even to the instant of death, she could hardly prevail with herself to forgive her, and never spoke of her without a kind of heat, very improper and unbecoming in a person in her distressful state.

The punishment ordained by our laws for treasons committed by women, whether high or petty, is burning alive.<sup>[7]</sup> This, though pronounced upon her by the judge, she could never be brought to believe would be executed, but while she lay under sentence, she endeavoured to put off the thoughts of the fatal day as much as she could, always asserting that she thought the crime no sin, for which she was condemned. It seems her mother died at Tyburn before midsummer, and this poor wretch would often say that she little thought she should so soon follow her, when she attended her to death, averring also that she suffered unjustly. As for this poor woman, her temper was exceedingly unhappy, and as it had made her uneasy and miserable all her life, so at her death it occasioned her to be impatient, and to behave inconsistently. For which, sometimes, she would apologise, by saying that though it was not in her power to put on grave looks, yet her

heart was as truly affected as theirs who gave greater outward signs of contrition; a manner of speaking usually taken up by those who would be thought to think seriously in the midst of outward gaiety, and of whose sincerity in cases like these. He only can judge who is acquainted with the secrets of all hearts and who, as He is not to be deceived, so His penetration is utterly unknown to us, who are confined to appearances and the exterior marks of things.

She lost all her boldness at the near approach of death and seemed excessively surprised and concerned at the apprehension of the flames. When she went out to die, she owned her crime more fully than she had ever done. She said she had learnt to coin of a man and woman who had now left off and lived very honestly, wherefore she said she would not discover them. At the very slake she complained how hard she found it to forgive Miles, who had been her accomplice and then betrayed her, adding that though she saw faggots and brushes ready to be lighted and to consume her, yet she would not receive life at the expense of another's blood. She averred there were great numbers of London who followed the same trade of coining, and earnestly wished they might take warning by her death. At the instant of suffering, she appeared to have reassumed all her resolution, for which she had, indeed, sufficient occasion, when to the lamentable death by burning was added the usual noise and clamour of the mob, who also threw stones and dirt, which beat her down and wounded her. However, she forgave them cheerfully, prayed with much earnestness and ended her life the same day as the last mentioned malefactor, Perkins, aged about twenty-four years.

[5]

A commission was appointed to consider the debased state of the currency and, not without considerable opposition, a bill was passed in 1696, withdrawing all debased coin from circulation. This incurred an expense of some £1,200,000, which the Government met by imposing a window tax.

[6]

This was at the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. It was an old London landmark, from which distances were measured as from the Standard in Cornhill. It was demolished in 1765.

[7]

In practice, criminals were strangled before being burned. The last case in which this penalty was inflicted was in 1789; it was abolished the following year.

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### **WALTER KENNEDY, a Pirate**

Piracy was anciently in this kingdom considered as a petty treason at Common Law; but the multitude of treasons, or to speak more properly of offences construed into treason, becoming a very great grievance to the subject, this with many others was left out in the famous Statute of the 25th Edward the Third, for limiting what thenceforth should be deemed treason. From that time piracy was regarded in England only as a crime against the Civil Law, by which it was always capital; but there being some circumstances very troublesome, as to the proofs therein required for conviction, by a statute in the latter end of the reign of Henry the Eighth it was provided that this offence should be tried by commissioners appointed by the king, consisting of the admiral and certain of his officers, with such other persons as the reigning prince should think fit, after the common course of the laws of this realm for felonies and robberies committed on land, in which state it hath continued with very small alterations to this day.

Offenders of this kind are now tried at the Sessions-house in the Old Bailey, before the judge of the Court of Admiralty, assisted by certain other judges of the Common Law by virtue of such a commission as ts before mentioned, the silver oar (a peculiar ensign of authority belonging to the Court of Admiralty) lying on the table. As pirates are not very often apprehended in Britain, so particular notice is always given when a Court like this, called an Admiralty Sessions, is to be held, the prisoners until that time remaining in the Marshalsea, the proper prison of this Court.

On the 26th of July, 1721, at such a sessions, Walter Kennedy and John Bradshaw were tried for piracies committed on the high seas, and both of them convicted. This Walter Kennedy was born at a place called Pelican Stairs in Wapping. His father was an anchor-smith, a man of good reputation, who gave his son Walter the best education he was able; and while a lad he was very tractable, and had no other apparent ill quality than that of a too aspiring temper. When he was grown up big enough to have gone out to a trade, his father bound him apprentice to himself, but died before his son was out of his time. Leaving his father's effects in the possession of his mother and brothers, Walter then followed his own roving inclinations and went to sea. He served for a considerable time on board a man-of-war, in the reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne, in the war then carried on against France; during which time he often had occasion to hear of the exploits of the pirates, both in the East and West Indies, and of their having got several islands into their possession, wherein they were settled, and in which they exercised a sovereign power.

These tales had wonderful effect on Walter's disposition, and created in him a secret ambition of making a figure in the same way. He became more than ordinarily attentive whenever stories of that sort were told, and sought every opportunity of putting his fellow sailors upon such relations.

Men of that profession have usually good memories with respect, at least, to such matters, and Kennedy, therefore, without much difficulty became acquainted with the principal expeditions of these maritime desperadoes, from the time of Sir Henry Morgan's commanding the Buccaneers in America, to Captain Avery's more modern exploits at Madagascar<sup>[8]</sup>; his fancy insinuating to him continually that he might be able to make as great a figure as any of these thievish heroes, whenever a proper opportunity offered.

It happened that he was sent with Captain Woodes Rogers<sup>[9]</sup> Governor of Providence [Bahama Islands], when that gentleman first sent to recover that island by reducing the pirates, who then had it in possession. At the time of the captain's arrival these people had fortified themselves in several places, and with all the care they were able, had provided both for their safety and subsistence.

It happened that some time before, they had taken a ship, on board of which they found a considerable quantity of the richest brocades, for which having no other occasion, they tore them up, and tying them between the horns of their goats, made use of them to distinguish herds that belonged to one settlement and those that belonged to another, and sight of this, notwithstanding the miserable condition which in other respects these wretches were in, mightily excited the inclination Kennedy had to following their occupation.

Captain Rogers having signified to the chiefs of them the offers he had to make of free grace and pardon, the greater number of them came in and submitted very readily. Those who were determined to continue the same dissolute kind of life, provided with all the secrecy imaginable for their safety, and when practicable took their flight out of the island. The captain being made Governor, fitted out two sloops for trade, and having given proper directions to their commanders, manned them out of his own sailors with some of these reformed pirates intermixed. Kennedy went out on one of these vessels, in which he had not long been at sea before he joined in a conspiracy some of the rest had formed of seizing the vessel, putting those to death who refused to come into their measures, and then to go, as the sailors phrase it, "upon the account", that is in plain English, commence pirates.

This villainous design succeeded according to their wish. They emptied the other vessel of whatever they thought might be of use, and then turned her adrift, as being a heavy sailer, and consequently unfit for their purpose. A few days after their entering on this new course of life, they made themselves masters of two pretty large ships, having fitted which for their purpose, they now grew strong enough to execute any project that in their present circumstances they were capable of forming. Thus Kennedy was now got in to that unhappy state of living which from a false notion of things he had framed so fair an idea of and was so desirous to engage in.

Kennedy took a particular delight in relating what happened to him in these expeditions, even after they had brought him to misery and confinement. The account he gave of that form of rule which these wretches set up, in imitation of the legal government, and of those regulations there made to supply the place of moral honesty was in substance this.

They chose a captain from amongst themselves, who in effect held little more than that title, excepting in an engagement, when he commanded absolutely and without control. Most of them having suffered formerly from the ill-treatment of their officers, provided carefully against any such evil, now they had the choice in themselves. By their orders they provided especially against any quarrels which might happen among themselves, and appointed certain punishments for anything that tended that way; for the due execution thereof they constituted other officers besides the captain, so very industrious were they to avoid putting too much power into the hands of one man. The rest of their agreement consisted chiefly in relation to the manner of dividing the cargo of such prizes as they should happen to take, and though they had broken through all laws divine and human, yet they imposed an oath to be taken for the due observance of these, so inconsistent a thing is vice, and so strong the principles imbibed from education.

The life they led at sea was rendered equally unhappy from fear and hardship, they never seeing any vessel which reduced them not to the necessity of fighting, and often filled them with apprehensions of being overcome. Whatever they took in their several prizes could afford them no other pleasure but downright drunkenness on board, and except for two or three islands there were no other places where they were permitted to come on shore, for nowadays it was become exceedingly dangerous to land, either at Jamaica, Barbadoes, or on the islands of the Bermudas. In this condition they were when they came to a resolution of choosing one Davis<sup>[10]</sup> as captain, and going under his command to the coast of Brazil.

This design they put in execution, being chiefly tempted with the hopes of surprising some vessel of the homeward bound Portuguese fleet, by which they hoped to be made rich at once, and no longer be obliged to lead a life so full of danger. Accordingly they fell in with twenty sail of those ships and were in the utmost danger of being taken and treated as they deserved. However, on this occasion their captain behaved very prudently, and taking the advantage of one of those vessels being separated from the rest, they boarded her in the night without firing a gun. They forced the captain, when they had him in one of their own ships, to discover which of the fleet was the most richly laden, which he having done through fear, they impudently attacked her, and were very near becoming masters of her, though they were surrounded by the Portuguese ships, from whence they at last escaped, not so much by the swiftness of their own sailing, as by the cowardice of the enemy. In this attempt, though they miscarried as to the prize they had proposed, yet they accounted themselves very fortunate in having thus escaped from so

dangerous an adventure.

Being some time after this in great want of water, Davis at the head of about fifty of his men, very well armed, made a descent in order to fill their casks, though the Portuguese governor of the port near which they landed easily discovered them to be pirates; but not thinking himself in a condition strong enough to attack them, he thought fit to dissemble that knowledge.

Davis and his men were no sooner returned on board than they received a message by a boat from shore, that the Governor would think himself highly honoured if the captain and as many as he pleased of his ship's company would accept of an entertainment the next day at the castle where he resided. Their commander, who had hitherto behaved himself like a man of conduct, suffered his vanity to overcome him so far as to accept of the proposal, and the next morning with ten of his sailors, all dressed in their best clothes, went on shore to this collation. But before they had reached half way, they were set upon by a party of Indians who lay in ambuscade, and with one flight of their poisoned arrows laid them all upon the ground, except Kennedy and another, who escaped to the top of a mountain, from whence they leaped into the sea, and were with much difficulty taken up by a boat which their companions sent to relieve them.

After this they grew tired of the coast of Brazil. However, in their return to the West Indies they took some very considerable prizes, upon which they resolved unanimously to return home, in order, as they flattered themselves, to enjoy their riches. The captain who then commanded them was an Irishman, who endeavoured to bring the ship into Ireland, on the north coast of which a storm arising, the vessel was carried into Scotland and there wrecked. At that time Kennedy had a considerable quantity of gold, which he either squandered away, or had stolen from him in the Highlands. He afterwards went over into Ireland, where being in a low and poor condition he shipped himself at length for England, and came up to London. He had not been long in town before he was observed by some whose vessel had been taken by the crew with whom he sailed. They caused him to be apprehended, and after lying a considerable time in prison, he was, as I have said before, tried and convicted.

After sentence, he showed much less concern for life than is usual for persons in that condition. He was so much tired with the miseries and misfortune which for some years before he had endured, that death appeared to him a thing rather desirable than frightful. When the reprieve came for Bradshaw, who was condemned with him, he expressed great satisfaction, at the same time saying that he was better pleased than if he himself had received mercy. *For,* continued he, *should I be banished into America as he is, 'tis highly probable I might be tempted to my old way of life, and so instead of reforming, add to the number of my sins.*

He continued in these sentiments till the time of his death, when, as he went through Cheapside to his execution, the silver oar being carried before him as is usual, he turned about to a person who sat by him in the cart, and said, *Though it is a common thing for us when at sea to acquire vast quantities both of that metal which goes before me, and of gold, yet such is the justice of Providence that few or none of us preserve enough to maintain us; but as you see in me, when we go to death, we have not wherewith to purchase a coffin to bury us.* He died at Execution Dock, the 21st<sup>[11]</sup> of July, 1721, being then about twenty-six years of age.

[8]

Avery was one of the best known pirates of his time and told of his wonderful wealth, his capturing and marrying the daughter of the Great Mogul, and his setting up a kingdom in Madagascar. He was even the hero of a popular play—*The Successful Pirate*, produced at Dray Lane in 1712. The true story of his life and how he died in want, is related at length in Captain Charles Johnson's *History of the Pirates* edited by me, and published in the same edition as the present volume.

[9]

Woodes Rogers (d. 1732) sailed on Dampier's voyages and made a large sum of money which he devoted to buying the Bahama Islands from the proprietors on a twenty-one years' lease. He was made governor, but found himself unable to cope with the pirates and Spaniards who infested the islands, and went back to England in 1721. He returned as governor in 1728, and remained there until his death.

[10]

This was Howel Davis, whose adventures are related at length in Johnson's *History of the Pirates*, chap. ix.

[11]

*The History of the Pirates* gives the date as 19th of July. This book gives an interesting account of Kennedy, pp. 178-81.

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## The Life of MATTHEW CLARK, a Footpad and Murderer

Perhaps there is nothing to which we may more justly attribute those numerous executions which so disgrace our country, than the false notions which the meaner sort, especially, imbibe in their

youth as to love and women. This unhappy person, Matthew Clark, of whom we are now to speak, was a most remarkable instance of the truth of this observation. He was born at St. Albans, of parents in but mean circumstances, who thought they had provided very well for their son when they had procured his admission into the family of a neighbouring gentleman, equally distinguished by the greatness of his merit and fortune.

In this place, certainly, had Matthew been inclined in any degree to good, he might have acquired from the favour of his master all the advantages, even of a liberal education; but proving an incorrigible, lazy and undutiful servant, the gentleman in whose service he was, after bearing with him a long time, turned him out of his family. He then went to plough and cart, and such other country work, but though he had been bred to this and was never in any state from which he could reasonably hope better, yet was he so restless and uneasy at those hardships which he fancied were put upon him, that he chose rather to rob than to labour; and leaving the farmer in whose service he was, used to skulk about Bushey Heath, and watch all opportunities to rob passengers.

Matthew was a perfect composition of all the vices that enter into low life. He was idle, inclined to drunkenness, cruel and a coward; nor would he have had spirit enough to attack anybody on the road had it not been to supply him with money for merry meetings and dancing bouts, to which he was carried by his prevailing passion for loose women. And these expeditions keeping him continually bare, robbing and junketting, desire of pleasure and fear of the gallows were the whole round of both his actions and his thoughts.

At last the matrimonial maggot bit his brain, and alter a short courtship, he prevailed on a young girl in the neighbourhood to go up with him to London, in order to their marriage. When they were there, finding his stock reduced so low that he had not even money to purchase the wedding ring, he pretended that a legacy of fifteen pounds was just left him in the country, and with a thousand promises of a quick return, set out from London to fetch it. When he left the town, full of uneasy thoughts, he travelled towards Neasden and Willesden Green, where formerly he had lived. He intended to have lurked there till he had an opportunity of robbing as many persons as to make up fifteen pounds from their effects. In pursuance of this resolution, he designed in himself to attack every passenger he saw, but whenever it came to the push, the natural cowardice of his temper prevailed and his heart failed him.



MATTHEW CLARK CUTTING THE THROAT OF SARAH GOLDINGTON  
(From *the Annals of Newgate*)

While he loitered about there, the master of an alehouse hard by took notice of him and asked him how he came to idle about in haytime, when there was so much work, offering at the same time to hire him for a servant. Upon this discourse Clark immediately recollected that all the persons belonging to this man's house must be out haymaking, except the maid, who served his liquors and waited upon guests. As soon, therefore, as he had parted from the master and saw he was gone into the fields, he turned back and went into his house, where renewing his former acquaintance with the maid, who as he had guessed, was there alone, and to whom he formerly had been a sweetheart, he sat near an hour drinking and talking in that jocose manner which is usual between people of their condition in the country. But in the midst of all his expressions of affection, he mediated how to rob the house, his timorous disposition supposing a thousand dangers from the knowledge the maid had of him.

He resolved, in order absolutely to secure himself, to murder her out of the way; upon which, having secretly drawn his knife out of his sheath, and hiding it under his coat, he kissed her, designing at the same time to dispatch her; but his heart failed him the first time. However, getting up and kissing her a second time, he darted it into her windpipe; but its edge being very dull, the poor creature made a shift to mutter his name, and endeavoured to scramble after him. Upon which he returned, and with the utmost inhumanity cut her neck to the bone quite round;



after which he robbed the house of some silver, but being confounded and astonished did not carry off much.

He went directly into the London Road, and came as far as Tyburn, the sight of which filled him with so much terror that he was not able to pick up courage enough to go by it. Returning back into the road again, he met a waggon, which, in hopes of preventing all suspicion, he undertook to drive up to town (the man who drove it having hurt his leg). But he had not gone far before the persons who were in pursuit of the murderer of Sarah Goldington (the maid before mentioned) came up with him, and enquired whether he had seen anybody pass by his waggon who looked suspicious, or was likely to have committed the fact. This enquiry put him into so much confusion that he was scarce able to make an answer, which occasioned their looking at him more narrowly and thereby discovering the sleeve of his shirt to be all bloody. At first he affirmed with great confidence that a soldier meeting him upon the road had insulted him, and that in fighting with him he had made the soldier's mouth bleed, which had so stained his shirt. But in a little time perceiving this excuse would not prevail, but that they were resolved to carry him back, he fell into a violent agony and confessed the fact.

At the next sessions at the Old Bailey he was convicted, and after receiving sentence of death, endeavoured all he could to comfort and compose himself during the time he lay under condemnation. His father, who was a very honest industrious man came to see him, and after he was gone Matthew spoke with great concern of an expression which his father had made use of, viz., That if he had been to die for any other offence, he would have made all the interest and friends he could to have served for his life, but that the murder he had committed was so cruel, that he thought that nothing could atone for it but his blood. The inhumanity and cruel circumstances of it did indeed in some degree affect this malefactor himself, but he seemed much more disturbed with the apprehension of being hanged in chains, a thing which from the weakness of vulgar minds terrifies more than death itself, and the use of which I confess I do not see, since it serves only to render the poor wretches uneasy in their last moments, and instead of making suitable impressions on the minds of the spectators, affords a pretence for servants and other young persons to idle away their time in going to see the body so exposed on a gibbet.

At the place of execution, Clark was extremely careful to inform the people that he was so far from having any malice against the woman whom he murdered that he really had a love for her. A report, too, of his having designed to sell the young girl he had brought out of the country into Virginia had weight enough with him to occasion his solemn denying of it at the tree, though he acknowledged at the same time that he had resolved to leave her. He declared also, to prevent any aspersions on some young men who had been his companions, that no person was ever present with, or privy to any of the robberies he had committed; and having thus far discharged his conscience, he suffered on the 28th of July, 1721, in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

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### **The Life of JOHN WINSHIP, Highwayman and Footpad**

That idleness in which youths are suffered to live in this kingdom till they are grown to that size at which they are usually put apprentice (a space of time in which they are much better employed, in many other countries of Europe) too often creates an inaptitude to work and allows them opportunity of entering into paths which have a fatal termination.

John Winship, of whom we are now to treat, was born of parents in tolerable circumstances in the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. They gave him an education rather superior to his condition, and treated him with an indulgence by which his future life became unhappy. At about fourteen, they placed him as an apprentice with a carpenter, to which trade he himself had a liking. His master used him as well as he could have expected or wished, yet that inclination to idleness and loitering which he had contracted while a boy, made him incapable of pursuing his business with tolerable application. The particular accident by which he was determined to leave it shall be the next point in our relation.

It happened that returning one day from work, he took notice of a young woman standing at a door in a street not far distant from that in which his master lived. He was then about seventeen, and imagining love to be a very fine thing, thought fit, without further enquiry, to make this young woman the object of his affection. The next evening he took occasion to speak to her, and this acquaintance soon improving into frequent appointments, naturally led Winship into much greater expenses than he was able to support. This had two consequences equally fatal to this unhappy young man, for in the first place he left his master and his trade, and took to driving of coaches and like methods, to get his bread; but all the ways he could think of, proving unable to supply his expenses, he went next upon the road, and raised daily contributions in as illegal a manner as they were spent at night, in all the excesses of vice.

It is impossible to give either a particular or exact account of the robberies he committed, because he was always very reserved, even after conviction, in speaking as to these points.

However, he is said to have been concerned in robbing a Frenchman of quality in the road to Hampstead, who in a two-horsed chaise, with the coachman on his box, was attacked in the dusk of the evening by three highwaymen. They exchanged several pistols and continued the fight, till the ammunition on both sides being exhausted, the foreigner prepared to defend himself with his sword. The rogues were almost out of all hopes of obtaining their booty, when one of them getting behind the chaise secretly cut a square hole in its back, and putting in both his arms,

seized the gentleman so strongly about the shoulders that his companions had an opportunity of closing in with him, disarming him of his sword, rifling and taking a hundred and twenty pistoles. Not content with this they ripped the lace off his clothes, and took from the coachmen all the money he had about him.

Winship had been concerned in divers gangs, and being a fellow of uncommon agility of body, was mightily well received and much caressed by them, as was also another companion of his, whom they called Clean-Limbed Tom, whose true name was never known, being killed in a duel at Kilkenny in Ireland. This last mentioned person had been bred with an apothecary, and sometimes travelled the country in the high capacity of a quack doctor, at others, in the more humble station of a merry-andrew. Travelling once down into the west, with a little chest of medicines which he intended to dispose of in this matter at West Chester, at an inn about twenty miles short of that city he overtook a London wholesale dealer, who had been that way collecting debts. Tom made a shift to get into his company overnight, and diverted him so much with his facetious conversation that he invited him to breakfast with him the next morning. Tom took occasion to put a strong purge into the ale and toast which the Londoner was drinking, he himself pretending never to take anything in the morning but a glass of wine and bitters. When the stranger got on horseback, Tom offered to accompany him, *For*, says he, *I can easily walk as fast as your horse will trot*. They had not got above two miles before, at the entrance of a common, the physic began to work. The tradesman alighting to untruss a point, Tom leaped at once into his saddle, and galloped off both with his horse and portmanteau. He baited an hour at a small village three miles beyond Chester, having avoided passing through that city, then continued his journey to Port Patrick, from whence he crossed to Dublin with about four score pounds in ready money, a gold watch, which was put up in a corner of a cloak bag, linen, and other things to a considerable value besides.

But to return to Winship. His robberies were so numerous that he began to be very well known and much sought after by those who make it their business to bring men to justice for rewards. There is some reason to believe that he had been once condemned and received mercy. However, on the 25th of May, 1721, he stopped one Mr. Lowther in his chariot, between Pancras Church and the Halfway House, and robbed him of his silver watch and a purse of ten guineas; for which robbery being quickly after apprehended, he was convicted at the Old Bailey, on the evidence of the prosecutor and the voluntary information of one of his companions.

While he lay under sentence, he could not help expressing a great impatience at the miserable condition to which his follies had reduced him, and at the same time to show the most earnest desire of life, though it were upon the terms of transportation for the whole continuance of it; though he frequently declared it did not arise so much from a willingness in himself to continue in this world, as at the grief he felt for the misfortunes of his aged mother, who was ready to run distracted at her son's unhappy fate.

As he was a very personable young man strangers, especially at chapel, took particular notice of him, and were continually inquiring of his adventures; but Winship not only constantly refused to give them any satisfaction, but declared also to the Ordinary that he did not think himself obliged to make any discoveries which might affect the lives of others, showing also an extraordinary uneasiness whenever such questions were put to him. When he was asked, by the direction of a person of some rank, whether he did not rob a person dressed in such a manner in a chaise as he was watering his horse before the church door, during the time of Divine service, Winship replied, he supposed the crime did not consist in the time or place, and as to whether he was guilty of it or no, he would tell nothing.

In other respects he appeared penitent and devout, suffering at Tyburn at the same time with the afore-mentioned Matthew Clark, in the twenty-second year of his age, leaving behind him a wife, who died afterwards with grief for his execution.

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## **The Life of JOHN MEFF, *alias* MERTH, a Housebreaker and a Highwayman**

The rigid execution of felons who return from transportation has been found so necessary that few or none who have been tried for such illegal returning have escaped, though 'tis very hard to convince those who suffer for that offence that there is any real crime in their evading their sentence. It was this which brought John Meff, *alias* Merth, of whom we are now to speak, to an ignominious death, after he had once before escaped it in a very extraordinary manner, as in the process of his story shall be related.

This unhappy man was born in London of French parents, who retired into England for the sake of their religion, when Louis XIV began his furious persecution against the Protestants in his dominions. This John Meff was educated with great care, especially as to the principles of religion, by a father who had very just notions of that faith for which in banishment he suffered. When his son John grew up, he put him out apprentice to a weaver, whom he served with great fidelity, and after he came out of his time, married; but finding himself incapable to maintain his family by his labour, he unfortunately addicted himself to ill-courses. In this he was yet more unlucky, for having almost at his first setting out broke open a house, he was discovered, apprehended, tried, convicted, and put in the cart, in order to go to execution within the fortnight; but the hangman being arrested as he was going to Tyburn, he and the rest who were to have suffered with him were transported through the clemency of the Government.

On this narrow escape from death, Meff was full of many penitent resolutions, and determined with himself to follow for the future an honest course of life, however hard and laborious, as persons are generally inclined to believe all works in the plantations are. Yet no sooner was he at liberty (that is, on board the transport vessel, where he found means to make the master his friend) than much of these honest intentions were dissolved and laid aside, to which perhaps the behaviour of his companions and of the seamen on board the ship, did not a little contribute. At first their passage was easy, the wind fair and prosperous. They began to comfort one another with the hopes of living easily in the Plantations, greedily enquiring of the seamen how persons in their unhappy condition were treated by their masters, and whether all the terrible relations they had had in England were really facts, or invented only to terrify those who were to undergo that punishment.

But while these unhappy persons were thus amusing themselves a new and unlooked for misfortune fell upon them, for in the height of Bermuda they were surprised by two pirate sloops, who though they found no considerable booty on board, were very well satisfied by the great addition they made to their force, from most of those felons joining with them in their piratical undertakings. Meff, however, and eight others, absolutely refused to sign the paper which contained the pirate's engagement and articles for better pursuing their designs. These nine were, according to the barbarous practice of those kind of people, marooned, that is, set on shore on an uninhabited island. According to the custom of the people in such distress, they were obliged to rub two dry sticks together till they took fire, and with great difficulty gathered as many other sticks as made a fire large enough to yield them some relief from the inclemency of the weather. They caught some fowls with springes made of an old horsehair wig, which were very tough and of a fishy taste, but after three or four days, they became acquainted with the springes and were never afterwards to be taken by that means. Their next resource for food was an animal which burrowed in the ground like our rabbits, but the flesh of these proving unwholesome, threw them into such dangerous fluxes that five out of the nine were scarce able to go. They were then forced to take up with such fish as they were able to catch, and even these were not only very rank and unpleasant, but very small also, and no great plenty of them either.

At last, when they almost despaired of ever getting off that inhospitable island, they espied early one morning an Indian canoe come on shore with seven persons. They hid themselves behind the rocks as carefully as they could, and the Indians being gone up into the heart of the island, they went down and finding much salt provisions in the boat, they trusted themselves to the mercy of the waves.

By the providence of God they were driven in two days into an English settlement, where Meff, instead of betaking himself to any settled course, resolved to turn sailor, and in that capacity made several voyages, not only to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the rest of the British Islands, but also to New England, Virginia, South Carolina, and other plantations. On the main, there is no doubt but he led a life of no great satisfaction in this occupation, which probably was the reason he resolved to return home to England at all hazards. He did so, and had hardly been a month in this kingdom before he fell to his old practices, in which he was attended with the same ill-fortune as formerly; that is to say, he was apprehended for one of his first acts, and committed to Newgate. Out of this prison he escaped by the assistance of a certain bricklayer, and went down to Hatfield in Hertfordshire to remain in hiding, but as he affirmed and was generally believed, being betrayed by the same bricklayer he was retaken, conveyed again to Newgate and confined the utmost severity.

At his trial there arose a doubt whether the fact he had committed was not pardoned by the Act of Indemnity then lately granted. However, the record of his former conviction being produced, the Court ordered he should be indicted for returning without lawful cause, on which indictment he was convicted upon full proof, condemned and shortly after ordered for execution.

During the space he lay under sentence he expressed much penitence for his former ill-spent life, and together with James Reading, who was in the same unhappy state with himself, read and prayed with the rest of the prisoners. This Reading had been concerned in abundance of robberies, and, as he himself owned, in some which were attended with murder; he acknowledged he knew of the killing of Mr. Philpot, the surveyor of the window-lights, at the perpetration of which fact Reading said there were three persons present, two of which he knew, but as to the third he could say nothing. This malefactor, though but thirty-five years of age, was a very old offender, and had in his life-time been concerned with most of the notorious gangs that at that time were in England, some of whom he had impeached and hanged for his own preservation; but he was at last convicted for robbing (in company with two others) George Brownsworth of a watch and other things of a considerable value, between Islington and the turnpike, and for it was executed at Tyburn, the 11th of September, 1721, together with John Meff aforesaid, then in the fortieth year of his age.

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### **The Life of JOHN WIGLEY, a Highwayman**

It is an observation which must be obvious to all my readers, that few who addict themselves to robbing and stealing ever continue long in the practice of those crimes before they are overtaken by Justice, not seldom as soon as they set out.

This man had been bred a plasterer, but seems to have fallen very early into ill courses and felonious methods of getting money, in which horrid practice he spent his years, till taking up

with an old woman who sold brandy upon Finchley Common, she sometimes persuaded him, of late years, to work at his trade.

There has been great suspicions that he murdered the old husband to this woman, who was found dead in a barn or outhouse not far from Hornsey; but Wigley, though he confessed an unlawful correspondence with the woman, yet constantly averred his innocency of that fact, and always asserted that though the old man's death was sudden, yet it was natural. He used to account for it by saying that the deceased was a great brandy-drinker, by which he had worn out his constitution, and that being one evening benighted in his return home from London, he crawled into that barn where he was found dead next morning, and was currently reported to have been murdered.

Though this malefactor had committed a multitude of robberies, yet he generally chose to go on such expeditions alone, having always great aversion for those confederacies in villainy which we call gangs, in which he always affirmed there was little safety, notwithstanding any oaths, by which they might bind themselves to secrecy. For notwithstanding some instances of their neglecting rewards when they were to be obtained by betraying their companions, yet when life came to be touched, they hardly ever failed of betraying all they knew. Yet he once receded from the resolution he had made of never robbing in company, and went out one night with two others of the same occupation towards Islington, there they met with one Symbol Conyers, whom they robbed of a watch, a pair of silver spurs, and four shillings in money, at the same time treating him very ill, and terrifying him with their pistols.

For this fact, soon after it was done, Wigley was apprehended, and convicted at the ensuing sessions. When all hopes of life were lost, he seemed disposed to suffer with cheerfulness and resignation that death to which the Law had doomed him. He said, in the midst of his afflictions it was some comfort to him that he had no children who might be exposed by his death to the wide world, not only in a helpless and desolate condition, but also liable to the reflections incident from his crimes. He also observed that the immediate hand of Providence seemed to dissipate whatever wicked persons got by rapine and plunder, so as not only to prevent their acquiring a subsistence which might set them above the necessity of continuing in such courses, but that they even wanted bread to support them, when overtaken by Justice. He was near forty years of age at the time of his death, which happened on the same day as the malefactors last mentioned.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM CASEY, a Robber**

William Casey, whose life is the subject of our present discourse, was a son of one of the same name, a soldier who had served his Majesty long, and with good reputation. As is usual amongst that sort of people, the education he gave his son was such as might fit him for the same course of life, though at the same time he took care to provide him with a tolerable competency of learning, that is, as to writing and reading English. When he was about fifteen years of age, his father caused him to be enlisted in the same company in which he served for some small time before my Lord Cobham's expedition into Spain,<sup>[12]</sup> in which he accompanied him. That expedition being over, Casey returned into England, and did duty as usual in the Guards.

One night he, with some others, crossing the park a fray happened between them and one John Stone, which as Casey affirmed at his death, was occasioned by the prosecutor Stone offering very great indecencies to him, upon which they in a fury beat and abused him, from the abhorrence they pretended to have for that beastly and unnatural sin of sodomy. Whether this was really the case or no is hard to determine; all who were concerned in it with Casey being indicted (though not apprehended) with him, and their evidence consequently taken. However that matter was, Stone the prosecutor told a dreadful story on Casey's trial. He said the four men attacked him crossing the Park, who attacked, beat and cruelly trod upon and wounded him, taking from him at the same time his hat, wig, neck-cloth and five shillings in money; and that upon his arising and endeavouring to follow them, they turned back, stamped upon him, broke one of his ribs, and told him that if he attempted to stir, they would seize him and swear sodomy upon him. On this indictment Casey was convicted and ordered for execution, notwithstanding all the intercession his friends could make.

While under sentence he complained heavily of the pains a certain corporal had taken in preparing and pressing the evidence against him. He said his diligence proceeded not from any desire of doing justice, or for his guilt, but from an old grudge he owed their family, from Casey's father threatening to prosecute him for a rape committed on his daughter, then very young, and attended with very cruel circumstances; and which even the corporal himself had in part owned in a letter which he had written to the said Casey's father. However, while he lay in Newgate, he seemed heartily affected with sorrow for his misspent life, which he said was consumed as is too frequent among soldiers, either in idleness or vice. He added, that in Spain he had made serious resolutions of amendment with himself, but was hindered from performing them by his companions, who were continually seducing him into his old courses. When he found that all hopes of life were lost, he disposed himself to submit with decency to his fate, which disposition he preserved to the last.

At the place of execution he behaved with great composure and said that as he had heard he was accused in the world of having robbed and murdered a woman in Hyde Park, he judged it proper to discharge his conscience by declaring that he knew nothing of the murder, but said nothing as to the robbery. At the time of his death, which was on the 11th of September, 1721, he was about

twenty years of age, and according to the character his officers gave him, a very quiet and orderly young man. He left behind him a paper to be published to the world, which as he was a dying man he averred to be the truth.

A copy of a paper left by William Casey.

Good People, I am now brought to this place to suffer a shameful and ignominious death, and of all such unhappy persons, 'tis expected by the world that they should either say something at their death, or leave some account behind them. And having that which more nearly concerns me, viz., the care of my immortal soul, I choose rather to leave these lines behind me than to waste my few precious moments in talking to the multitude. First, I declare, I die like a member, though a very unworthy one, of the Church of England as by Law established, the principles of which my now unhappy father took an early care to instruct me in. And next for the robbery of Mr. Stone, for which I am now brought to this fatal place. I solemnly do declare to God and the world, that I never had the value of one halfpenny from him, and that the occasion of his being so ill-used was that he offered to me that detestable and crying sin of sodomy.

I take this opportunity, with almost my last breath, to give my hearty thanks to the honourable Col. Pitts, and Col. Pagitt, for their endeavours to save my life, and indeed I had some small hopes that his Majesty, in consideration of the services of my whole family, having all been faithful soldiers and servants to the Crown of England, would have extended one branch of his mercy to me, and have sent me to have served him in another country. But welcome be the Grace of God, I am resigned to His will, and die in charity with all men, forgiving, hoping to be forgiven myself, through the merits of my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope, and make it my earnest request that nobody will be so little Christian as to reflect on my aged parents, wife, brother, or sisters, for my untimely end. And I pray God, into whose hands I commend my spirit, that the great number of sodomites in and about this City and suburbs, may not bring down the same judgement from Heaven as fell on Sodom and Gomorrah.

William Casey.

[12]

Sir Richard Temple, 1st Viscount Cobham, was a distinguished general who had served under Marlborough. In 1719 he led an expedition to the north coast of Spain and seized Vigo and the neighbouring towns and harbours.

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### **The Life of JOHN DYKES, a Thief and Highwayman**

It is a reflection almost too common to be repeated that of all the vices to which young people are addicted, nothing is so dangerous as a habit and inclination to gaming. To explain this would be to swell a volume. Instances which are so numerous do it much better. Perhaps this unhappy person John Dykes is as strong a one as is anywhere to be met with. His parents were persons in middling circumstances, but he being their eldest child, they treated him with great indulgence, and to the detriment of their own fortune afforded him a necessary education. When he grew up and his friends thought of placing him out apprentice, he always found some excuse or other to avoid it, which arose only from his great indolence of temper, and his continual itching after gaming. When he had money, he went to the gaming tables about town, and when reduced by losses sustained there, would put on an old ragged coat and get out to play at chuck, and span-farthing, amongst the boys in the street, by which, sometimes he got money enough to go to his old companions again. But this being a very uncertain recourse, he made use more frequently of picking pockets; for which being several times apprehended and committed to Bridewell, his friends, especially his poor father, would often demonstrate to him the ignominious end which such practices would necessarily bring on, entreating him while there was yet time, to reflect and to leave them off, promising to do their utmost for him, notwithstanding all that was past. In the course of this unhappy life the youth had acquired an extraordinary share of cunning, and an unusual capacity of dissembling; he employed it more than once to deceive his family into a belief of his having made a thorough resolution of amendment.

Once, after having suffered the usual discipline of the horsepond, Dykes was carried before a Justice of Peace, and committed to Tothill Fields Bridewell<sup>[13]</sup>. Here he became acquainted with one Jeddediah West, a Quaker's son, who had fallen into the like practices, and for them shared the same punishment with himself. They were pretty much of a temper, but Jeddediah was the elder and much the more subtle of the two, and in this unhappy place they contracted a strict and intimate friendship. Out of shame Jeddediah forbore for two or three days to acquaint his relations, and during that time for the most part subsisted out of what Dykes got from home. But at last West picked up courage enough to send to his brother, a very eminent man in business, and by telling him a plausible story, procured not only pity and relief, but even prevailed on him to believe that he was innocent of the fact for which he was committed. He so well tutored his friend Dykes that though he could not persuade his parents into the same degree of credulity, yet his outward appearance of penitence induced them not only to pardon him but to take him home, give him a new suit of clothes, and to promise him, if he continued to do well, whatever was in

their power to do for him.

Dykes and his companion being in favour with their friends, and having money in their pockets, continued their correspondence and went often to the gaming tables together. At first they had a considerable run of luck for about three weeks, but Fortune then forsaking them, they were reduced to be downright penniless, without any hopes of relief or assistance from their friends sufficient to carry on their expenses. West at last proposed an expedient for raising money, which lay altogether upon himself, and which he the next day executed in the following manner.

About the time that he knew his brother was to come home from the Exchange to dinner, he went to his house equipped in a sailor's pea-jacket, his hair cropped short to his ears, his eyebrows coloured black, and a handkerchief about his neck. As soon as he saw him in the counting-house, his brother started back, and cried, *Bless me! Jeddediah, how came you in this pickle?* With all signs of grief and confusion, he threw himself at his brother's feet, and told him with a flood of tears that two coiners who had accidentally seen him in Bridewell had sworn against him and three others on their apprehension, in order on the merit thereof to be admitted evidences to get off themselves. *So that, dear brother,* he continued, *I have been obliged to take a passage in a vessel that does down next tide to Gravesend, for I have ran the hazard of my life to come and beg your charitable assistance.*

The poor honest man was so much amazed and concerned at this melancholy tale, that bursting out into tears, and hanging about his brother's neck, he begged him to take a coach and begone to Billingsgate, giving him ten guineas in hand and telling him that his bills should not be protested if he drew within the compass of a hundred pounds from Dieppe, whither he said the ship was bound. West was no sooner out of the street where his brother lived, but he ordered the coach to drive to a certain place where he had appointed Dykes to meet him, and there they expressed a great deal of mutual satisfaction at the trick West had played his brother. However, the latter was no great gainer in the end, for Mr. West, senior, soon finding out the contrivance, forever renounced him, and Jeddediah being soon after arrested for twelve pounds due to his tailor, was carried to prison and remained there without the least assistance from his brother, till after his friend Dykes was hanged.

The last mentioned malefactor, unmoved by all the tender entreaties of his friends, and the glaring prospect before him of his own ruin, went still on at the old rate, and whenever gaming had brought him low in cash, took up with the road, or some such like dishonest method to recruit it. At last he had the ill-luck to commit a robbery in Stepney parish, in the road between Mile End and Bow, upon one Charles Wright, to whose bosom clapping a pistol, he commanded him to deliver peacefully, or he would shoot him through the body. The booty he took was very inconsiderable, being only a penknife, an ordinary seal, and five shillings and eightpence in money. A poor price for life, since two days after he was apprehended for this robbery, committed to Newgate and condemned the next sessions.

His behaviour under these unhappy circumstances was very mean, and such as fully showed what difference there is between courage and that resolution which is necessary to support the spirits and calm our apprehensions at the certain approach of a violent death. I forbear attempting any description of those unutterable torments which the exterior marks of a distracted behaviour fully showed that this poor wretch endured. And as I have nothing more to add of him, but that he confessed his having been guilty of a multitude of ill acts, he submitted at last with greater cheerfulness than he had ever shown during his confinement to that shameful death which the Law had ordained for his crimes, on the 23rd of October, 1721, when he was about twenty-three years of age.

[13]

This Bridewell occupied the site adjoining the north side of the Green Coat School, on the west: side of Artillery Place. Although originally intended for vagrants, early in the 18th century it was turned into a house of detention for criminals.

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### **The Life of RICHARD JAMES, a Highwayman**

The misfortune of not having early a virtuous education is often so great a one as never to be retrieved, and it happens frequently (as far as human capacity will give us leave to judge) that those prove remarkably wicked and profligate for want of it who if they had been so happy as to have received it, would probably have led an honest and industrious life. I am led to this observation at present by the materials which lay before me for the composition of this life.

Richard James was the son of a nobleman's cook, but he knew little more of his father than that he left him to the wide world while very young; and so at about twelve years of age he was sent to sea. There he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner by the Spaniards, who he acknowledged treated him with great humanity, and a house-painter taking a great liking to him, received him into his house, taught him his profession, and used him with the same tenderness as if he had been his nearest relation.

But fondness for his country exciting in him a continual desire of seeing England again, at last he found a means to return before he was seventeen; and after this, being in England but a very small time, he totally disobliged what few friends he had left, by his silly marriage to a poor girl younger than himself. As is common enough in such mad adventures, the woman's friends were

as much disobliged as his, and so not knowing how to subsist together, Richard was obliged to betake him to his old profession of the sea.

The first voyage he made was to the West Indies, where he had the misfortune to be taken by pirates, and by them being set on shore, he was reduced almost to downright starving. However, begging his way to Boston in New England, he from thence found a method of returning home once again. The first thing he did was to enquire for his wife. But she, under a pretence of having received advice of his death from America, had gotten another husband; and though poor James was willing to pass that by, yet the woman, it seems, knew better when she was well, and under pretence of affection for two children which she had by this last husband, absolutely refused to leave him and return back to Dick, her first spouse. However, he did not seem to have taken this much to heart, for in a short time he followed her example and married another wife; but finding no method of procuring an honest livelihood, he took a short method of living, viz., to thieving after every manner that came in his way.

He committed a vast number of robberies in a very short space, chiefly upon the waggoners in the Oxford Road, and sometimes, as if there were not crime enough in barely robbing them, he added to it by the cruel manner in which he treated them. At this rate he went on for a considerable space, till being apprehended for a robbery of a man on Hanwell Green, from whom he took but ten shillings, he was shortly after convicted; and having no friends, from that time he laid aside all hope of life.

During the space he had to prepare himself for death, he appeared so far from being either terrified, or even unwilling to die, that he looked upon it as a very happy relief from a very troublesome and uneasy life, and declared, with all outward appearance of sincerity, that he would not, even if it were in his power, procure a reprieve, or avoid that death which could alone prove a remedy for those evils which had so long rendered life a burden. He was very earnest to be instructed in the duties of religion, and seemed to desire nothing else than to prepare himself, as well as time and his melancholy circumstances would allow him, and never from the time of his conviction showed any change in his disposition but continued still rather to wish for his death than to fear it. He made a very ample confession of all the robberies he had ever done, and seemed sorrowful enough, above all, for the inhumanity and incivility with which he had sometimes treated people.

Amongst other particulars he said that once, with his companions, having robbed a lady in some other company of a whip, and a tortoiseshell snuff-box with a silver rim, she earnestly desired to have them returned, saying that as to the money they had taken they were heartily welcome; the other thieves seemed inclinable to grant her request, but James absolutely declared that she should not have them. However, as a very extraordinary mark of his generosity, he took the snuff out of the box, and putting it into a paper, gave it her back again.

At the place of execution he repeated what he had formerly said as to his readiness of dying, adding, that if the people pitied the misfortune he fell under of dying so ignominious a death, he no less pitied them in the dangers and misfortunes they were sure to run through in this miserable world. At the time of his death he was about thirty years of age, and suffered on the same day with the criminal last mentioned.

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### **The Life of JAMES WRIGHT, a Highwayman**

James Wright, the malefactor whose life we are going to relate at present, was born at Enfield, of very honest and industrious parents, who, that he might get a living honestly, put him apprentice to a peruke-maker. At this trade, after having served his time, he set up in the Old Bailey, and lived there for some time in very good credit. But being much given up to women, and an idle habit of life, his expenses quickly outwent his profits, and thus in the space of some months reduced him to downright want. This put him upon the illegal ways he afterwards took to support himself in the enjoyment of those pleasures which even the evils he had already felt could not make him wise enough to shun.

He was very far from being a hardened criminal, hardly ever robbing a passenger without tears in his eyes, and always framing resolutions to himself of quitting that infamous manner of life, as soon as ever it should be in his power. He fancied that as the rich could better spare it than the poor, there was less crime in taking it from them, and valued himself not a little that he had never injured any poor man, but always singled out those who from their equipage were likeliest to yield him a good booty, and at the same time not be much the worse for it themselves. He had gone on for a considerable space in the commission of villainies with impunity, but at last being apprehended for a robbery committed by him in the county of Surrey, he was thereupon indicted and tried at the ensuing assizes at Kingston, and by some means or other, was so lucky as to be acquitted, no doubt to his very great joy; and on this deliverance he again renewed his vows of amendment.

After this acquittal a friend of his was so kind as to take him down to his house in the country, in hopes of keeping him out of harm's way; and indeed 'tis highly probable that he had totally given over all evil intention of that sort, when he was unfortunately impeached by Hawkins, one of his old companions, and on his evidence and that of the prosecutor whom he found out, Wright was taken up, tried and convicted at the Old Bailey. When he perceived there was no hope of life he applied himself to the great business of his soul, and behaved with the greatest composure

imaginable. He declared himself a Roman Catholic, yet frequented the chapel all the time he was in Newgate, and seemed only studious how to make peace with God.

When the fatal day of execution approached, he was far from seeming amazed, notwithstanding that after mature deliberation he refused to declare his associates, or how they might be found, saying that perhaps they might repent, and he hoped some of them had done so, and he would not bring them to the same ignominious death with himself. The fact he died for, viz., robbing Mr. Towers, with some ladies in a coach in Marlborough Street, he confessed, also that his companion called out to him, *What, do they resist? Shoot 'em*. He suffered with all the outward signs of penitence, on the 22nd of December, 1721, being about thirty-four years of age.

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### **The Life of NATHANIEL HAWES, a Thief and a Robber**

Amongst many odd notions which are picked up by the common people, there is none more dangerous, both to themselves and unto others, than the idea they get of courage, which with them consists either in a furious madness, or an obstinate perseverance, even in the worst cause.

Nathaniel Hawes was a very extraordinary instance of this, as the following part of his life will show. He was, as he said himself, the son of a very rich grazier in Norfolk, who dying when he was but a year old, he afterwards pretended that he was defrauded of a greater part of his father's effects which should have belonged to him. However, those who took care of his education put him out apprentice to an upholsterer, with whom having served about four years, he then fell into very expensive company, which reduced him to such straits as obliged him to make bold with his master's cash, by which he injured him for some time with impunity. But proceeding, at last, to the commission of a downright robbery, he was therein detected, tried and convicted, but being then a very young man, the Court had pity on him, and he had the good luck to procure a pardon.

Natt made the old use of mercy, when extended to such sort of people, that is, when he returned to liberty he returned to his old practices. His companions were several young men of the same stamp with himself, who placed all their delight in the sensual and brutal pleasures of drinking, gaming, whoring and idling about, without betaking themselves to any business. Natt, who was a young fellow naturally sprightly and of good parts, from thence became very acceptable to these sort of people, and committed abundance of robberies in a very small space of time. The natural fire of his temper made him behave with great boldness on such occasions, and gave him no small reputation amongst the gang. Seeing himself extravagantly commended on such occasions, Hawes began to form to himself high notions of heroism in that way, and from the warmth of a lively imagination, became a downright Don Quixote in all their adventures. He particularly affected the company of Richard James, and with him robbed very much on the Oxford Road, whereon it was common for both these persons not only to take away the money from passengers, but also to treat them with great inhumanity, which for all I might know might arise in a great measure from Hawes's whimsical notions.

This fellow was so puffed up with the reputation he had got amongst his companions in the same miserable occupation, that he fancied no expedition impracticable which he thought fit to engage, and indeed the boldness of his attempts had so often given him success that there is no wonder a fellow of his small parts and education should conceive so highly of himself. It was nothing for Hawes singly to rob a coach full of gentlemen, to stop two or three persons on the highway at a time, or to rob the waggons in a line as they came on the Oxford Road to London, nor was there any of the little prisons or Bridewells that could hold him.

There was, however, an adventure of Natt's of this kind that deserves a particular relation. He had, it seems, been so unlucky as to be taken and committed to New Prison,<sup>[14]</sup> on suspicion of robbing two gentlemen in a chaise coming from Hampstead. Hawes viewed well the place of his confinement, but found it much too strong for any attempts like those he was wont to make. In the same place with himself and another man mere was a woman very genteelly dressed, who had been committed for shoplifting. This woman seemed even more ready to attempt something which might get her out of that confinement than either Hawes or her other companion. The latter said it was impracticable, and Natt that though he had broken open many a prison, yet he saw no probability of putting this in the number.

*Well, said the woman have you courage enough to try, if I put you in the way? Yes, quoth Hawes, there's nothing I won't undertake for liberty; and said the other fellow, If I once saw a likelihood of performing it, there's nobody has better hands at such work than myself. In the first place, said this politician in petticoats, we must raise as much money amongst us as will keep a very good fire. Why truly, replied Hawes, a fire would be convenient in this cold weather, but I can't, for my heart, see how we should be nearer our liberty for it, unless you intend to set the gaol in flames. Tush! Tush!* answered the woman, *follow but my directions, and let's have some faggots and coals, and I warrant you by to-morrow morning we shall be safe out of these regions.* The woman spoke this with so much assurance that Hawes and the other man complied, and reserving but one shilling, laid out all their money in combustibles and liquor. While the runners of the prison were going to and fro upon this occasion, the woman seemed so dejected that she could scarce speak, and the two men by her directions sat with the same air as if the rope already had been about them at Tyburn. At last, as they were going to be locked up; *Pray, says the woman, with a faint voice, Can't you give me something like a poker? Why, yes, says one of the fellows belonging to the gaol, if you'll give me twopence, I'll bring you one of the old bars that was taken out of the*



*window when these new ones were put in.* The woman gave him the halfpence, he delivered the bar, and the keepers having locked them up, barred and bolted the doors, and left them until next morning.

As soon as ever the people of the gaol were gone, up starts madam. *Now, my lads,* says she, *to work;* and putting her hands into her pockets and shaking her petticoats, down drops two little bags of tools. She pointed out to them a large stone at the corner of the roof which was morticed into two others, one above and the other below. After they had picked all the mortar from between them, she heated the bar red hot in the fire, and putting it to the sockets into which the irons that held the stones were fastened with lead, it quickly loosened them, and then making use of the bars as of a crow, by two o'clock in the morning they had got them all three out, and opened a fair passage into the streets, only that it was a little too high. Upon this the woman made them fasten the iron bar strongly at the angle where the three stones met, and then pulling off her stays, she unrolled from the top of her petticoats four yards of strong cord, the noose of which being fastened on the iron, the other end was thrown out over the wall, and so the descent was rendered easy. The men were equally pleased and surprised at their good fortune, and in gratitude to the female author of it, helped her to the top of the wall, and let her get safe over before they attempted to go out themselves.

It was not long after this that Hawes committed a robbery on Finchley Common, upon one Richard Hall, from whom he took about four shillings in money; and to make up the badness of the booty, he took from him his horse, in order to be the better equipped to go in quest of another which might make up the deficiency. For this robbery, being shortly after detected and apprehended, he was convicted and received sentence of death. When first confined, he behaved himself with very great levity, and declared he would merit a greater reputation by the boldness of his behaviour than any highwayman that had died these seven years. Indeed, this was the style he always made use of, and the great affectation of intrepidity and resolution which he always put on would have moved anybody (had it not been for his melancholy condition) to smile at the vanity of the man.

At the time he was taken up, he had, it seems, a good suit of clothes taken from him, which put him so much out of humour, because he could not appear, as he said, like a gentleman at the sessions-house, that when he was arraigned and should have put himself upon his trial, he refused to plead unless they were delivered to him again. But to this the Court answered that it was not in their power, and on his persisting to remain mute, after all the exhortations which were made to him, the Court at last ordered that the sentence of the press should be read to him, as is customary on such occasions; after which the Judge from the Bench spoke to him to this effect

Nathaniel Hawes,

The equity of the Law of England, more tender of the lives of its subjects than any other in the world, allows no person to be put to death, either unheard or without the positive proof against him of the fact whereon he stands charged; and that proof, too, must be such as shall satisfy twelve men who are his equals, and by whose verdict he is to be tried. And surely no method can be devised fuller than this is, as well of compassion, as of Justice. But then it is required that the person to be tried shall aver his innocence by pleading Not Guilty to his indictment, which contains the charge. You have heard that which the grand jury have found against you. You see here twelve honest men ready to enquire impartially into the evidence that shall be given against you. The Court, such is the humanity of our constitution, is counsel for you as you are a prisoner. What hinders then, that you should submit to so fair, so equal a trial; and wherefore will you, by a brutish obstinacy, draw upon you that heavy judgement which the Law has appointed for those who seem to have lost the rational faculties of men?

To this Hawes impudently made answer, that the Court was formerly a place of Justice, but now it was become a place of injustice; that he doubted not but that they would receive a severer sentence than that which they had pronounced upon him; and that for his part, he made no question of dying with the same resolution with which he had often beheld death, and would leave the world with the same courage with which he had lived in it.

Natt thought this a most glorious instance of his courage, and when some of his companions said jestingly, that he chose pressing because the Court would not let him have a good suit of clothes to be hanged in, he replied, with a great deal of warmth, that it was no such thing, but that as he had lived with the character of the boldest fellow of his profession he was resolved to die with it, and leave his memory to be admired by all the gentlemen of the road in succeeding ages. This was the rant which took up the poor fellow's head, and induced him to bear 250 pound weight upon his breast for upwards of seven minutes, and was much the same kind of bravery as that which induced the French lacquey to dance a minuet immediately before he danced his last upon the wheel, an action which made so much noise in France as engaged the Duke de Rochefoucauld to compare it with the death of Cato.

Hawes, indeed, did not persist quite so long, but submitted to that justice which he saw was unavoidable, after he had endured, as I have said before, so great a weight in the press. The bruises he received on the chest pained him so exceedingly during the short remainder of his life that he was hardly able to perform those devotions which the near approach of death made him desirous to offer up for so profligate a life. He laid aside, then, those wild notions which had been

so fatal to him through the whole course of his days, and so remarkably unfortunate to him in this last age of life. He confessed frankly what crimes he could remember and seemed very desirous of acquitting some innocent persons who were at that time imprisoned, or suspected, for certain villainies which were committed by Hawes and his gang; particularly a footman, then in the Poultry Compter, and a man's son at an alehouse, who, though Hawes declared he knew no harm of him, yet at the place of execution he said that as he desired his death might be a warning to all in general, so he wished it might be particularly considered by him. Though, as I have said, he was fully convinced of the folly of those notions which he had formerly entertained, yet he did not, as most of those braves do, go from one degree of extravagance to the other, that is, from daring everything to sinking into the meanest cowardice, for Hawes went to his death very composedly, as he had received the Sacrament the day before, with all the outward marks of devotion. He suffered on the 22nd day of September, 1721, at which time he was scarce twenty years of age.

[14]

This was the Clerkenwell House of Detention, where prisoners were sent after being sentenced, pending their disposal at a House of Correction. It was originally intended for the overflow from Newgate. The prison stood in Clerkenwell Close.

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### The Life of JOHN JONES, a Pickpocket

There is not, perhaps, a greater misfortune to young people than that too great tenderness and compassion with which they are treated in their youth, and those hopes of amendment which their relations flatter themselves with as they grow up. If they could suffer themselves to be guided by experience, they would quickly find that sagacious minds do but increase in wickedness as they increase in years. Timely services, therefore, and proper restraints are the only methods with which such persons are to be treated, for minds disposed to such gross impurities as those which lead to such wickednesses or are rendered capital by Law, are seldom to be prevailed on by gentleness, or admonitions unseconded by harsher means. I am very far from being an advocate for great severities towards young people, but I confess in cases like these, I think they are as necessary as amputations, where the distemper has spread so far that no cure is to be hoped for by any other means. If the relations of John Jones had known and practised these methods, it is highly probable he had escaped the suffering and the shame of that ignominious death to which, after a long persisting in his crimes, he at last came.



#### A PRISONER UNDER PRESSURE IN NEWGATE

Accused men who refused to plead to their indictment might be pressed to death. Edward Burnworth carried 424 lb. on his chest for an hour and three minutes before he consented to plead

*(From the Newgate Calendar)*

This malefactor was born in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn, of parents in tolerable circumstances, who, while a boy, indulged him in all his little humours from a wise expectation of their dropping from him all at once when he grew up. But this expectation not succeeding, as it must be owned there was no great probability it should, they were then for persuading him to settle in business. That he might do this with less reluctance they were so kind as to put him out upon liking to three or four trades; but it happening unluckily that there was work to be done in all of them, Jones could not be brought to go apprentice to any, but idled on amongst his companions, without ever thinking of applying himself to any business whatever. His relations sent him to sea, another odd academy to learn honesty at, and on his return from thence, and refusing to go any more, his relations refused to support him any longer.

Jack was very melancholy on this score, and having but eighteenpence in the world when he received the comfortable message of his never being to expect a farthing more from his friends, he went out to take a walk in Hyde Park to divert his melancholy, when he ruminated on what he was to do next for a livelihood. In the midst of these reflections he espied an old schoolfellow of his, who used to have the same inclinations with himself. There had been a great intimacy between them; it was quickly renewed, and Jack Jones unburdened to him the whole budget of his sorrows. *And is this all?* says the young fellow. *Why, I will put you in a way to ease this in a minute, if you will step along with me to a house hard by, where I am to meet with some of my acquaintance.* Jones readily consented, and to a little blind alehouse in a dark lane they went. The woman of the house received them very kindly, and as soon as Jack's companion had informed her that he was a newcomer, she conducted him into a little room, where she entertained him with a good dinner and a bowl of punch after it. Jack was mightily taken with the courtesy of his landlady, who promised him he should never want such usage and his friend would teach him in the evening how to earn it.

Evening came, and out walked the two young men. Jack was put upon nothing at that time, but to observe how his companion managed. He was a very dexterous youth, and at seven o'clock prayers picked up, in half an hour's time, three good handkerchiefs, and a silver snuff-box. Having this readily shown him the practice, he was no less courteous in acquainting Jones with the theory of his profession, and two or three night's work made Jones a very complete workman in their way.

He lived at this rate for some months, until going with his instructor through King Street, Westminster, and passing by a woman pretty well dressed, says the other fellow to Jones, *Now mind, Jack, and while jostle her against the wall, do you whip off her pocket.* Jones performed tolerably well, though the woman screamed out and people were thick in the street. He gave the pocket, as soon as he had plucked it off, to his comrade, but having felt it rather weighty, would trust him no farther than the first by-alley before they stopped to examine its contents.

They had scarce found their prize consisted of no more than a small prayer-book, a needle case, and a silver thimble, when the woman with a mob at her heels bolted upon them and seized them. Jones had the pocket in his hand when they laid hold of him, and his associate no sooner perceived the danger, but he clapped hold of him by the collar and cried out as loud as any of the mob, *Ay, ay, this is he, good woman, is not this your pocket?* By this stratagem he escaped, and Jones was left to feel the whole weight of the punishment which was ready to fall upon them. He was immediately committed to prison, and the offence being capital in its nature, he was condemned at the next sessions, and though he always buoyed himself up with hopes to the contrary, was ordered for execution. He was dreadfully amazed at death, as being, indeed, very unfit to die. However, when he found it was inevitable, he began to prepare for it as well as he was able. His relations now afforded him some little relief, and after having made as ample a confession as he was able, he suffered at Tyburn with the two above-mentioned malefactors, Hawes and Wright, being then but a little above nineteen years of age.

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## The Life of JOHN SMITH, a Murderer

As idleness is fatal to youth, so it and ill-company become not seldom so even to persons in years. John Smith, of whose extraction we can say nothing, had served with a very good character in a regiment of foot, during Queen Anne's wars in Flanders. His captain took a particular liking to him, and from his boldness and fierce courage, to which he himself was also greatly inclined, they did abundance of odd actions during the War, some of which may not be unentertaining to the reader, if I mention.

The army lying encamped almost over against that of the French king, foraging was become very dangerous, and hardly a party went out without a skirmish. John's master, the captain, having been out with a party, and being over powered by the French, were obliged to leave their trusses behind them. When they returned to the camp, Smith was ordered to lead his master's horse out into the field between the two camps, that the poor creature might be able to pick up a little pasture. John had not attended his horse long before, at the distance of about half a mile, he saw a boy leading two others, at the foot of a hill which joined to the French fortification. As John's livery was yellow, and he spoke Walloon bad enough to be taken for a Frenchman, he ventured to stake the Captain's horse down where it was feeding, and without the least apprehension of the risk he ran, went across to the fellow who was feeding his horses under the French lines. He proceeded with so much caution that he was within a stone's throw of the boy, before he perceived him. From the colour of his clothes, and the place where they were, immediately under the French camp, the lad took him for one of their own people, and therefore answered him very civilly when he asked what o'clock it was, and whom he belonged to. But John no sooner observed from the boy's turning his horses, that the hill lay again between them and the French soldiers, than clapping his hand suddenly upon the boy's throat and tripping up his heels, he clapped a gag in his mouth, which he had cut for that purpose; and leaving him with his hands tied behind him upon the ground, he rode clear off with the best of the horses, notwithstanding that the boy had alarmed the French camp, and he had some hundred shot sent after him.

The captain and Smith were out one day a-foraging, and one of the officers of their party who was known to have a hundred pistoles about him, was killed in a skirmish, and neither party dared to bring off the body for fear of the other, it being just dark, each expected a reinforcement

from the camp. Smith told his captain that if he'd give him one half of the gold for fetching, he would venture; and his offer being gladly accepted, he accordingly crept two hundred yards upon his belly, and after he had picked the purse out of the dead man's pockets, returned without being either seen or suspected.

When the army was disbanded, Smith betook himself to the sea, and served under Admiral Byng, [15] in the fight at Messina; but on the return of that fleet from the Mediterranean, being discharged he came up to London, where having squandered his money, he did some petty thefts to get more. To this he was induced chiefly by the company of one Woolford, who was executed, and at whose execution Smith was present, and soon after cohabited with his wife. But not long after this, Smith meeting with one Sarah Thompson, an old acquaintance of his, who had it seems left him to live with another fellow, he took it into his head thereupon to use her very roughly, and clapping a pistol to her breast, threatened with abundance of ill-language to shoot her. This occasioned a great fray in the place where it happened, which was near the Hermitage towards Wapping, and several persons running to take the woman away, and to seize him, in order to prevent murder, Smith fired his pistol, and unhappily killed one Matthew Walden, who was amongst the number. The mob immediately crowded upon him and seized him, and the fact appearing very clear on his trial, he was convicted at the next sessions at the Old Bailey.

He behaved himself with great resolution, professed himself extremely sorry, as well for the many vices he had been guilty of as for that last bloody act which brought him to his shameful end. He especially recommended to all who spoke to him, to avoid the snares and delusions of lewd women; and at the place of execution delivered the following paper. He was about forty years of age when he died, being the 8th day of February, 1722, at Tyburn.

The paper delivered by John Smith at the place of execution

I was born of honest parents, bred to the sea, and lived honest, 'till I was led aside by lewd women. I then robbed on ships, and never robbed on shore. I had no design to kill the woman who jilted me, and left me for another man, but only to terrify her, for I could have shot her when the loaded pistol was at her breast, but I curbed my passion, and only threw a candle-stick at her. I confess my cruelty towards my wife, who is a woman too good for me, but I was at first forced to forsake her for debt, and go to sea. I hope in God none will reflect on her, or my poor innocent children, who could not help my sad passion, and more sad death. Written by me,

John Smith

[15]

George Byng, later created Viscount Torrington, was sent with a fleet for the protection of Sicily against the Spaniards. He found them besieging Messina, whereupon he gave their fleet battle and gained a smashing victory at Cape Passaro, 31 July, 1718.

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## **The Life of JAMES SHAW, *alias* SMITH, a Highwayman and Murderer**

James Shaw, otherwise Smith (for by both these names he went, nor am I able to say which was his true one) was the son of parents both of circumstances and inclination to have given him a very good education if he would have received it. The unsettledness of his temper was heightened by that indulgence with which he was treated by his relations, who permitted him to make trial of several trades, though he could not be brought to like any. Indeed, he stayed so long with a forger of gun-locks, as to learn something of his art, which sometimes he practised and thereby got money; but generally speaking he chose rather to acquire it by easier means.

I cannot take upon me to say at what time he began to rob upon the road, or take to any other villainy of that sort, but 'tis certain that if he himself were to be believed, it was in a great measure owing to a bad wife; for when he, by his labour, got nine shillings a week, and used to return home very weary in the evening, he generally found nobody there to receive him, or to get ready his supper, but everything in the greatest confusion, without any person to take care of what little he had. This, as he would have had it believed, was the source of his misfortunes and necessities, as it was also the occasion of his taking such fatal methods to relieve them.

The Hampstead Road was that in which he chiefly robbed, and he could not be persuaded that there was any great crime in taking away the superfluous cash of those who lavish it in vanity and luxury, or from those who procure it by cheating and gaming; and under these two classes Shaw pretended to rank all who frequented the Wells or Belsize, and it is to be much feared that in this respect he was not very far out. Amongst the many adventures which befell him in his expeditions on the road, there are one or two which it may not be improper to take notice of.

One evening, as he was patrolling thereabouts, he came up to a chariot in which there was a certain famous justice, who happened to have won about four hundred pounds at play, and Count Ui—n, a famous foreign gamester, that has made many different figures about this town. No sooner was the coach stopped by Shaw and another person on horseback, but the Squire slipped the money he had won behind the seat of the coach, and the Count having little to lose, seemed not very uneasy at the accident. The highwaymen no sooner had demanded their money, but the Count gave two or three pieces of foreign gold, and the gentleman, in hopes by this means of

getting rid of them, presented them with twenty guineas.

*Why, really, sir,* said Shaw, on the receipt of the gold, *this were a handsome compliment from another person, but methinks you might have spared a little more out of the long bag you brought from the gaming table. Come, gentlemen, get out, get out, we must examine the nest a little, I fancy the goldfinches are not yet flown.* Upon this, they both got out of the chariot, and Shaw shaking the cushion that covered the seat hastily, the long bag fell out with its mouth open, and all its bright contents were scattered on the ground. The two knights of the road began to pick them up as fast as they could, and while the justice cursed this unlucky accident which had nicked him, after he had nicked all the gamesters at the Wells, the Count, who thought swearing an unprofitable exercise, began to gather as fast as they. A good deal of company coming in sight just as they had finished, and while they were calling upon the Count to refund, they were glad to gallop away. But returning to London they were taken, and about three hours after committing the fact, they, together with the witnesses against them, were brought before a Middlesex magistrate, who committed them.

*But, pray, Sir,* says Shaw, before he was taken out of the room; *Why should not that French fellow suffer as well as we? He shared the booty, and please your Worship, 'tis but reasonable he should share the punishment. Well, what say you, Sir?* quoth the Justice to his brother magistrate. *What is this outlandish man they talk of? He is a count, Sir,* replied he, *returned from Naples, whither he went on some affairs of importance. He makes a very good figure here sometimes, though I do not know what his income is. I do not apprehend your Worship has anything to do with that, since I do not complain. However,* replied this dispenser of justice, *I have had but a very sorry account of you, yet as you are in company with my brother here, I shall take no further notice of what these men say.*<sup>[16]</sup>

Shaw being after this got out of prison and having no money to purchase a horse, he endeavoured to carry on his old profession of a footpad. In this shape he robbed also several coaches and single passengers, and that with very great inhumanity, which was natural, he said, from that method of attacking, for it was impossible for a footpad to get off, unless he either maimed the man, or wounded his horse.

Meeting by chance, as he was walking across Hampstead Road, an old grave-looking man, he thought there was no danger in making up to him, and seizing him, since he himself was well armed. The old gentleman immediately begged that he would be civil and told him that if he would be so, he would give him an old pair of breeches which were filled with money and effects worth money, and, as he said, lay buried by such a tree, pointing at the same time to it with his hand. Shaw went thither directly, in hopes of gaining the miser's great prize, for the old fellow made him believe he had buried it out of covetousness, and came there to brood over it. But no sooner were they come to the place, and Shaw looping down, began to look for three pieces of tobacco pipe, which the old man pretended to have stack where they were buried, but the gentleman whipped out his sword, and made two or three passes at Shaw, wounding him in the neck, side and breast.

As the number of his robberies were very great, so it is not to be expected that we should have a very exact account of them, yet as Shaw was not shy in revealing any circumstance that related to them, we may not perhaps have been as particular in the relation of his crimes as our readers would desire, and therefore it will be necessary to mention some other of his expeditions.

At his usual time and place, viz., Hampstead Road, in the evening, he overtook a dapper fellow, who was formerly a peruke-maker but now a gamester. This man taking Shaw for a bubble, began to talk of play, and mentioned All Fours and Cribbage, and asked him whether he would play a game for a bottle or so at the Flask. Shaw pretended to be very willing, but said he had made a terrible oath against playing for anything in any house; but if to avoid it, the gentleman would tie his horse to a tree and had any cards in his pocket, he'd sit down on the green bank in yonder close, and hazard a shilling or two. The gamester, who always carried his implements in his pocket, readily accepted of the offer, and tying their horses to a post of a little alehouse on the road, over they whipped into the fields. But no sooner were they set down, and the sharper began to shuffle the cards, but Shaw starting up, caught him by the throat, and after shaking out three guineas and a half from his breeches' pocket, broke to pieces two peep boxes, split as many pair of false dice, and kicked the cards all about the ground. He left him tied hand and foot to consider ways and means to recruit his stock by methods just as honest as those by which he lost it.

The soldiers that at that time were placed on the road, passed for a great security amongst people in town, but those who had occasion to pass that way found no great benefit from their protection, for robberies were as frequent as ever, and the ill-usage of persons when robbed more so, because the rogues thought themselves in greater danger of being taken, and therefore bound or disabled those they plundered, for fear of their pursuing them.

For a fact of this kind it was that Shaw came to his death, for one Philip Pots, being robbed on horseback by several footpads and knocked off his horse near the tile kilns by Pancras, and wounded in several places of his body with his own sword, which one of the villains had taken from him, some persons who passed by soon after took him up, and carried him to the Pinder of Wakefield.<sup>[17]</sup> There, on the Monday following (this accident happening on Saturday night) he in great agonies expired. For this murder and another robbery between Highgate and Kentish Town, Shaw was taken up and soon after convicted. At first he denied all knowledge of the

murder, but when his death grew near, he did acknowledge being privy to it, though he persisted in saying he had no hand in its commission.

At the time he was under condemnation, the afore-mentioned John Smith, William Colthouse, and Jonah Burgess were in the same condition. They formed a conspiracy for breaking out of the place where they were confined and to force an escape against all those who should oppose them. For this purpose they had procured pistols, but their plot being discovered, Burgess in great rage, cut his own throat and pretended that Shaw designed to have dispatched himself with one of the pistols. But Shaw, himself, absolutely denied this, and affirmed on the contrary that when Burgess said his enemies should never have the satisfaction (as they had bragged they would have) of placing themselves upon Holborn Bridge, to see him go by Tyburn, he (Shaw) exhorted him never to think of self-murder, and by that means give his enemies a double revenge in destroying both body and soul.

As Shaw had formerly declared his wife's ill-conduct had been the first occasion of his falling into those courses which had proved so fatal to him, he still retained so great an antipathy to her on that account, as not to be able to pardon her, even in the last moments of his life, in which he would neither confess, nor positively deny the murder for which he died. He was then about twenty-eight years of age, and died the same day with the last-mentioned malefactor, Smith.

[16]

This discourse between the magistrates is obscure. I have been unable to clear it.

[17]

This was the public-house at the Battle Bridge (King's Cross) end of Gray's Inn Road.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM COLTHOUSE, a Thief and Highwayman**

William Colthouse was born in Yorkshire, had a very good education for a person of his rank and especially with regard to religious principles, of which he retained a knowledge seldom to be met with among the lower class of people; but he was so unhappy as to imbibe in his youth strange notions in regard to civil government, hereditary rights having been much magnified in the latter end of the late Queen's reign. William amongst others was violent attached thereto, and fancied it was a very meritorious thing to profess his sentiments, notwithstanding they were directly opposite to those of persons then in power. Some declarations of this sort occasioned his being confined in Newgate, and prosecuted for speaking seditious words in the beginning of King George the First's reign. His Newgate acquaintances taught him quickly their arts of living, and he was no sooner at liberty than he put them into execution, he and his brother living like gentlemen on their expeditions on the road; till unfortunately committing a robbery on Hounslow Heath together, they were both closely pursued, the other taken, and William narrowly escaped by creeping into a hollow tree.

After the execution of his brother, Colthouse being terribly affected therewith, retired to Oxford, and there worked as a journeyman joiner, determining with himself to live honestly for the future, and not by a habit of ill-actions go the same way as one so nearly related to him had done before. But as his brother's death in time grew out of his remembrance, so his evil inclinations again took place, and he came up to London with a full purpose of getting money at an easier rate than working.

Soon after his arrival his Jacobite principles brought him into a great fray at an alehouse in Tothill Fields, Westminster, where some soldiers were drinking, and who on some disrespectful words said of the Prince, caught up Colthouse and threw him upon a red-hot gridiron, thereby making a scar on his cheek and under his left eye. By this he came to be taken for a person who murdered a farmer's son in Philpot Lane, in Hampshire, when he was charged with which he not only denied, but by abundance of circumstances rendered it highly probable that he did not commit it, there being, indeed, no other circumstance which occasioned that suspicion but the likeness of the scar in his face, which happened in the manner I told you.

While he lay under condemnation, a report reached his ear that his two brothers in the country were also said to be highwaymen; he complained grievously of the common practice that was made by idle people raising stories to increase the sorrows of families which were so unhappy as to have any who belonged to them come to such a death as his was to be. As to his brothers, he declared himself well satisfied that the younger was a sober and religious lad, and as for the elder, though he might have been guilty of some extravagance, yet he hoped and believed they were not of the same kind with those which had brought him to ruin. However, that he might do all the good which his present sad circumstance would allow, he wrote the following letter to his brethren in the country.

Dear Brothers,

Though the nearness of my approaching death ought to shut out from my thoughts all temporal concerns, yet I could not compose my mind into that quietness with which I hope to pass from this sinful world into the presence of the Almighty, before I had thus exhorted you to take particular warning from my death, which the intent of the Law to deter others from wickedness hath decreed

to be in a public and ignominious manner. Amidst the terrors which the frailty of human nature (shocked with the prospect of so terrible an end) makes my afflicted heart to feel, even these sorrows are increased, and all my woes doubled by a story which is spread, I hope without the least grounds of truth, that ye, as well as I, have lived by taking away by force the property of others.

Let the said examples of my poor brother, who died by the hand of Justice, and of me, who now follow him in the same unhappy course, deter you not only from those flagrant offences which have been so fatal unto us, but also from those foolish and sinful pleasures in which it is but too frequent for young persons to indulge themselves. Remember that I tell you from a sad experience, that the wages of sin, though in appearance they be sometimes large and what may promise outward pleasure, yet are they attended with such inward disquiet as renders it impossible for those to have received them to enjoy either quiet or ease. Work, then, hard at your employments, and be assured that sixpence got thereby will afford you more solid satisfaction than the largest acquisitions at the expense of your conscience. That God may, by His grace, enable you to follow this my last advice, and that He may bless your honest labour with plenty and prosperity is the earnest prayer of your dying brother

William Colthouse

Till the day of his execution he had denied his being accessory to the intended escape by forcing the prison, but when he came to Tyburn, he acknowledged that assertion to be false, and owned that he caused the two pistols to be provided for that purpose. He was about thirty-four years of age at the time he suffered, which was on the 8th of February, 1722, with Burgess, Shaw and Smith.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM BURRIDGE, a Highwayman**

In the course of these lives I have more than once observed that the vulgar have false notions of courage, and that applause is given to it by those who have as false notions of it as themselves, and this it was in a great measure which made William Burridge take to those fatal practices which had the usual termination in an ignominious death. He was the son of reputable people, who lived at West Haden in Northamptonshire, who after affording him a competent education, thought proper to bind him to his father's trade of a carpenter. But he, having been pretty much indulged before that time, could not by any means be brought to relish labour, or working for his bread.

Burridge was a well-made fellow, and of a handsome person, as well as great strength and dexterity, which he had often exercised in wrestling and cudgel-playing which gained him great praise amongst the country fellows at wakes and fairs, where such prizes are usually given. Therefore giving himself up almost wholly to such exercises, he used frequently to run away from his parents, and lie about the country, stealing poultry, and what else he could lay his hands on to support himself. His father trying all methods possible to reclaim him and finding them fruitless, as his last refuge turned him over to another master, in hopes that having there no mother to plead for him, a course of continued severities might perhaps reclaim him. But his hopes were all disappointed, for instead of mending under his new master, William gave himself over to all sorts of vices, and more especially became addicted to junketting with servant-wenches in the neighbourhood, who especially on Sundays when their masters were out, were but too ready to receive and entertain him at their expense.

But these adventures made him very obnoxious to others, as well as his master, who no longer able to bear his lying out of night, and other disorderly practices, turned him off, and left him to shift for himself. He went home to his friends, but going on still in the same way, they frankly advised him to ship himself on board a man-of-war in order to avoid that ill-fate which they then foresaw, and which afterwards overtook him. William, though not very apt to follow good counsel, yet approved of this at last when he saw some of his companions had already suffered for those profligate courses to which they were addicted.

He shipped himself, therefore, in a squadron then sailing for Spain under the command of Commodore Cavendish, on board whose ship he was when an engagement happened with the Spaniards in Cadiz Bay. The dispute was long and very sharp, and Burridge behaved therein so as to meet with extraordinary commendations. These had the worst effect upon him imaginable, for they so far puffed him up, that he thought himself worthier of command than most of the officers on the ship, and therefore was not a little uneasy at being obliged to obey them. This hindered them from doing him any kindness, which they would otherwise perhaps have done in consideration of his gallant behaviour against the enemy. At his return into England he was extremely ambitious of living without the toil of business, and therefore went upon the highway with great diligence, in order to acquire a fortune by it, which when he had done, he designed to have left it off, and to have lived easily and honestly upon the fruits of it. But, alas! these were vain hopes and idle expectations, for instead of acquiring anything which might keep him hereafter, he could scarce procure a present livelihood at the hazard both of his neck and his soul, for he was continually obliged to hide himself, through apprehension, and not seldom got into Bridewell or some such place, for brawls and riots.

This William Burridge was the person who with Nat Hawes made their escape out of New Prison, by the assistance of a woman, as the life of that malefactor is before related.<sup>[18]</sup> And as he saved himself then from the same ignominious death which afterwards befell him, so he escaped it another time by becoming evidence against one Reading, who died for the life offences. As to Burridge, he still continued the same trade, till being taken for stealing a bay gelding belonging to one Mr. Wragg, he was for that offence finally condemned at the Old Bailey. While under sentence, as he had been much the greatest and oldest offender of any that were under the same fate, so he seemed to be by much the most affected and the most penitent of them all; and with great signs and sorrow for the many crimes he had committed, he suffered on the 14th of March, 1722, with five other persons at Tyburn, being then about thirty-four years of age.

[\[18\]](#)

See page [59](#).

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### **The Life of JOHN THOMSON, a thief, Highwayman, etc.**

John Thomson was born at Carlisle, but was brought with his friends to London. They, it seems, were persons of no substance, and took little care of their son's education, suffering him, while a lad, to go often to such houses as were frequented by ill-people, and such as took dishonest methods to get money. Such are seldom very dose in their discourse when they meet and junket together, and Thomson, then a boy, was so much pleased with their jovial manner of life, eating well and drinking hard, that he had ever a bias that way, even when he was otherways employed, till he was fifteen years old, leading such an idle and debauched life that, as he himself expressed it, he had never heard of or read a Bible or other good book throughout all that space.

A friend of his was then so kind as to put him out apprentice to a weaver, and he might have had some chance of coming into the world in an honest and reputable way, but he had not continued with his master any long time before he listed himself in the sea service, during the Wars in the late Queen's time, and served on board a squadron which was sent up the Baltic to join the Danes. This cold country, with other hardships he endured, made him so out of humour with a sailor's life that though he behaved himself tolerably well when on board, yet he resolved never to engage in the same state, if once discharged and safe on shore.

Upon his coming back to England, he went to work at his trade of a weaver, and being for a while very sensible of the miseries he had run through on board the man-of-war, he became highly pleased with the quiet and easy way in which he got his bread by his business, thinking, however, that there was no way so proper to settle him as by marrying, which accordingly he did. But he was so unfortunate that though his wife was a very honest woman, yet the money he got not being sufficient to maintain them, he was even obliged to take to the sea again for a subsistence, and continued on board several ships in the Straits and Mediterranean for a very considerable space, during which he was so fortunate as to serve once on board an enterprising captain, who in less than a year's space, took nineteen prizes to a very considerable value. And as they were returning from their cruise, they took a French East India ship on the coast of that kingdom, whose cargo was computed at no less than a hundred thousand pounds sterling. Thomson might certainly, if he would, have saved money enough to have put himself into a creditable method of life as many of his shipmates had done, and so well did the captain improve his own good fortune that on his return he retired into the country, where he purchased an estate of fifteen hundred pounds *per annum*.

But Thomson being much altered from the usual bent of his temper by his being long accustomed at sea to blood and plunder, so when he returned home, instead of returning to an honest way of living, he endeavoured to procure money at the same rate by land which he had done at sea, and for that purpose associated himself with persons of a like disposition, and in their company did abundance of mischief. At last he and one of his associates passing over Smithfield between twelve and one in the morning, on the second of March, they perceived one George Currey going across that place very much in drink. Him they attacked, though at first they pretended to lead him safe home, drawing him to a proper place out of hearing of the houses, where they took from him a shirt, a wig and a hat, in doing which they knocked him down, stamped upon his breast, and in other respects used him very cruelly. Being apprehended soon after this fact, he was for it tried and convicted.

In the space between that and his death, he behaved himself very penitently, and desired with great earnestness that his wife would retire into the country to her friends, and learn by his unhappy example that nothing but an honest industry could procure the blessing of God. This he assiduously begged for her in his prayers, imploring her at the same time that he gave her this advice, to be careful of her young son she had then at her breast, not only as to his education, but also that he might never know his father's unhappy end, for that would but damp his spirits, and perhaps force him upon ill-courses when he grew up, from an apprehension that people might distrust his honesty and not employ him. He professed himself much afflicted at the past follies of his life, and with an outward appearance of true penitence, died on the fourth of May, 1722, in the thirty-third year of his age, at Tyburn.

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### **The Life of THOMAS REEVES, a Notorious Highwayman and Footpad**



As it is not to be denied that it is a singular blessing to a nation where no persecution is ever raised against persons for their religion, so I am confident that the late Free Thinking principles (as they have been called) have by their being spread amongst the vulgar, contributed greatly to the many frauds and villainies which have been so much complained of within these thirty years, and not a little to encouraging men in obtaining a subsistence and the gratification of their pleasures by rapines committed upon others rather than live in a laborious state of life, in which, perhaps, both their birth and circumstances concurred to fix them.

Thomas Reeves was a very remarkable as well as very unfortunate instance of that depravity in moral principles of which I have been speaking. By his friends he was bred a tinman, his father, who was of that profession, taking him as an apprentice but using him with the most indulgent fondness and never suffering him to want anything which was in his power to procure for him, flattered himself with the hopes of his becoming a good and happy man. It happened very unfortunately for Reeves that he fell, when young, into the acquaintance of some sceptical persons who made a jest of all religion and treated both its precepts and its mysteries as inventions subservient to priestcraft. Such notions are too easily imbibed by those who are desirous to indulge their vicious inclinations, and Reeves being of this stamp, greedily listened to all discourses of such a nature.

Amongst some of these companions who had cheated him out of his religion, he found some also inclined to practise the same freedom they taught, encouraged both by precept and example. Tom soon became the most conspicuous of the gang. His boldness and activity preferred him generally to be a leader in their adventures, and he had such good luck, in several of his first attempts, that he picked up as much as maintained him in that extravagant and superfluous manner of life in which he most of all delighted. One John Hartly was his constant companion in his debauches, and generally speaking an assistant in his crimes. Both of them in the evening of the ninth of March, 1722, attacked one Roger Worebington, near Shoreditch, as he was going across the fields on some business. Hartly gave him a blow on the head with his pistol, after which Reeves bid him stand, and whistling, four more of the gang came up, seized him, and knocked him down. They stripped him stark naked and carried away all his clothes, tying him hand and foot in a cruel manner and leaving him in a ditch hard by. However he was relieved, and Reeves and Hartly being soon after taken, they were both tried and convicted for this fact.

After the passing sentence, Reeves behaved himself with much indifference, his own principles stuck by him, and he had so far satisfied himself by considering the necessity of dying, and coined a new religion of his own, that he never believed the soul in any danger, but had very extensive notions of the mercy of God, which he thought was too great to punish with eternal misery those souls which He had created. This criminal was, indeed, of a very odd temper, for sometimes he would both pray and read to the rest of the prisoners, and at other times he would talk loosely and divert them from their duty, often making enquiries as to curious points, and to be informed whether the soul went immediately into bliss or torment, or whether, as some Christians taught, they went through an intermediate state? All which he spoke of with an unconcernedness scarce to be conceived, and as it were rather out of curiosity than that he thought himself in any danger of eternal punishment hereafter.

Hartly, on the other hand, was a fellow of a much softer disposition, showed very great fear, and looked in great confusion at the approach of death. He got six persons dressed in white to go to the Royal Chapel and petition for a pardon, he being to marry one of them in case it had been procured, but they failed in the attempt, and he appeared less sensible than ever when he found that death was not to be evaded.

At the place of execution, Reeves not only preserved that resolution with which he had hitherto borne up against his misfortunes, but when the mob pushed down one of the horses that drew the cart, and it leaning sideways so that Reeves was thereby half hanged, to ease himself of his misery he sprung over at once and finished the execution.

Hartly wept and lamented exceedingly his miserable condition, and the populace much pitied him, for he was not twenty years of age at the time he died; but Reeves was about twenty-eight years of age, when he suffered, which was at the same time with John Thomson, before mentioned.

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### **The Life of RICHARD WHITTINGHAM, a Footpad and Street robber**

Though there have been some instances of felons adhering so closely together as not to give up one another to Justice, even for the sake of saving life, yet are such instances very rare, and examples of the contrary very common.

Richard Whittingham was a young man of very good natural inclinations, had he not been of too easy a temper, and ready to yield to the inducements of bad women. His friends had placed him as an apprentice to a hot-presser, with whom he lived very honestly for some time; but at last, the idle women with whom he conversed continually pressing him for money in return for their lewd favours, he was by that means drawn in to run away from his master, and subsist by picking pockets. In the prosecution of this trade, he contracted an infamous friendship with Jones, Applebee and Lee, three notorious villains of the same stamp, with whom he committed abundance of robberies in the streets, especially by cutting off women's pockets, and such other exploits. This, he pretended, was performed with great address and regularity, for he said that

after many consultations, 'twas resolved to attack persons only in broad streets for the future, from whence they found it much less troublesome to escape than when they committed them in alleys and such like close places, whereupon a pursuit once begun, they seldom or never missed being taken. He added, that when they had determined to go out to plunder, each had his different post assigned him, and that while one laid his leg before a passenger, another gave him a jolt on the shoulders, and as soon as he was down a third came to their assistance, whereupon they immediately went to stripping and binding those who were so unlucky as thus to fall into their hands. Upon Applebee's being apprehended, and himself impeached, Whittingham withdrew to Rochester, with an intent to have gone out of the kingdom, but after all he could not prevail with himself to quit his native country.

On his return to London, he fled for sanctuary to the house of his former master, who treated him with great kindness, supplied him with work, sent up his victuals privately, and did all in his power to conceal him. But Jones and Lee, his former companions, found means to discover him as they had already impeached him, and so, on their evidence and that of the prosecutor, he was convicted of robbing William Garnet, in the area of Red Lion Square, when Applebee knocked him down, and Jones and Lee held their hands upon his eyes, and crammed his own neck-cloth down his throat.

When he found he was to die, he was far from behaving himself obstinately, but as far as his capacity would give him leave, endeavoured to pray, and to fit himself for his approaching dissolution. He had married a young wife, for whom he expressed a very tender affection, and seemed more cast down with the thoughts of those miseries to which she would be exposed by his death, than he was at what he himself was to suffer.

During the time he lay in the condemned hold, he complained often of the great interruptions those under sentence of death met with from some prisoners who were confined underneath, and who, through the crevice, endeavoured as usual, by talking to them lewdly and profanely, to disturb them even in their last moments. At the place of execution he wept bitterly, and seemed to be much affrighted at death and very sorry for his having committed those crimes which brought him thither. He was but nineteen years old when he suffered, which was on the 21st of May, 1722.

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### **The Life of JAMES BOOTY, a Ravisher**

Such is the present depravity of human nature that we have sometimes instances of infant criminals and children meriting death by their crimes, before they know or can be expected to know how to do anything to live. Perhaps there was never a stronger instance of this than in James Booty, of whom we are now speaking. He was a boy rather without capacity than obstinate, whose inclinations, one would have expected, could hardly have attained to that pitch of wickedness in thought, which it appeared both by evidence and his own confessions, he had actually practised. His father was a peruke-maker in Holborn, and not in so bad circumstances but that he could have afforded him a tolerable education, if he had not been snatched away by death. Thus his son was left to the care of his mother, who put him to a cabinet-maker, where he might have been bound apprentice if the unhappy accident (for so indeed I think it may be called) had not intervened. It seemed his master had taken a cousin of his, a girl of about fifteen or somewhat more, for a servant. This girl went into the workshop where the boy lay, under pretence of mending his coat, which he had torn by falling upon a hook as he stumbled over the well of the stairs; but instead of darning the hole, she went to bed to the boy, put out the candle, and gave him the foul distemper.

Not knowing what was the matter with him, but finding continual pains in his body, he made a shift at last to learn the cause from some of the workmen. Not daring to trust even his mother with what was the matter with him, instead of applying to a proper person to be cured, he listened as attentively as he could to all discourses about that distemper, which happened frequently enough amongst his master's journeymen. There he heard some of the foolish fellows say that lying with any person who was sound would cure those who were in such a condition. The extreme anguish of body he was in excited him to try the experiment, and he injured no less than four or five children, between four years old and six, before he committed that act for which he was executed.

He one day carried his master's daughter, Anne Milton, a girl of but five years and two months old, to the top of the house, and there with great violence abused her and gave her the foul disease. The parents were not long before they made the discovery of it, and the child telling them what Booty had done to her, they sent for a surgeon who examined him, and found him in a very sad condition with venereal disease. Upon this he was taken up and committed to Newgate, and upon very full evidence was convicted at the next sessions, and received sentence of death; from which time to the day before he was executed, he was afflicted with so violent a fever as to have little or no sense. But then coming to himself, he expressed a confused sense of religion and penitence, desired to be instructed how to go to Heaven, and showed evident marks of his inclination to do anything which might be for the good of his soul.

At the place of execution he wept and looked dejected, said his mother had sought diligently for the wench who did him the injury, and was the cause of his doing it to so many others; but that although the girl was known to live in Westminster after she left his master, yet his mother was never able to find her. Thus was this young creature removed from the world by an ignominious

death at Tyburn, on the 21st May, 1722, being then somewhat above fifteen years old.

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### **The Life of THOMAS BUTLOCK, *alias* BUTLOGE, a Thief**

The foolish pride of wearing fine clothes and making a figure has certainly undone many ordinary people, both by making them live beyond what their labour or trade would allow, and by inducing them to take illegal methods to procure money for that purpose.

Thomas Butlock, otherwise Butloge, which last was his true name, was born in the kingdom of Ireland, about thirty miles east of Dublin, whither his parents had gone from Cheshire (which was their native country) with a gentleman on whom they had a great dependence, and who was settled in Ireland. Though their circumstances were but indifferent, yet they found means to raise as much as put their son apprentice to a vintner in Dublin, and probably, had he ever set up in that business they would have done more. But he had not been long ere what little education he had was lost, and his morals corrupted by the sight of such lewd scenes as passed often in his master's house. However the man was very kind to him, and in return Thomas had so great esteem and affection for his master that when he broke and come over to hide himself at Chester, Butloge frequently stole over to him with small supplies of money and acquainted him with the condition of his family, which he had left behind.

In this precarious manner of life, he spent some time, until finding it impossible for him to subsist any longer by following his master's broken fortunes, he began to lay out for some new employment to get his bread. But after various projects had proved unsuccessful when they came to be executed, he was forced to return into Ireland again, where not long after, he had the good fortune to marry a substantial man's daughter which retrieved his circumstances once more.

But Butloge had always, as he expressed it, an aspiring temper, which put him upon crossing the seas again upon the invitation of a gentleman who, he pretended was a relation, and belonged to the Law, by whose interest he was in hopes of getting into a place. Accordingly, when he came to London, he took lodgings and lived as if he was already in possession of his expectation, which bringing his pocket low, he accepted the service of Mr. Claude Langley, a foreign gentleman, who had lodged in the same house. It cannot be exactly determined how long he had been in his service before he had committed the fact for which he died, but as to the manner it happened thus.

Mr. Langley, as well as all the rest of the family, being out at church, Butloge was sitting by himself in his master's room, looking at the drawers, and knowing that there was a good sum of ready money therein. It then came into his head what a figure he might cut if he had all that money. It occurred to him, at the same time, that his master was scarce able to speak any English, and was obliged to go over to France again in a month's time; so that he persuaded himself that if he could keep out of the way for that month, all would be well, and he should be able to live upon the spoil, without any apprehension of danger. These considerations took up his mind for half an hour; then he put his scheme into execution, broke open the drawers and took from thence twenty-seven guineas, four *louis d'ors*, and some other French pieces. As soon as he completed the robbery, and was got safe out of town, he went directly to Chester, that he might appear fine (as he himself said) at a place where he was known. His precaution being so little, there is no wonder that he was taken, or that the fact appearing plain, he should be convicted thereon.

After sentence was passed, he laid aside all hopes of life, and without flattering himself as too many do, he prepared for his approaching end. Whatever follies he might have committed in his life, yet he suffered very composedly on the 22nd day of July, 1722, being then about twenty-three years of age.

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### **The Life of NATHANIEL JACKSON, a Highwayman**

The various dispositions of men make frequent differences in their progress, either in virtue or vice; some being disposed to cultivate this or that branch of their duty with peculiar diligence, and others, again, plunging themselves in some immoralities they have no taste for.

But as for this unfortunate criminal, Nathaniel Jackson, he seemed to have swept all impurities with a drag net, and to have habituated himself to nothing but wickedness from his cradle. He was the son of a person of some fortune at Doncaster, in Yorkshire, who died when his son Nat was very young, but not, however, till he had given him some education. He was bound by a friend, in whose hands his father left his fortune, to a silk-weaver at Norwich, with whom he lived about three years; but his master restraining his extravagancies, and taking great pains to keep him within the bounds of moderation, Jackson at last grew so uneasy that he ran away from his master, and absconded for some time. But his guardian at last hearing where he was, wrote to him, and advised him to purchase some small place with his fortune, whereon he might live with economy, since he perceived he would do no good in trade. Jackson despised this advice, and instead of thinking of settling, got into the Army, and with a regiment of dragoons went over into Ireland.

There he indulged himself in all the vices and lusts to which he was prone, living in all those debaucheries to which the meanest and most licentious of the common soldiers are addicted; but

he more especially gave himself up to lewdness and the conversation of women. This, as it led him into abundance of inconveniences, so at last it engaged him in a quarrel with one of his comrades which ended in a duel. Jackson had the advantage of his antagonist and hacked and wounded him in a most cruel manner. For this, his officers broke him, and he thereby lost the fifteen guineas which he had given to be admitted into the troop; and as men are always apt to be angry with punishment, however justly they receive it, so Jackson imputed his being cashiered to the officers' covetousness, the crime he had committed passing in his own imagination for a very trivial action.

Having from this accident a new employment to seek, he came over to his guardian and stayed with him a while. But growing very soon weary of those restraints which were put upon him there, as he had done at those under his Norwich master, he soon fell into his old courses, got into an acquaintance with lewd women and drunken fellows, with whom he often stayed out all night at the most notorious bawdy houses. This making a great noise, his friends remonstrated in the strongest terms, pointing out to him the wrong he did himself; but finding all their persuasions ineffectual, they told him plainly he must remove. Upon this he came up to London, not without receiving considerable presents from his so much abused friends.

The town was an ill place to amend a man who came into it with dispositions like his. On the contrary, he found still more opportunities for gratifying his lustful inclinations than at any time before, and these lewd debaucheries having reduced him quickly to the last extremity, he was in a fair way to be prevailed on to take any method to gain money. He was in these said circumstances when he met accidentally with John Morphew, an old companion of his in Ireland, and soon after, as they were talking together, they fell upon one O'Brian in a footman's garb, also their acquaintance in Ireland.

He invited them both to go with him to the camp in Hyde Park, and at a sutler's tent there, treated them with as much as they would drink. When he had paid the reckoning, turning about, *d'ye see, boys*, says he, *how full my pockets are of money? Come, I'll teach you to fill yours, if you are but men of courage*. Upon this out they walked towards Hampstead, between which place and St. Pancras they met one Dennet, whom they robbed and stripped, taking from him a coat and a waistcoat, two shirts, some hair, thirteen pence in money, and other things. This did not make O'Brian's promise good, all they got being but of inconsiderable value, but it cost poor Jackson his life, though he and Morphew had saved Dennet's when O'Brian would have killed him to prevent discoveries; for Jackson being not long after apprehended, was convicted of the fact, but O'Brian, having timely notice of his commitment, made his escape into Ireland.

As soon as sentence was passed, Jackson thought of nothing but how to prepare himself for another world, there being no probability that interest his friends could make to save him. He made a very ingenious confession of all he knew, and seemed perfectly easy and resigned to that end which the Law had appointed for those who, like him, had injured society. He was about thirty years old at the time of his death, which was on the 18th of July, 1722, at Tyburn.

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### **The Life of JAMES, *alias* VALENTINE CARRICK, a Notorious Highwayman and Street Robber**

Though it has become a very common and fashionable opinion that honour may supply the place of piety, and thereby preserve a morality more beneficial to society than religion, yet if we would allow experience to decide, it will be no very difficult matter to prove that when persons have once given way to certain vices (which in the polite style pass under the denomination of pleasures) rather than forego them they will quickly acquire that may put it in their power to enjoy them, though obtained at the rate of perpetrating the most ignominious offences. If there had not been too much truth in this observation we should hardly find in the list of criminals persons who, like James Carrick, have had a liberal education, and were not meanly descended, bringing themselves to the most miserable of all states and reflecting dishonour upon those from whom they were descended.

This unfortunate person was the son of an Irish gentleman, who lived not far from Dublin, and whom we must believe to have been a man of tolerable fortune, since he provided as well for all his children as to make even this, who was his youngest, an ensign. James was a perfect boy at the time when his commission required him to quit Ireland to repair to Spain, whither, a little before, the regiment wherein he was to serve had been commanded. As he had performed his duty towards the rest of his children, the father was more than ordinarily fond of this his youngest, whom therefore he equipped in a manner rather beyond that capacity in which he was to appear upon his arrival at the army. In his person James was a very beautiful well-shaped young man, of a middle size, and something more than ordinarily genteel in his appearance, as his father had taken care to supply him abundantly for his expenses; so when he came into Spain he spent his money as freely as any officer of twice his pay. His tent was the constant rendezvous of all the beaux who were at that time in the camp, and whenever the army were in quarters, nobody was handsomer, or made a better figure than Mr. Carrick.

Though we are very often disposed to laugh at those stories for fictions which carry in them anything very different from what we see in daily experience, yet as the materials I have for this unfortunate man's life happen both to be full and very exact, I shall not scruple mentioning some of his adventures, which I am persuaded will neither be unpleasant, nor incapable of improving my readers.

The regiment in which Carrick served was quartered at Barcelona, after the taking of that place by the English troops<sup>[19]</sup> who supported the title of the present Emperor to the crown of Spain. The inhabitants were not only civil, but to the last degree courteous to the English, for whom they always preserved a greater esteem than for any other nation. Carrick, therefore, had frequent opportunities for making himself known and getting into an acquaintance with some of the Spanish cavaliers, who were in the interest of King Charles. Amongst these was Don Raphael de Ponto, a man of fortune and family amongst the Catalans, but, as is usual with the Spaniards, very amorous and continually employed in some intrigue or other. He was mightily pleased with Carrick's humour, and conceived for him a friendship, in which the Spaniards are perhaps more constant and at the same time more zealous, than any other nation in Europe. As Carrick had been bred a Roman Catholic and always continued so, notwithstanding his professing the contrary to those in the Army, so he made no scruple of going to Mass with his Spanish friend, which passed with the English officers only as a piece of complaisance.

Vespers was generally the time when Don Raphael and his English companion used to make their appointments with the ladies, and therefore they were very punctual at those devotions, from a spirit which too often takes up young minds. It happened one evening, when after the Spanish custom they were thus gone forth in quest of adventures, a duenna slipped into Don Raphael's hand a note, by which he was appointed to come under such a window near the convent, in the street of St. Thomas, when the bell of the convent rang in the evening, and was desired to bring his friend, if he were not afraid of a Spanish lady. Don Raphael immediately acquainted his friend, who you may be sure was ready to obey the summons.

When the hour came, and the convent bell rang, our sparks, wrapped up in their cloaks, slipped to their posts under a balcony. They did not wait long there, before the same woman who delivered the note to Don Raphael made her appearance at the window, and throwing down another little billet, exhorted them to be patient a little, and they should not lose their labour. The lovers waited quiet enough for about a quarter of an hour, when the old woman slipped down, and opened a door behind them, at which our sparks entered with great alacrity. The old woman conducted them into a very handsome apartment above stairs, where they were received by two young ladies, as beautiful as they could have wished them. Compliments are not much used on such occasions in Spain, and these gentlemen, therefore, did not make many before they were for coming to the point with the ladies, when of a sudden they heard a great noise upon the stairs, and as such adventures make all men cautious in Spain, they immediately left the ladies, and retiring towards the window, drew their swords. They had hardly clapped their backs against it, before the noise on the stairs ceasing, they felt the floor tremble under their feet, and at last giving way, they both fell into a dark room underneath, where without any other noise than their fall had made, they were disarmed, gagged and bound by some persons placed there for that purpose. When the rogues had finished their search, and taken away everything that was valuable about them, even to ripping the gold lace off Carrick's clothes, they let them lie there for a considerable time, and at last removed them in two open chests to the middle of the great marketplace, where they left them to wait for better fortune. They had not remained there above a quarter of an hour, before Carrick's sergeant went the rounds with a file of musketeers. Carrick hearing his voice, made as much noise as he was able, and that bringing the sergeant and his men to the place where they were set, their limbs and mouths were immediately released from bondage.

The morning following, as soon as Carrick was up, the Spanish gentleman's major domo came to wait upon him, and told him that his master being extremely ill, had desired him to make his compliments to his English friend in order to supply the defects of the letter he sent him, which by reason of his indisposition was very short. Having said this, the Spaniard presented him with a letter, and a little parcel, and then withdrew. Carrick did not know what to make of all this, but as soon as the stranger was withdrawn, opened his packet in order to discover what it contained. He found in it a watch, a diamond ring, and a note on a merchant for two hundred pieces-of-eight, which was the sum Carrick (to make himself look great) said he had lost by the accident. The note at the same time informing him that Don Raphael de Ponto thought it but just to restore to him what he had lost by accompanying him in the former night's adventures.

After Carrick returned into England, though he had no longer his commission, or indeed any other way of living, yet he could not lay aside those vices in which hitherto he had indulged himself. When he had any money he entertained a numerous train of the most abandoned women of the town, and had also intrigues at the same time with some of the highest rank of those prostitutes. To the latter he applied himself when his pocket first began to grow low, and they supplied him as long, and as far as they were able. But, alas! their contributions went but a little way towards supporting his expenses. Happening about that time to fall into an acquaintance with Smith, his countryman, after a serious consultation on ways and means to support their manner of living, they came at last to a resolution of taking a purse on the road, and joined company soon afterwards with Butler, another Irish robber, who was executed some time before them on the evidence of this very Carrick. When Carrick's elder brother heard of this in Ireland, he wrote to him in the most moving terms, beseeching him to consider the sad end to which he was running headlong, and the shame and ignominy with which he covered his family and friends, exhorting him at the same time not to cast away all hopes of doing well, but to think of returning to Dublin, where he assured him he would meet him, and provide handsomely for him, notwithstanding all that was past.

But Carrick little regarded this good advice, or the kind overtures made him by his brother. No

sooner had he procured his liberty but he returned to his old profession, and committed a multitude of robberies on Finchley Common, Hounslow and Bagshot Heaths, spending all the money he got on women of the town, at the gaming table, and in fine clothes, which last was the thing in which he seemed most to delight. But money not coming in very quick by these methods, he with Molony, Carrol and some others of his countrymen, began to rob in the streets, and by that means got great sums of money. They continued this practice for a long space of time with safety, but being one night out in Little Queen Street, by Lincoln's Inn Fields, between one and two in the morning they stopped a chair in which was the Hon. William Young, Esq., from whom they took a gold watch, valued at £50, a sword, and forty guineas in money. Carrick thrust his pistol into the chair, Carrol watched at a distance, while Molony, perceiving the gentleman hesitate a little in delivering, said with a stern voice, *Your money, sir! Do you trifle?* It was a very short time after the commission of this robbery that both he and his companion Molony were taken, Carrol making a timely escape to his native kingdom. While James Carrick remained in Newgate, his behaviour was equally singular and indecent, for he affected to pass his time with the same gaiety in his last moments as he had spent it in the former part of his days.

Thronges of people, as it is but too much the custom, came to see him in Newgate, to whom, as if he had intended that they should not lose their curiosity, he told all the adventures of his life, with the same air and gaiety as if he had been relating them at some gaming ordinaries. This being told about town, drew still greater heaps of company upon him, which he received with the same pleasantness; by which means he daily increased them, and by that means the gain of the keepers at Newgate, who took money to show him. Upon this he said to them merrily one day: *You pay, good folks, for seeing me now, but if you had suspended your curiosity 'till I went to Tyburn, you might have seen me for nothing.* This was the manner in which he talked and lived even to the last, conversing until the time of his death with certain loose women who had been his former favourites, and whom no persuasions could engage him to banish from his presence while he yet had eyes, and could behold them in his sight.

At the place of execution, where it often happens that the most daring offenders drop that resolution on which they foolishly value themselves, Carrick failed not in the least. He gave himself genteel airs (as Mr. Purney, the then Ordinary, phrases it) in placing the rope about his neck, smiled and bowed to everybody he knew round him, and continued playing a hundred little tricks of the same odd nature, until the very instant the cart drove away, declaring himself to be a Roman Catholic, and that he was persuaded he had made his peace with God in his own way. In this temper he finished his life at Tyburn, on the 18th of July, 1722, being then about twenty-seven years of age.

[19]

This was in 1705, by an expedition commanded by the Earl of Peterborough.

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### **The Life of John MOLONY, a Highwayman and Street Robber**

John Molony was an Irishman likewise, born at Dublin and sent to sea when very young. He served in the fleets which during the late Queen's reign sailed into the Mediterranean, and happening to be on board a ship which was lost, he with some other sailors, was called to a very strict account for that misfortune, upon some presumption that they were accessory thereto. Afterwards he sailed in a vessel of war which was fitted out against the pirates, and had therein so good luck that if his inclinations had been honest, he might certainly have settled very handsomely in the world. But that was far from his intention; he liked a seaman's pleasures, drinking and gaming, and when on shore, lewd women, the certain methods of being brought to such ways of getting money as end in a shameful death.

When abroad, his adventures were not many, because he had little opportunity of going on shore, yet one happened in Sicily which made a very great impression upon him, and which it may not therefore be improper to relate. There were two merchants at Palermo, both young men, and perfectly skilled in the arts of traffic; they had had a very liberal education, and had been constant friends and companions together. The intimacy they had so long continued was cemented by their marriage with two sisters. They lived very happily for the space of about two years, and in all probability might have continued to do so much longer, had not the duenna who attended one of their wives, died, and a new one been put in her place. Not knowing the young ladies' brothers, upon their speaking to them at Church, she gave notice of it to the husband of her whom she attended, and he immediately posting to his neighbour, the woman told them both that their wives, notwithstanding all she could say, were talking to two well-dressed cavaliers, which the duenna who waited on the other, notwithstanding the duties of her post, saw without taking any notice. This so exasperated the jealousy of the Sicilians that without more ado they ran to the church, and meeting with their spouses coming out from thence with an air of gaiety, seized them, and stabbed them dead with a little dagger, which for that purpose each had concealed under his coat. Then flying into the church for sanctuary, they discovered their mistake, when one of them, seized with fury at the loss of a wife of whom he was so extravagantly fond, stabbed the other, though not mortally, and with many repeated wounds murdered the duenna, whose rash error had been the occasion of spilling so much blood.

Upon Molony's return to England, he was totally out of all business, and minded nothing but haunting the gaming tables, living on the charity of his fortunate countrymen when his luck was bad, and relieving them, in turn, when he had a favourable run at dice. It was at one of these

houses that he became acquainted with Carrick, and the likeness of their tempers creating a great intimacy, after a short knowledge of one another they joined with Carrol, a fellow as wicked as themselves, but much more cruel, and were all concerned in that robbery for which Carrick and Molony died.

When these two criminals came to be tried at the Old Bailey, their behaviour was equally ludicrous, silly and indecent; affecting to rally the evidence that was produced against them, and to make the people smile at their premeditated bulls. Carrick, was a lean, fair man, and stood at the left hand corner of the bar; Molony was a larger built man, who wore a browner wig. Carrick took occasion to ask Mr. Young, when he stood up to give his evidence, which side of the chair it was he stood on, when he robbed him. Mr. Young answered him, that he stood on the right side. *Why now, what a lie that is,* returned Carrick, *you know Molony, I stood on the left.* Before the people recovered themselves from laughing at this, Molony asked him what coloured wig he took him to have on at the time the robbery was committed; being answered it was much the same colour with that he had on then, *There's another story,* quoth Molony, *you know, Carrick, I changed wigs with you that morning, and wore it all day.*

Yet after sentence was passed, Molony laid aside all airs of gaiety, and seemed to be thoroughly convinced he had mistaken the true path of happiness. He did not care to see company, treated the Ordinary civilly when he spoke to him, though he professed himself a Papist, and was visited by a clergymen of that Church.

As he was going to the place of execution, he still looked graver and mote concerned; though he did not fall into those agonies of sighing and tears as some do, but seemed to bear his miserable state with great composedness and resignation, saying he had repented as well as he could in the short time allowed him, suffering the same day with the two last mentioned malefactors.

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### **The Life of THOMAS WILSON, a Notorious Footpad**

It happens so commonly in the world, that I am persuaded that none of my readers but must have remarked that there is a certain settled and stupid obstinacy in some tempers which renders them capable of persevering in any act, how wicked and villainous soever, without either reluctance at the time of its commission, or a capacity of humbling themselves so far as to acknowledge and ask pardon for their offences when detected or discovered. Of this rugged disposition was the criminal we are now to speak of.

Thomas Wilson was born of parents not in the worst of circumstances, in the neighbourhood of London. They educated him both in respect of learning and other things as well as their capacity would give them leave; but Thomas, far from making that use of it that they desired, addicted himself wholly to ill practices, that is to idleness, and those little crimes of spoiling others, and depriving them of their property, which an evil custom has made pass for trivial offences in England. But it seems the parents of Wilson did not think so, but both reprimanded him and corrected him severely whenever he robbed orchards, or any other such like feats as passed for instances of a quick spirit and ingenuity in children with less honest and religious parents.

But these restraints grew quickly so grievous to Thomas's temper, that he, observing that his parents, notwithstanding their correction, were really fond of him, bethought himself of a method of conquering their dislike to his recreations. Therefore stealing away from his home, he rambled for a considerable space in the world, subsisting wholly upon such methods as he had before used for his recreation. But this project was so far from taking effect, that his parents, finding him incorrigible, looked very coldly upon him, and instead of fondling him the more for this act of disobedience, treated him as one whom they foresaw would be a disgrace to their family and of whom they had now very little or no hope.

Wilson perceiving this, out of the natural sourness of his temper resolved to abandon them totally, which he did, and went to sea without their consent or notice. But men of his cast being very ill-suited to that employment, where the strictest obedience is required towards those who are in command, Wilson soon brought himself into very unhappy circumstances by his moroseness and ill-behaviour; for though he was but thirteen when he went to sea, and never made but one voyage to the Baltic, yet in that space he was fourteen times whipped and pickled and six times hung by the heels and lashed for the villainies he committed on the ship.

Upon this return into England, he was so thoroughly mortified by this treatment that he went home to his friends, and as far as his surly humour would give him leave, made his submission and promised more obedience and better behaviour for the future. They then took him in, and were in some hopes that they should now reclaim him. Accordingly they placed him with a sawyer, by Fleet Ditch, which at his first coming to the business seemed to him to be a much lighter work than that he had endured in the space of his being at sea. He served four years honestly, indeed, and with as much content as a person of his unsettled mind could enjoy in any state; but at the end of that space, good usage had so far spoiled him that he longed to be at liberty again, though at the expense of another sea voyage. Accordingly, leaving his master, he went away again on board of a merchantman bound for the Straits. During the time which the ship lay in port for her loading, he contracted some distemper from the heat of the country, and his immoderate love of its wine and the fruits that grow there. These brought him very low, and he falling at the same time into company of some bad women, made an addition to his former ails by adding one of the worst and most painful of all distempers to the miseries he before endured.

In this miserable condition, more like a ghost than a man, he shipped himself at last for England in a vessel, the captain of which out of charity gave him his passage home. The air of that climate in which he was born, recovered him to a miracle. Soon after which being, I suppose, cured also of those maladies which had attended the Spanish women's favours, he fell in love with a very honest industrious young woman, and quickly prevailed with her to marry him. But her friends discovering what a profligate life he led, resolved she should not share in the misfortunes such a measure would be sure to draw upon him, wherefore they took her away from him. How crabbed soever this malefactor might be towards others, yet so affectionately fond was he of his wife that the taking of her away made him not only uneasy and melancholy, but drove him also into distraction. To relieve his grief, at first he betook himself to those companies that afterwards led him to the courses which brought on his death, and in almost all the villainies he committed afterwards he was hardly ever sober, so much did the loss of his wife, and the remorse of his course of the life he led affect him, whenever he allowed himself coolly to reflect thereon.

The crew he had engaged himself in were the most notorious and the most cruel footpads which for many years had infested the road. The robberies they committed were numerous and continual, and the manner in which they perpetrated them base and inhuman. For, seldom going out with pistols (the sight of which serves often to terrify passengers out of their money, without offering them any other injury than what arises from their own apprehensions) these villains provided themselves with large sticks, loaded at the end with lead; with these, from behind a hedge, they were able to knock down passengers as they walked along the road, and then starting from their covert, easily plunder and bind them if they thought proper. They had carried on this detestable practice for a long space in almost all those roads which lead to the little villages whither people go for pleasure from the hurry and noise of London.

Amongst many other robberies which they committed, it happened that in the road to Bow they met a footman, whom without speaking to, they knocked down as soon as they had passed him. The fellow was so stunned with the fall, and so frightened with their approach, that he made not the least resistance while they took away his money and his watch, stripped him of his hat and wig, his waistcoat and a pair of silver buckles; but when one of them perceiving a ring of some value upon his finger, went to tear it off, he begged him in the most moving terms to leave it, because it had been given to him by his lady, who would never forgive the loss of it. However it happened, he who first went to take it off, seemed to relent at the fellow's repeated entreaties, but Wilson catching hold of the fellow's hand, dragged it off at once, saying at the same time, *Sirrah, I suppose you are your lady's stallion, and the ring comes as honestly to us as it did to you.*

A few days after this adventure, Wilson being got very drunk, thought he would go out on the road himself, in hopes of acquiring a considerable booty without being obliged to share it with his companions. He had not walked above half an hour, before he overtook a man laden with several little glazed pots and other things, which being tied up in a cloth, he had hung upon the end of a stick and carried on his shoulder. Wilson coming behind him with one of those loaded sticks that I have mentioned, knocked him down by the side of the ditch, and immediately secured his bundle. But attempting to rifle him farther, his foot slipped, he being very full of liquor, and he tumbled backwards into the ditch. The poor man took that opportunity to get up and run away, and so soon as he could recover himself, Wilson retreated to one of those evil houses that entertain such people, in order to see what great purchase he had got; but upon opening the cloth, he was not a little out of humour at finding four pots, each filled with a pound of rappee snuff, and as many galley pots of scented pomatum.

Some nights after this expedition, he and one of his companions went out on the like errand, and had not been long in the fields before they perceived one Mr. Cowell, near Islington. Wilson's companion immediately resolved to attack him, but Wilson himself was struck with such a terror that he begged him to desist, from an apprehension that the man knew him; but that not prevailing with his associate, they robbed him of a hat and wig, and about a shilling in money. Wilson was quickly apprehended, but his companion having notice thereof, saved himself by a flight into Holland. At the ensuing sessions Wilson was indicted, not only for this fact, but for many others of a like nature, to all of which he immediately pleaded guilty, declaring that as he had done few favours to mankind, so he would never expect any.

After sentence of death was pronounced upon him, he laid aside much of his stubbornness, and not only applied himself to the duties of religion which are recommended to persons in his unhappy condition to practice, but also offered to make any discoveries he was able which might tend to satisfying the Justice of his country or the benefit of society. In pursuance of which he wrote a paper, which he delivered with much ceremony at the place of execution, and which though penned in none of the best styles, I have yet thought convenient to annex in his own words.

Being questioned with respect of several of his companions who are very well known, but whom, notwithstanding all the search had been made after them, no discovery could be made so as they might be apprehended and brought to justice, Wilson declared that as for three of the most notorious, they had made their escape into Holland some time before he was apprehended; two others were in Newgate for trivial offences, and another (whom he would not name) was retired into Warwickshire, had married there, and led a very honest and industrious life.

At the place of execution he seemed less daunted than any of the malefactors who suffered with him, showed himself several times by standing up to the spectators, before the rope was fastened about his neck, and told them that he hoped they would give no credit to any spurious accounts



which might be published of him; because whatever he thought might be necessary for them to know, he had digested in a paper which he had delivered the Sunday before he died, in order to be communicated to the public. He added, that since he had been in the cart, he had been informed that one Phelps had been committed to Newgate for a robbery mentioned by him in his paper. He said, as he was a dying man, he knew nothing of Phelps, and that he was not in any manner whatsoever concerned in that robbery for which he had been apprehended. He then put the rope about his neck, and submitted to his death with great resolution, being then about twenty years of age, and the day he suffered the 26th of July, 1722.

The Paper delivered by the above mentioned criminal the day before his execution.

I, Thomas Wilson, desire it may be known that I was in a horse-way that lies between Highgate and Hornsey, where meeting a man and a woman, they enquired the way to Upper Holloway. We directed them across the fields; meantime we drank two pints of ale to hearten us, then followed them, and robbed them of two shillings and some half pence, the woman's apron, her hat and coloured handkerchief. We left them without misusing them, though there were thoughts of doing it. My companion that robbed with me is gone to Holland upon hearing I was taken up, though I should not have impeached him, but his friends lived in Holland. Another robbery we committed was by a barn in the footpath near Pancras Church of a hat and tie-wig, and cane, and some goods he was carrying, but we heard he had a considerable sum of money about him; but he ran away and I ran after him, but I being drunk he escaped, and I was glad to get off safe. We robbed two other men near Copenhagen House of a coat and waistcoat. I committed many street robberies about Lincoln's Inn. For these and for all other sins, I pray God and Man to pardon me, especially for shooting the pistol off before Justice Perry, at my friend's adversary, and am very glad I did not kill him.

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## **The Lives of ROBERT WILKINSON and JAMES LINCOLN, Murderers and Footpads**

Robert Wilkinson, like abundance of other unhappy young men, contracted in his youth a liking to idleness, and an aversion to all sorts of work and labour, and applied himself for a livelihood hardly to anything that was honest. The only employment he ever pretended to was that of a prize fighter or boxer at Hockley-in-the-Hole,<sup>[20]</sup> where, as a fellow of prodigious dexterity, though low in stature, and very small limbed, he was much taken notice of. And as is usual for persons who have long addicted themselves to such a way of living, he had contracted an inhumanity of temper which made him little concerned at the greatest miseries he saw others suffer, and even regardless of what might happen to himself. The set of villains into whose society he had joined himself, viz., Carrick who was executed, Carrol who made his escape into Ireland, Lincoln of whom we shall speak afterwards, Shaw and Burrige before mentioned, and William Lock, perpetrated together a prodigious number of villainies often attended with cruel and bloody acts.

Some of these fellows, it seems, valued themselves much on the ferocity they exerted in the war they carried on against the rest of mankind, amongst which Wilkinson might be justly reckoned, being ever ready to second any bloody proposal, and as unwilling to comply with any good-natured one. An instance of this happened in the case of two gentlemen whom Shaw, he and Burrige attacked near Highgate. Not contented with robbing them of about forty shillings, their watches and whatever else about 'em was valuable, Wilkinson, after they were dismounted, knocked one of them into a ditch, where he would have strangled him with his hand if one of his comrades had not hindered him. The man pleaded all the while the other held him, that he was without arms, incapable of making any resistance, and that it was equally base and barbarous to injure him, who neither could, nor would attempt to pursue him. Though this fact was very fully proved, yet Wilkinson strongly denied it, as indeed he did almost everything, though nothing was more notorious than that he had lived by these wicked courses for a very considerable time.

Having had occasion to mention this gang with whom Wilkinson was concerned, it may not be improper to acquaint my readers with an adventure of one Calhagan and Disney, two Irish robbers of the same crew. One of them had persuaded a gentleman's housekeeper, of about thirty-five, that he was extremely in love with her, passing at the same time for a gentleman of fortune in the kingdom of Ireland, the brogue being too strong upon his tongue for him to deny his country. He met her frequently, and made her not a few visits, even at her master's house, taking care all the while to keep up the greatest form of ceremony, as though to a person whom he designed to make his wife. His companion attended on him with great respect as his tutor or gentleman, appearing at first very much dissatisfied with his making his addresses to a woman so much beneath him, but as the affair went on pretending to be so much taken with her wit, prudence and genteel behaviour, that he said his master had made an excellent choice, and advised him to delay his marriage no longer than till he had settled his affairs with his guardian, naming as such a certain noble lord of unquestioned character and honour. These pretences prevailing on the credulity of an old maid, who like most of her species was fond of the company of young fellows, and in raptures at the thoughts of a lover, she thought it a prodigious long while till these accounts were made up, enquiring wherever she went, when such a lord would come to town. She heard, at last, with great satisfaction, that he would certainly come over from Ireland

that summer.

The family in which she lived, going out of town as usual, left her in charge of the house; as there was nobody but herself and an under maid, her lover often visited her, and at last told her that on such a day my Lord had appointed to settle his affairs and to deliver up all his trust. The evening of this day, the gentleman and his tutor came and brought with them a bundle of papers and parchments, which they pretended were the instruments which had been signed on this occasion. After making merry with the housekeeper and the maid on a supper which they had sent from the tavern, the elder of them at last pulls out his watch, and said, *Come, 'tis time to do business, 'tis almost one o'clock*. Upon which the other arose, seized the housekeeper, to whom he had so long paid his addresses, and clapped an ivory gag into her mouth, while his companion did the same thing by the other. Then putting out all the candles, having first put one into a dark lanthorn they had brought on purpose, they next led the poor creatures up and down the house, till they had shown them the several places where the plate, linen, jewels and other valuable things belonging to the family were laid. After having bundled up these they threw them down upon the floor, tied their ankles to one another, and left them hanging, one on one side, and the other on the other side of the parlour door; in which posture they were found the next day at noon, at the very point of expiring, their blood having stagnated about their necks, which put them into the greatest danger.

But to return to Wilkinson. One night, he with his companions Lincoln and William Lock came up with one Peter Martin, a poor pensioner of Chelsea College, whom they stopped. Wilkinson held him down and Lincoln knocked him down on his crying out for help; afterwards taking him up, he would have led him along, and Wilkinson pricked him with his sword in the shoulders and buttocks for some time, to make him advance, till William Lock cried out to them, *How should ye expect the man to go forward when he is dead*.

For this murder and for a robbery committed by them with Carrick and Carrol they were both capitally convicted. Wilkinson behaved himself to the time of his execution very morosely, and when pressed, at the place of execution, to unburden his conscience as to the crime for which he died, he answered peremptorily that he knew nothing of the murder, nor of Lincoln who died with him, until they were apprehended; adding, that as to hanging in chains he did not value it, but he had no business to tell lies, to make himself guilty of things he never did. Three days and three nights before the time of his death, he abstained totally from meat and drink, which rendered him so faint that he had scarce strength enough to speak at the tree.

James Lincoln, who died with him for the aforesaid cruel murder, was a fellow of a more docile and gentle temper than Wilkinson, owned abundance of the offences he had been guilty of, and had designed, as he himself owned, to have robbed the Duke of Newcastle of his gaiter ornaments, as he returned from the instalment. Notwithstanding these confessions, he persisted, as well as Wilkinson, in utterly denying that he knew anything of the murder of the pensioner, and saying that he forgave William Lock who had sworn himself and them into it. Wilkinson was at the time of his execution about thirty-five years old, and James Lincoln somewhat under. They died at the same time with the afore-mentioned malefactor, Wilson, at Tyburn.

[20]

This was near Clerkenwell Green. It was a famous Bear Garden and the scene of various prize-fights to which public challenges were issued. Cunningham quotes a curious one for the year 1722:—"I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Hyfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me on the stage and box with me for three guineas, each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops her money to lose the battle" (this was to prevent scratching). The acceptance ran, "I, Hannah Hyfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows and from her no favour."

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### **The Life of MATTHIAS BRINSDEN, a Murderer**

Though all offences against the laws of God and the land are highly criminal in themselves, as well as fatal in their consequences, yet there is certainly some degree in guilt; and petty thieveries and crimes of a like nature seem to fall very short in comparison of the atrocious guilt of murder and the imbrueing one's hands in blood, more especially when a crime of so deep a dye in itself is heightened by aggravating circumstances.

Matthias Brinsden, who is to be the subject of our present narration, was a man in tolerable circumstances at the time the misfortune happened to him for which he died. He had several children by his wife whom he murdered, and with whom he had lived in great uneasiness for a long time. The deceased Mrs. Brinsden was a woman of a great spirit, much addicted to company and not a little to drinking. This had occasioned many quarrels between her and her husband on the score of those extravagancies she was guilty of, Mr. Brinsden thinking it hard that she should squander away his money when he had a large family, and scarce knew how to maintain it.

Their quarrels frequently rose to such a height as to alarm the neighbourhood, the man being of a cruel, and the woman of an obstinate temper, and it seemed rather a wonder that the murder had not ensued before than that it happened when it did, they seldom falling out and fighting

without drawing blood, or having some grievous accident or other happening therefrom. Once he burnt her arms with a red-hot iron, and but a week before her death he ran a great pair of scissors into her skull, which covered her with blood, and made him and all who saw her think he had murdered her then. But after bleeding prodigiously she came a little to herself, and on the application of proper remedies recovered. Brinsden, in the meanwhile fled, and was hardly prevailed with to return, upon repeated assurances that she was in no danger, promising himself that if she escaped with life then, he would never suffer himself to be so far transported with passion as to do her an injury again.

The fatal occasion of that quarrel which produced the immediate death of the woman, warm with liquor, and in the midst of passion, and which soon after brought on a shameful and ignominious end to the man himself, happened by Mrs. Brinsden's drinking cheerfully with some company at home, and after their going away, demanding of her husband what she should have for supper? He answered, bread and cheese; to which the deceased replied that she thought bread and cheese once a day was enough, and as she had eaten it for dinner, she would not eat it for supper. Brinsden said, she should have no better than the rest of his family, who were like to be contented with the same, except his eldest daughter for whom he had provided a pie, and towards whom on all occasions he showed a peculiar affection, occasioned as he said, from the care she took of his other children and of his affairs, though malicious and ill-natured people gave out that it sprang from a much worse and, indeed, the basest of reasons.

On the discourse I have mentioned between him and his wife, Mrs. Brinsden in a violent passion declared she would go to the general shop and sup with her friends, who were gone from her but a little before. He, therefore, having got between her and the door, having the knife in his hand with which he cut the bread and cheese, and she still persisting with great violence in endeavouring to go out, he threw her down with one hand and stabbed her with the other. This is the account of this bloody action as it was sworn against him at his trial by his own daughter, though he persisted in it that what she called throwing down was only gently laying her on the bed after she received the blow, which as he averred happened only by chance, and her own pressing against him as the knife was in his hand. However that was, he sent for basilicon and sugar to dress the wound, in hopes she might at least recover so far as to declare there was no malice between them, but those endeavours were in vain, for she never spoke after.

In the meanwhile, Brinsden took occasion during the bustle that this sad accident occasioned, and fled to one Mr. Kegg's at Shadwell Dock, where, though for some small space he continued safe, yet the terrors and apprehensions he was under were more choking and uneasy than all the miseries he experienced after his being taken up. Such is the weight of blood, and such the dreadful condition of the wicked.

At his trial he put on an air of boldness and intrepidity, saying that though the clamour of the town was very strong against him, yet he hoped it would not make an impression to his disadvantage on the jury, since the death of his wife happened with no premeditated design. The surgeon who examined the wound, having deposed that it was six inches deep, he objected to his evidence by observing that the knife, when produced in Court, was not quite so long. He pleaded also, very strongly, the insupportable temper of his wife, and said she was of such a disposition that nothing would do with her but blows. But all this signifying little, the evidence of this daughter appearing also full and direct against him, the jury showed very small regard to his excuses, and after a short reflection on the evidence, they found him guilty.

Under sentence he behaved himself indolently and sottishly, doing nothing but eat his victuals and doze in his bed; thinking it at the same time a very great indignity that he should be obliged to take up with those thieves and robbers who were in the same state of condemnation with himself, always behaving himself towards them very distantly, and as if it would have been a great debasement to him if he had joined with them in devotion.

His daughter who had borne witness against him at his trial, came to him at chapel and begged his forgiveness, even for having testified the truth. At first he turned away from her with much indignation; the second day she came, after great entreaty and persuasion of his friends, he at last muttered out, *I forgive you*. But the girl coming the third day and earnestly desiring he would kiss her, which at first he refused, and at last turning to her and weeping lamentably, he took her in his arms, and said: *For Christ's sake, my child, forgive me. I have robbed you of your own mother. Be a good child, rather die than steal, never be in a passion, but curb your anger. Honour your mistress, for she will be both a father and a mother to you. Pray for your father and think of him as well as you can.*

At the place of execution he composed himself to suffer with as much patience as he could, and while the rest threw books and handkerchiefs to their friends, he seemed wrapped up in a profound meditation, out of which he drew himself as soon as prayers began and assisted with much cheerfulness and attention. When they were ended he stood up and desiring the Ordinary to repeat after him the following speech, which he dictated word for word as I have transcribed it, seeming most passionately affected with the reflection the world had cast on himself and daughter, as my readers will perceive from the speech itself. After the making of which, he was immediately turned off, on the sixteenth of July, 1722.

The last speech of Matthias Brinsden

I was born of kind parents, who gave me learning, and went apprentice to a fine-drawer. I had often jars which might increase a natural waspishness in my

temper. I fell in love with Hannah, my late wife, and after much difficulty won her, she having five sisters at the same time. We had ten children (half of them dead) and I believe we loved each other dearly, but often quarrelled and fought. Pray good people mind, I had no malice against her, nor thought to kill her, two minutes before the deed, but I designed only to make her obey me thoroughly, which the Scripture says all wives should do. This I thought I had done, when I cut her skull on Monday, but she was the same again by Tuesday.

Good people, I request you to observe that though the world has spitefully given out that I carnally and incestuously lay with my eldest daughter, I here solemnly declare, as I am entering into the presence of God, I never knew whether she was man or woman, since she was a babe. I have often taken her in my arms, often kissed her, sometimes given her a cake or a pie, when she did any particular service beyond what came to her share, but never lay with her, or carnally knew her, much less had a child by her. But when a man is in calamities and is hated like me, the women will make surmises into certainties. Good Christians pray for me, I deserve death, I am willing to die, for though my sins are great, God's mercies are greater.

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### **The Life of EDMUND NEAL, a Footpad**

Of all the unhappy wretches whose ends I have recorded that their examples may be of the more use to mankind, there is none perhaps which be more useful, if well considered, than this of Edmund Neal Though there be nothing in it very extraordinary, yet it contains a perfect picture of low pleasures for which men sacrifice reputation and happiness, and go on in a voluptuous dream till they awake to temporal and, but for the mercy of God, to eternal death.

This Edmund Neal was the son of a father of the same name, a blacksmith in a market town in Warwickshire. He was one of those mechanics who, from a particular observance of the foibles of human nature, insinuate themselves into the good graces of those who employ them, and from being created as something even beneath a servant, grow up at last into a confidence to which it would not be improper to affix the name of a friend. This Edmund Neal senior had by this method climbed (by a little skill he had in horses) from paring off their hoofs, to directing of their riders, until in short there was scarce a sporting squire in the neighbourhood but old Edmund was of his privy council. Yet though he got a vast deal of money, he took very little care of the education of his son, whom he scarce allowed as much learning as would enable him to read a chapter; but notwithstanding this, he carried him about with him wherever he went, as if the company of gentlemen, though he was unable to converse with them, would have been sufficient to improve him.

The scenes young Neal saw at the houses whither his father carried him, filled him with such a liking to debauchery and such an irreclaimable passion for sensual pleasures, as was the source from whence his following misfortunes flowed. For what, as he himself complained, first gave him occasion to repine at his condition, and filled him with wandering inclinations of pursuing an idle and extravagant life, was the forcing of him to go apprentice to a tailor, a trade for which he had always the greatest aversion, and contempt. No sooner, therefore, was he placed out apprentice, but the young fellows of that occupation whom he had before derided and despised, now ridiculed him in their turns, and laughed at the uneasiness which they saw his new employment caused him. However, he lived about four years with his master, being especially induced thereto by the company of a young man who worked there, and who used to amuse him with stories of intrigues in London, to which Neal listened with a very attentive ear.

This London companion more and more inclined him to vice, and the history he gave of his living with a woman—who cheated her other cullies to maintain him, and at last for the sake of a new sweetheart, stripped him of all he had one night while he slept, and left him so much in debt that he was obliged to fly into the country—the relation, I say, of these adventures made such an impression on young Neal that he was never at rest until he fell into a method of copying them. And as ill-design seldom waits long for an opportunity, so the death of his first master, and his being turned over to a second, much less careful and diligent to his business, furnished Neal with the occasion he wanted. This master he both cheated of his money and defrauded of his goods, letting in loose and disorderly persons in the night, and finding a way for their going out again in the morning before his master was awake, and consequently without the least suspicion.

These practices quickly broke the man with whom he lived, and his breaking turned Edmund upon the wide world, equally destitute of money, friends and capacity, not knowing what to do, and having but two shillings in his pocket. He took a solitary walk to that end of the town which went out upon the London Road, and there by chance he met a woman who asked him to go with her to London. He not knowing what to do with himself accepted her offer, and without any more words to the bargain they set out together. The woman was very kind to him on the road, and poor Edmund flattered himself that money was so plentiful in London as to render it impossible for him to remain without it. But he was miserably mistaken when he arrived there. He went to certain public-houses of persons whom he had known in the country, who instead of using him civilly, in a day or two's time were thrusting him out of doors. Some common whores, also, finding him to be a poor country fellow, easily seduced him and kept him amongst them for a stallion, until, between their lust and their diseases, they had put him in a fair road to the grave.

Tired out with their vices, which were even too gross for a mind so corrupted as his was, he chose rather to go and live with a brewer and carry out drink. But after living for some time with two masters of that occupation, his mind still roving after an easier and pleasanter life, he endeavoured to get it at some public-house; which at last he with much ado effected at Sadlers Wells.<sup>[21]</sup> This appeared so great a happiness that he thought he should never be tired of a life where there was so much music and dancing, to which he had been always addicted; and, as he phrased it himself, he thought he was in another world when he got with a set of men and maids in a barn with a fiddle among them.

However, he at last grew tired of that also; and resolving to betake himself to some more settled and honest employment, he hired himself to a man who kept swine, and there behaved himself both with honesty and diligence. But his master breaking a little time after he had been with him, though as he affirmed without his wronging him in the least, he was reduced to look for some new way of maintaining himself. This being about the time of the late Rebellion,<sup>[22]</sup> and great encouragement being then offered for those who would enter themselves in the late king's service at sea, Neal accepted thereof, and shipped himself on board the *Gosport* man-of-war, which sailed to the Western Islands of Scotland. What between the cold and the hard fare he suffered deeply, and never, as he said, tasted any degree of comfort till he returned to the West of England. The Rebellion being then over, Neal with very great joy accepted his discharge from the service, and once more in search of business came up to London.

The reputation of an honest servant he had acquired from the hog merchant he had formerly lived with, quickly procured him a place with another of the same trade, with him he lived too (as was said) very honestly; and having been trusted with twenty or thirty pounds at a time, was always found very trusty and faithful. But happening, unluckily, to work here with one Pincher, who in the course of his life had been as unhappy as himself, they thereupon grew very intimate together, and being a couple of fellows of very odd tempers, after having got half drunk at the Hampshire Hog, they took it into their heads that there was not in the world two fellows so unhappy as themselves. The subject began when they were maudlin, and as they grew quite drunk, they came to a resolution to go out and beat everybody they met, for being happier than themselves.

The first persons they met in this expedition were a poor old man whose name was Dormer and his wife. The woman they abused grossly, and Pincher knocked the man down, though very much in years, Neal afterwards rolling him about, and either took or shook out of his pocket all the money he had, which was but three pence farthing. For this unaccountable action they were both apprehended, tried and convicted, with three other persons, in the November sessions, 1722. But their inhuman behaviour to the old man made such an impression on the Court to their disadvantage, that when the death warrant came down, they two only were appointed for execution.

At the near approach of death, Neal appeared excessively astonished, and what between fear and concern, his senses grew disordered. However, at the place of execution he seemed more composed than he had been before, and said that it was very fit he should die, but added he suffered rather for being drunk than any design he had either to rob or use the man cruelly. As for William Pincher, his companion both in the robbery and its punishment, he seemed to be the counterpart of Neal, a downright Norfolk clown, born within six miles of Lynn and by the kindness of a master of good fortune, taken into his house with an intent to breed him up, on his father's going for a soldier. At first he behaved himself diligently and thereby got much into the favour of his master, but falling into loose company and addicting himself to sitting in alehouses, his once kind and indulgent master, finding him incorrigible, dismissed him from his service, and having given him some small matter by way of encouragement, he set out for London. Here he got into the business before mentioned, and said himself, that he might have lived very comfortably thereon, if he had been industrious and frugal; but that addicting himself to his old custom of sitting continually in an alehouse had drawn him into very great inconveniences. In order to draw himself out of these he thought of following certain courses, by which, as he had heard some company where he used say, a young man might get as much money as he could spend, let him live as extravagantly as he would. This occasioned his persuading Neal into that fatal undertaking which cost them their lives. His behaviour under sentence was irreproachable, being always taken up either in reading, praying or singing of Psalms, performing all things that so short a space would give him leave to do, and showing as evident marks of true repentance as perhaps any unhappy person ever did in his condition.

Thus these two companions in misfortune suffered together on die last day of the year 1722, Edmund Neal being then about thirty years of age, and Pincher about twenty-six.

<sup>[21]</sup>

This was opened, about 1680, by a certain Sadler, as a public music-room and house of entertainment. The discovery of a spring of mineral water in the garden attracted general attention and the place soon became a place of popular resort.

<sup>[22]</sup>

The Jacobite rising of 1715.

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## The Life of CHARLES WEAVER, a Murderer

Hastiness of temper and yielding to all the rash dictates of anger, as it is an offence the most unworthy a rational creature, so it is attended also with consequences as fatal as any other crime whatever. A wild expression thrown out in the heat of passion has often cost men dearer than even a real injury would have done, had it been offered to the same person. A blow intended for the slightest has often taken away life, and the sudden anger of a moment produced the sorrow of years, and has been, after all, irreparable in its effect.

Charles Weaver, of whom we are now speaking, was the son of parents in very good circumstances in the city of Gloucester, who put him apprentice to a goldsmith. He served about four years of his time with his master, and having in that space run out into so much lewdness and extravagance that his friends refused any longer to supply or to support him, he then thought fit to go into the service of the Queen, as a soldier, and in that capacity went over with those who were sent into America to quell the Indians. These people were at that time instigated by the French to attack our plantations on the main near which they lay. The greater part of these poor creatures were without European arms, yet several amongst them had fuses, powder and ball from the French, with which, being very good marksmen, they did abundance of mischief from their ambuscades in the woods.

At the time Weaver served against them, they were commanded by one Ouranaquoy, a man of a bloody disposition, great courage and greater cunning. He had commanded his nation in war against another Indian nation, from whom he took about forty prisoners, who according to the Indian custom were immediately destined to death; but being prevailed upon, by the presence of the French, to turn his arms against the English, on the confines of whose plantations he had gained his last victory, Ouranaquoy having sent for the prisoners he had taken before him, told them that if they would fall upon a village about three miles distant, he would not only give them their liberty, but also such a reward for the scalp of every Englishman, woman or child, they brought. They readily agreed on these terms and immediately went and plundered the village.

The English army lay about seven miles off, and no sooner heard of such an outrage committed by such a nation, but they immediately attacked the people to whom the prisoners belonged, marching their whole army for that purpose against the village, which if we may call it so, was the capital of their country. By this policy Ouranaquoy gained two advantages, for first he involved the English in a war with the people with whom they had entertained a friendship for twenty years, and in the next place gained time, while the English army were so employed, to enter twenty-five miles within their country, destroying fourscore whites and three hundred Indians and negroes. But this insult did not remain long unrevenged, for the troops in which Weaver served arriving immediately after from Europe, the army (who before they had done any considerable mischief to the people against whom they marched, had learnt the stratagem by which they had been deceived by Ouranaquoy) returned suddenly into his country, and exercised such severities upon the people thereof that to appease and make peace with the English the chiefs sent them the scalps of Ouranaquoy, his three brothers and nine sons.

On Weaver's return into England from this expedition, he shipped himself again as a recruit for that army which was then commanded by the Earl of Peterborough in Spain. He served also under the Duke of Ormond when his grace took Vigo, and Weaver had the good luck to get some hundred pounds for his share in the booty, but that money which he, in his thoughts, had designed for setting himself up in England, being insensibly squandered and decayed, he was obliged to list himself again, and so became a second time spectator of the taking of Vigo under the Lord Cobham. [\[23\]](#)

While he served in the second regiment of Foot-guards, he behaved himself so well as to engage his officer to take him into his own house, where he lived for a considerable space; and he had been twice actually reviewed in order to his going into the Life-guards, when he committed the act for which he died, which according to the evidence given at his trial happened thus. He was going into a boat in company with Eleanor Clark, widow, and Edward Morris. After they were in the boat, some words arising, the woman bid Weaver pay Morris what he owed him, upon which Weaver in a great passion got up, and endeavoured to overturn the boat with them all. But Thomas Watkins, the waterman, preventing that, Weaver immediately drew his sword, and swore he would murder them all, making several passes at them as if he had firmly intended to be as good as his word. The men defended themselves so well as to escape hurt, and endeavoured all they could to have preserved the woman, but Weaver making a pass, the sword entered underneath her left shoulder, and thereby gave her a wound seven inches deep, after which she gave but one groan and immediately expired. For this bloody fact Weaver was tried and convicted, and thereupon received sentence of death.

During the space between the passing of sentence and its execution an accident happened which added grievously to all his misfortunes. His wife, big with child, coming about a fortnight before his death to see him in Newgate, was run over by a dray and killed upon the spot. Weaver himself, though in the course of the life he had led he had totally forgot both reading and writing, yet came duly to prayers, and gave all possible marks of sorrow and repentance for his misspent life, though he all along pretended that the woman's death happened by accident, and that he had had no intent to murder her. He suffered the 8th day of February, 1722-3, being at that time about thirty years of age.

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## The Life of JOHN LEVEE, a Highwayman, Footpad, etc.

There is a certain busy sprightliness in some young people which from I know not what views, parents are apt to encourage in hopes of its one day producing great effects. I will not say that they are always disappointed in their expectations, but I will venture to pronounce that where one bold spirit has succeeded in the world, five have been ruined, by a busy turbulent temper.

This was the case with this criminal, John Levee, who, to cover the disgrace his family suffered in him, called himself Junks. His father was a French gentleman, who came over with King Charles II at the Restoration, taught French to persons of distinction in court, and particularly to some of that prince's natural children. For the convenience of his scholars, he kept a large boarding-school in Pall Mall, whereby he acquired such a fortune as enabled him to set up for a wine merchant. In this capacity he dealt with France for many years to the amount of thousands *per annum*. His children received the best education that could be given them and never stirred out of doors but with a footman to attend them.

But Mr. Levee, the merchant, falling into misfortunes by some of his correspondents' failures, withdrew from his family into Holland; and this son John being taken by the French Society, in order to be put out apprentice and provided for, being induced thereto by the boy's natural vivacity and warmth of temper in which he had been foolishly encouraged, they sent him to sea with a captain of a man-of-war. He was on board the *Essex* when Sir George Byng, now Viscount Torrington, engaged the Spaniards at Messina.<sup>[24]</sup> He served afterwards on board the squadron commanded by Sir John Norris in the Baltic, and when he returned home, public affairs being in a more quiet state, his friends thought it better for him to learn merchants' accounts than to go any more voyages, where there was now little prospect of advantage.

But book-keeping was too quiet an employment for one of Levee's warm disposition, who far from being discouraged at the hardships of sea, only complained of his ill-luck in not being in an engagement. And so, to amuse this martial disposition, he with some companions went upon the road, which they practised for a very considerable time, robbing in a very genteel manner, by putting a hat into the coach and desiring the passengers to contribute as they thought proper, being always contented with what they gave them, though sometimes part of it was farthings. Nay, they were so civil that Blueskin and this Levee, once robbing a single gentlewoman in a coach, she happening to have a basket full of buns and cakes, Levee took some of them, but Blueskin proceeded to search her for money, but found none. The woman in the meanwhile scratched him and called him a thousand hard names, giving him two or three sound slaps in the face, at which they only laughed, as it was a woman, and went away without further ill-usage, a civility she would hardly have met with from any other gentlemen of their profession.

In October, he and his great companion Blueskin,<sup>[25]</sup> met a coach with two ladies and a little miss riding between their knees, coming from the Gravel Pits at Kensington.<sup>[26]</sup> Levee stopped the coach and without more ado, ordered both the coachmen and footman to jump the ditch, or he'd shoot them. They then stripped the ladies of their necklaces, cut a gold girle buckle from the side of the child, and took away about ten shillings in money, with a little white metal image of a man, which they thought had been solid silver, but proved a mere trifle.

At a grand consultation of the whole gang, and a report of great booties that were to be made (and that, too, with much safety) on Blackheath, they agreed to make some attempts there. Accordingly they set out, being six horsemen well armed and mounted; but after having continued about six hours upon the Heath, and not meeting so much as one person, and the same ill luck being three or four times repeated, they left off going on that road for the future. In December following, he and another person robbed a butcher on horseback, on the road coming from Hampstead. He told them he had sold two lambs there. Levee's companion said immediately, *Then you have eight-and-twenty shillings about you, for lambs sold to-day at fourteen shillings apiece*. After some grumbling and hard words they made him deliver and by way of punishment for his sauciness, as they phrased it, they took away his great coat into the bargain, and had probably used him worse had not Levee seen a Jew's coach coming that way, and been conscious to himself that those within it knew him; whereupon he persuaded his associates to go off without robbing it.

Levee never used anybody cruelly in any of his adventures, excepting only one Betts, who foolishly struck him three or four blows on the head, whereupon Levee with one blow of his pistol struck his eye out. One night, upon the same road, Blake and Matthew Flood being in company with this unhappy youth, they stopped the chariot of Mr. Young, the same person who hanged Molony and Carrick.<sup>[27]</sup> Blake calling out to lay hold, and Flood stopping the horses, Levee went into the coach and took from Mr. Young a gold watch and chain, one Richard Oakey also assisting, who died likewise for this fact. They robbed also Col. Cope, who was in the same chariot, of his gold watch, chain and ring, and twenty-two shillings in money. Levee said it would have been a very easy matter for the gentleman to have taken him, he going into the coach without arms, and his companions being on the other side of the hedge; but they gave him the things very readily, and it was hard to say who behaved themselves most civilly one towards the other, the gentlemen or he. One of them desired to have a cornelian ring returned, which Levee inclined to do, but that his companions would not permit him.

As they were going home after taking this booty, they met a poor man on horseback. Notwithstanding the considerable sum they had taken just before, they turned out of the road, carried him behind two haycocks because the moon shone light, and there finding that he had but two shillings in the world, the rest of his companions were for binding and beating him, but upon the man's saying that he was very sick and begging earnestly that they would not abuse him, Levee prevailed with them not only to set him on his horse again, but to restore him his two shillings, and lead him into the road where they left him.

Levee, Flood and Oakey were soon apprehended and Blake turning evidence, they were convicted the next sessions at the Old Bailey, and ordered for execution. Levee behaved himself while under condemnation very seriously and modestly, though before that time, he had acted too much the bravo, from the mistaken opinion that people are apt to entertain of courage and resolution. But when death approached near, he laid aside all this, and applied himself with great seriousness and attention to prayers and other duties becoming a person in his condition.

At the place of execution he fell into a strange passion at his hands being to be tied, and his cap pulled over his face. Passion signifying nothing there, he was obliged to submit as the others did, being at the time of his execution, aged about twenty-seven.

[24]

See page [66](#).

[25]

His real name was Joseph Blake, see page [177](#).

[26]

This was a portion of what is now the Bayswater Road, roughly between Petersburg Place and the Notting Hill Tube Station. Swift had lodgings there and it was a fairly fashionable residential spot.

[27]

See page [89](#).

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## **The Lives of RICHARD OAKEY and MATTHEW FLOOD, Street-Robbers and Footpads**

The first of these criminals, Richard Oakey, had been by his friends put apprentice to a tailor. In about two years his master failed, and from thence to the day of his unhappy death, Oakey continually followed thieving in one way or other. At first he wholly practised picking of women's pockets, which he said he did in a manner peculiar to himself; for being dressed pretty genteelly, he passed by the person he intended to rob, took up their upper petticoat and cut off the pocket at once, tripping them down at the same time. Then he stepped softly on the other side of the way, walked on and was never suspected. He said that while a lad, he had committed several hundred robberies in this way. As he grew older he made use of a woman to assist him, by pushing the people against the wall, while he took the opportunity of cutting their pockets; or at other times this woman came behind folks as they were crossing the way, and catching them by the arm, cried out, *There's a coach will run over ye*; while Oakey, in the moment of their surprise, whipped off their pocket.

This woman, who had followed the trade for a considerable time, happened one night at a bawdy-house to incense her bully so far as to make him beat her; she thereupon gave him still more provoking language, till at last he used her so cruelly, that she roared out *Murder*; and not without occasion, for she died of the bruises, though the people of the house concealed it for fear of trouble, and buried her privately. Upon this Oakey was obliged to go on his old way by himself.





THE HANGMAN ARRESTED WHEN ATTENDING JOHN MEFF TO TYBURN  
(From the *Annals of Newgate*)

The robberies he committed being numerous and successful, he bethought himself of doing something, as he called it, in a higher way; upon which, scraping acquaintance with two as abandoned fellows as himself, they took to housebreaking. In this they were so unlucky as to be detected in their second adventure, which was upon a house in Southwark near the Mint, where they stole calicoes to the value of twenty pounds and upwards. For this his two associates were convicted at Kingston assizes, he himself being the witness against them, by which method he at that time escaped. And being cured of any desire to go a-housebreaking again, he fell upon his old trade of picking pockets, till he got into the acquaintance of another as bad as himself, whom they called Will the Sailor. This fellow's practice was to wear a long sword, and then by jostling the gentleman whom they designed to rob, first created a quarrel, and while the fray lasted, gave his companion the opportunity of rubbing off with the booty. But whether Will grew tired of his companion, or of the dangerous trade which he was engaged in, certain it is that he left it off, and got again out of England on ship-board.

Oakey then got acquainted with Hawes, Milksop, Lincoln, Reading, Wilkinson, and half a dozen others, with whom one way or other he was continually concerned while they reigned in their villainies. And as they were in a short space all executed, he became acquainted with Levee, Flood, Blake and the rest of that gang, in whose association he continued until his crimes and theirs brought them together to the gallows. After condemnation his behaviour was such as became his condition, getting up in the night to pray so often and manifesting all the signs of a sincere repentance.

Matthew Flood was the son of a man who kept the Clink Prison<sup>[28]</sup> in the parish of St. Mary Overys, who had given him as good an education as was in his power, and bound him apprentice to one Mr. Williams, a lighterman. In this occupation he might certainly have done well, if he had not fallen into the company of those lewd persons who brought him to his fate. He had been about three months concerned with Blake, Levee, etc., and had committed many facts.

His behaviour under sentence was very penitent and modest, nor did he suffer the continual hopes his friends gave him of a reprieve ever to make him neglect his devotions. At the place of execution he said he was more particularly concerned for a robbery he had committed on a woman in Cornhill, not only because he took from her a good many guineas which were in her pocket, but that at the same time also he had taken a will which he burnt, and which he feared would be more to her prejudice than the loss of her money.

Oakey was about twenty-five years old at the time of his death, and Matthew Flood somewhat younger. They suffered on the same day with Weaver and the last-mentioned malefactor Levee, at Tyburn.

[\[28\]](#)

The Clink Prison was, until 1745, at the corner of Maid Lane, Southwark. It was originally used as a house of detention for heretics and offenders against the bishop of Winchester, whose palace stood nearby.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM BURK, a Footpad and Highwayman**

As indulgence is a very common parent of wickedness and disobedience, so immoderate correction and treating children as if they were Stocks is as likely a method as the other to make them stubborn and obstinate, and perhaps even force upon them taking ill methods to avoid usage which they cannot bear.

William Burk, the unfortunate criminal whose enterprises are to be the subject of our present narration, was born towards Wapping of parents honest and willing to give him education, though their condition in the world rendered them not able. He was thereupon put to the charity school, the master of which being of a morose temper and he a boy of very indifferent disposition, the discipline with which he was treated was so severe that it created in him an aversion towards all learning; and one day, after a more severe whipping than ordinary, he determined (though but eleven years of age) to run away.

He sought out, therefore, for a captain who might want a boy, and that being no difficult matter to find in their neighbourhood, he went on board the *Salisbury*, Captain Hosier, then lying at the Buoy in the Nore, bound for Jamaica. His poor mother followed him in great affliction, and endeavoured all she could to persuade him to return, but her arguments were all in vain, for he had contracted so great an antipathy to school, from his master's treatment, that instead of being glad to go back, he earnestly intreated the captain to interpose his authority and keep him on board. His request was complied with, and the poor woman was forced to depart without her son.

It was the latter end of Queen Anne's War when they sailed to Jamaica, and during the time they were out, took two Spanish galleons very richly laden. Their first engagement was obstinate and bloody, and he, though a boy, was dangerously hurt as he bustled about one way or another as the captain commanded him. The second prize carried 74 guns and 650 men, yet the *Salisbury* (but a 60-gun ship) took her without the loss of a single man; only a woman, who was the only one on board, going to peep at the engagement, had her head and shoulders shot off. Burk said the prize money of each sailor came but to £15, but some of the officers shared so handsomely as never to be obliged to go to sea again, being enabled to live easily on shore.

Three years he continued in the West Indies, and there (especially in Jamaica) he learned so much wickedness that when he came home, hardly any of the gangs into which he entered were half so bad, though inured to plunder, as he when he came amongst them a fresh man. From this voyage he went another in the slave trade to the coast of Guinea. Here he endured very great hardships, especially when he had the misfortune to be on board where the negroes rose upon the English, and had like to have overcome them; but at last having been vanquished, and tied down in a convenient place, they were used with severity enough. Upon his return into England from this voyage, he went into the Baltic in the *Worcester* man-of-war, in which he suffered prodigious hardships from the coldness of the climate and other difficulties he went through.

The many miseries he had experienced in a life at sea might possibly have induced him to the resolution he made of never going on ship-board any more. How he came to take to robbing does not very clearly appear, further than that he was induced thereto by bad women; but he behaved himself with very great cruelty, for going over the first field from Stepney, armed with a hedging-bill, he attacked one William Fitzer, and robbed him of his jacket, tobacco-box, a knife and fork, etc. He robbed, also, one James Westwood, of a coat and ten shillings in money; last of all, attacking John Andrews and Robert his son, coming over the fields, he dove the old man down. His son taking up the stick boldly attacked Burk, and a neighbour, one Perkinson, coming in at the noise, he was overpowered and apprehended. As the fact was very plainly proved, he was on a short trial convicted, and the barbarity of the fact being so great, left no room for his being omitted in the warrant for execution.

As he lay a long time under condemnation, and had no hopes of life, from the moment of his confinement he applied himself to make his peace with that Being whom he had so much offended by his profligate course of life. On all occasions he expressed his readiness to confess anything which might be for the promoting of justice or public good, in all respects manifesting a thorough sorrow and penitence for that cruelty with which he had treated poor old Andrews. At the tree he stood up in the car, beckoned for silence, and then spoke to the multitude in these terms.

Good People,

I never was concerned but in four robberies in my life. I desire all men who see my fatal end to let my death teach them to lead a sober and regular life, and above all to shun the company of ill-women, which has brought me to this shameful end and place. I desire that nobody may reflect upon my wife after my decease, since she was so far from having any knowledge of the ills I committed, that she was continually exciting me to live a sober and honest life. Wherefore I hope God will bless her, as I also pray He may do all of you.

This malefactor, William Burk, was in the twenty-second year of his age when executed at Tyburn, April the 8th, 1723.

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### **The Life of LUKE NUNNEY, a murderer**

Though drunkenness in itself is a shocking and beastly crime, yet in its consequences it is also often so bloody and inhuman that one would wonder persons of understanding should indulge themselves in a sin at once so odious and so fatal both to body and soul. The instances of persons who have committed murders when drunk, and those accompanied with circumstances of such barbarity as even those persons themselves could not have heard without trembling, are so many and so well known to all of any reading, or who have made any reflection, that I need not dwell longer than the bare narration of this malefactor's misfortunes will detain me, to warn against a

vice which makes them always monsters and often murderers.

Luke Nunney, of whom we are to speak, was a young fellow of some parts, and of a tolerable education, his father, at the time of his death, being a shoemaker in tolerable circumstances, and very careful in the bringing up of his children. He was more particularly zealous in affording them due notions of religion, and took abundance of pains himself to inculcate them in their tender years, which at first had so good an effect upon this Luke that his whole thoughts ran upon finding out that method of worship in which he was most likely to please God. Sometimes, though his parents were at the Church of England, he slipped to a Presbyterian Meeting-house, where he was so much affected with the preacher's vehemency in prayer and his plain and pious method of preaching that he often regretted not being bred up in that way, and the loss his parents sustained by their not having a relish for religion ungraced with exterior ornaments. These were his thoughts, and his practice was suitable to them, until the misfortunes of his father obliged him to break up the house, and put Luke out to work at another place.

The men where Nunney went to work were lewd and profligate fellows, always talking idly or lewdly, relating stories of what had passed in the country before they came up to work in London, the intrigues they had had with vicious women, and such loose and unprofitable discourses. This quickly destroyed the former good inclinations of Luke, who first began to waver in religion, and as he had quitted the Church of England to turn to the Dissenters, so now he had some thoughts of leaving them for the Quakers; but after going often to their meetings he professed he thought their behaviour so ridiculous and absurd as not to deserve the name either of religion or Divine worship.

His instability of mind pressed him also to go out into the world, for it appeared to him a great evil that while all the rest of his companions were continually discoursing of their adventures, he should have none to mention of his own. Some of them, also, having slightly called him Cockney and reproaching him with never having been seven miles from London, he remembered that his father had some near relations in the west of England, so he took a sudden resolution of going down thither to work at his trade. Full of these notions he went over one evening pretty late with his brother to Southwark, and meeting there with an acquaintance who would needs make him drink, they stayed pretty long at the house, insomuch that Luke got very drunk, and being always quarrelsome when he had liquor, insulted and abused everybody in the room. As he was quarrelling particularly with one James Young, William Bramston who stood by, came up and desired him to be quiet, advised him to go home with his company, and not stay and make a disturbance where nobody had a mind to quarrel but himself. Without making any reply Luke struck him a blow on the face. Bramston thereupon held up his fist as if he would have struck him, but did not. However Nunney struck him again and pushed him forwards, upon which Bramston reeled, cried out he was stabbed and a dead man, that Nunney was the person who gave him the wound, and Luke thereupon (drunk as he was) attempted to run away.

Upon this he was apprehended, committed prisoner to Newgate, and the next sessions, on the evidence of such of his companions as were present, he was convicted and received sentence of death. He behaved himself from that time as a person who had as little desire as hopes of continuing in the world, enquired diligently both of the Ordinary and of the man who was under sentence with him, how he should prepare himself for his latter end, coming constantly to chapel, and praying regularly at all times. Yet at the place of execution he declared himself a Papist. He added, that at the time the murder was committed he had no knife nor could he imagine how it was done, being so drunk that he knew nothing that had happened until the morning, when he found himself in custody. He was about twenty years of age at the time of his suffering on the 25th of May, 1723.

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### **The Life of RICHARD TRANTHAM, a Housebreaker**

Though vices and extravagancies are the common causes which induce men to fall into those illegal practices which lead to a shameful death, yet now and then it happens we find men of outward gravity and serious deportment as wicked as those whose open licentiousness renders their committing crimes of this sort the less amazing.

Of the number of these was Richard Trantham, a married man, having a wife and child living at the time of his death, keeping also a tolerable house at Mitcham in Surrey. He had been apprehended on the sale of some stolen silk, and the next sessions following was convicted of having broken the house of John Follwell, in the night-time, two years before, and taking thence a silver tankard, a silver salver, and fifty-four pounds of Bologna silk, valued at £74 and upwards. During the time which passed between the sentence and execution he behaved in a manner the most penitent and devout, not only making use of a considerable number of books which the charity of his friends had furnished him with, but also reading to all those who were in the condemned hold with them.

The morning he was to die, after having received the Sacrament, he was exhorted to make a confession of those crimes which he had committed, particularly as to housebreaking, in which he was thought to have been long concerned; thereupon he recollected himself a little, and told of six or seven houses which he had broken open, particularly General Groves's near St. James's; a stone-cutter in Chiswell Street; and Mr. Follwell's in Spitalfields, for which he died. At the place of execution, whither he was conveyed in a mourning coach, he appeared perfectly composed and submissive to that sentence which his own misdeeds and the justice of the Law had brought upon

him. Before the halter was put about his neck, he spoke to those who were assembled at the gallows to see his death, in the following terms:

Good People,

Those wicked and unlawful methods by which, for a considerable time, I have supported myself, have justly drawn upon me the anger of God, and the sentence of the Law. As I have injured many and the substance I have is very small, I fear a restitution would be hard to make, even if it should be divided. I therefore leave it all to my wife for the maintenance of her and my child. I entreat you neither to reflect on her nor on my parents, and pray the blessing of God upon you all.

He was thirty years old when he died and was executed the same day with the malefactor aforementioned.

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### **The Lives of JOHN TYRRELL, a Horse-dealer, and WILLIAM HAWKSWORTH, a Murderer**

John Tyrrell, the first of these malefactors, was convicted for stealing two horses in Yorkshire, but selling them in Smithfield he was tried at the Old Bailey. It seem she had been an old horse-stealer as most people conjecture, though he himself denied it, and as he pretended at his trial to have bought those two for which he died at Northampton Fair, so he continually endeavoured to infuse the same notions into all persons who spoke to him at the time of his death. He had practised carrying horses over into Flanders and Germany, and there selling them to persons of the highest rank, with whom he always dealt so justly and honourably that, as it was said, his word would have gone there for any sum whatsoever that was to be laid out in horse-flesh.

He had been bred up a Dissenter, and above all things affected the character of a religious and sober man, which excepting the instances for which he died, he never seemed to have forfeited; for whatever else was said against him after he was condemned, arose merely from conjectures occasioned by the number of horses he had sold in foreign parts. He himself professed that he had always led a most regular and devout life, and in the frequent voyages he made by sea, exhorted the sailors to leave that dissolute manner of life which too generally they led. During the whole time he lay under sentence, he talked of nothing else but his own great piety and devotion, which though, as he confessed, it had often been rewarded by many singular deliverances through the hand of Providence, yet since he was suffered to die this ignominious death and thereby disgrace his family and altogether overturn that reputation of sanctity with which so much pains himself had been setting up, he inclined to atheistic notions, and a wavering belief as to the being of a God at all.

As for the other malefactor, William Hawksworth, he was a Yorkshireman by birth. His parents, reputable people who took a great care in his reputation, intended to breed him to some good trade, but a regiment of soldiers happening to come into the town, Hawksworth imagining great things might be attained to in the army, would needs go with them, and accordingly listed himself. But having run through many difficulties and much hardships, finding also that he was like to meet with little else while he wore a red coat, he took a great deal of pains and made much interest to be discharged. At last he effected it, and a gentleman kindly taking him to live with him as a footman, he there recovered part of that education which he had lost while in the army. There, also, he addicted himself for some time to a sober and quiet life, but soon after giving way to his old roving disposition, he went away from his master, and listed himself again in the army in one of the regiments of Guards.

His behaviour the last time of his being in the service was honest and regular, his officers giving him a very good character, and nobody else a bad one; but happening to be one day commanded on a party to mount guard at the Admiralty Office, by Charing Cross, they met a man and woman. The man's name was John Ransom, and this Hawksworth stepping up to the woman and going to kiss her, Ransom interposed and pushed him off, upon which Hawksworth knocked him down with the butt end of his piece, by which blow about nine o'clock that evening he died.

The prisoner insisted continually that as he had no design to kill the man it was not wilful murder. He and Tyrrell died with less confusion and seeming concern than most malefactors do. Tyrrell was about thirty and Hawksworth in the twenty-eighth year of his age, on the 17th of June, 1723.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM DUCE, a Notorious Highwayman and Footpad**

However hardened some men may appear during the time they are acting their crimes and while hopes of safety of life remains, yet when these are totally lost and death, attended with ignominy and reproach, stares them in the face, they seldom fail to lay aside their obstinacy; or, if they do not, it is through a stupid want of consideration, either of themselves or of their condition.

William Duce, of whom we are now to speak, was one of the most cruel and abandoned wretches that ever went on the road. He was born at Wolverhampton, but of what parents, or in what manner he lived until his coming up to London, I am not able to say. He had not been long here before he got in debt with one Allom, who arrested him and threw him into Newgate, where he

remained a prisoner upwards of fifteen months; here it was that he learnt those principles of villainy which he afterwards put in practice.

His companions were Dyer, Butler, Rice and some others whom I shall have occasion to mention. The first of December, 1722, he and one of his associates crossing Chelsea Fields, overtook a well-dressed gentleman, a tall strong-limbed man, who having a sword by his side and a good cane in his hand they were at first in some doubt whether they should attack him. At last one went on one side and the other on the other, and clapping at once fast hold of each arm, they thereby totally disabled him from making a resistance. They took from him four guineas, and tying his wrists and ankles together, left him bound behind the hedge.

Not long after he, with two others, planned to rob in St. James's Park. Accordingly they seized a woman who was walking on the grass near the wall towards Petty France, and after they had robbed her got over the wall and made their escape. About this time his first acquaintance began with Dyer, who was the great occasion of this poor fellow's ruin, whom he continually plagued to go out a-robbing, and sometimes threatened him if he did not. In Tottenham Court Road, they attacked a gentleman, who being intoxicated with wine, either fell from his horse, or was thrown off by them, from whom they took only a gold watch. Then Butler and Dyer being in his company, they robbed Mr. Holmes of Chelsea, of a guinea and twopence, the fact for which he and Butler died.

Thinking the town dangerous after all these robberies, and finding the country round about too hot to hold them, they went into Hampshire and there committed several robberies, attended with such cruelties as have not for many years been heard of in England; and though these actions made a great noise, yet it was some weeks before any of them were apprehended.

On the Portsmouth Road it happened they fell upon one Mr. Bunch, near a wood side, where they robbed and stripped him naked; yet not thinking themselves secure, Duce turned and fired at his head. He took his aim so true that the bullet entered the man's cheek, upon which he fell with the agony of pain, turning his head downwards that the bullet might drop out of his mouth. Seeing that, Butler turned back and began to charge his pistol. The man fell down on his knees and humbly besought his life. Perceiving the villain was implacable, he took the advantage before the pistol was charged to take to his heels, and being better acquainted with the way than they, escaped to a neighbouring village which he raised, and soon after it the whole country; upon which they were apprehended. Mead, Wade and Barking, were condemned at Winchester assizes, but this malefactor and Butler were removed by an *Habeas Corpus* to Newgate.

While under sentence of death, Duce laid aside all that barbarity and stubbornness with which he had formerly behaved, with great frankness confessed all the villainies he had been guilty of, and at the place of execution delivered the following letter for the evidence Dyer, who as he said, had often cheated them of their shares of the money they took from passengers, and had now sworn away their lives.

The Letter of William Duce to John Dyer

It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the many wicked and barbarous actions which in your company and mostly by your advice, have been practised upon innocent persons. Before you receive this, I shall have suffered all that the law of man can inflict for my offences. You will do well to reflect thereon, and make use of that mercy which you have purchased at the expense of our blood, to procure by a sincere repentance the pardon also of God; without which, the lengthening of your days will be but a misfortune, and however late, your crimes if you pursue them, will certainly bring you after us to this ignominious place.

You ought especially to think of the death of poor Rice, who fell in the midst of his sins, without having so much as time to say, *Lord have mercy on me*. God who has been so gracious as to permit it to you, will expect a severe account of it, and even this warning, if neglected, shall be remembered against you. Do not however think that I die in any wrath or anger with you, for what you swore at my trial. I own myself guilty of that for which I suffer, and I as heartily and freely forgive you, as I hope forgiveness for myself, from that infinitely merciful Being, to whose goodness and providence I recommend you.

WILLIAM DUCE

He also wrote another letter to one Mr. R. W., who had been guilty of some offences of the like nature in his company, but who for some time had retired and lived honestly and privately, was no longer addicted to such courses, nor as he hoped would relapse into them again. At the time of his execution he was about twenty-five years of age, and suffered at Tyburn on the 5th of August, 1723.

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### **The Life of JAMES BUTLER, a Most notorious Highwayman, Footpad, etc.**

James Butler was the son of a very honest man in the parish of St. Ann's, Soho, who gave him what education it was in his power to bestow, and strained his circumstances to the utmost to put him apprentice to a silversmith. James had hardly lived with him six months when his roving inclination pushed him upon running away and going to sea, which he did, with one Captain

Douglass in a man-of-war.

Here he was better used than most young people are at the first setting out in a sailor's life. The captain being a person of great humanity and consideration, treated James with much tenderness, taking him to wait on himself, and never omitting any opportunity to either encourage or reward him. But even then Butler could not avoid doing some little thieving tricks, which very much grieved and provoked his kind benefactor, who tried by all means, fair and foul, to make him leave them off. One day, particularly, when he had been caught opening one of the men's chests and a complaint was thereupon made to the captain, he was called into the great cabin, and everybody being withdrawn except the captain, calling him to him, he spoke in these terms.

*Butler, I have always treated you with more kindness and indulgence than perhaps anybody in your station has been used with on board any ship. You do, therefore, very wrong by playing such tricks as make the men uneasy, to put it out of my power to do you any good. We are now going home, where I must discharge you, for as I had never any difference with the crew since I commanded the Arundel, I am determined not to let you become the occasion of it now. There is two guineas for you, I will take care to have you sent safe to your mother.*

The captain performed all his promises, but Butler continued still in the same disposition, and though he made several voyages in other ships, yet still continued light-fingered, and made many quarrels and disturbances on board, until at last he could find nobody who knew him that would hire him. The last ship he served in was the *Mary*, Capt. Vernon commander, from which ship he was discharged and paid off at Portsmouth, in August, 1721.

Having got, after this, into the gang with Dyer, Duce, Rice and others, they robbed almost always on the King's Road, between Buckingham House and Chelsea. On the 27th of April, 1723, after having plundered two or three persons on the aforesaid road, they observed a coach coming towards them, and a footman on horseback riding behind it. As soon as they came in sight Dyer determined with himself to attack them, and forced his companions into the same measures by calling out to the coachman to stop, and presenting his pistols. The fellow persisted a little, and Dyer was cocking his pistol to discharge it at him, when the ladies' footman from behind the coach, fired amongst them, and killed Joseph Rice upon the spot.

This accident made such an impression upon Butler that though he continued to rob with them a day or two longer, yet as soon as he had an opportunity he withdrew and went to hard labour with one Cladins, a very honest man, at the village called Wandsworth, in Surrey. He had not wrought there long, before some of his gang had been discovered. His wife was seized and sent to Bridewell in order to make her discover where her husband was, who had been impeached with the rest. This obliged him to leave his place, and betake himself again to robbing.

Going with his companions, Wade, Meads, Garns and Spigget, they went into the Gravesend Road, and there attacking four gentlemen, Meads thought it would contribute to their safety to disable the servant who rode behind, upon which he fired at him directly, and shot him through the breast. Not long after, they set upon another man, whom Meads wounded likewise in the same place, and then setting him on his horse, bid him ride to Gravesend. But the man turning the beast's head the other way, Meads went back again, and shot him in the face, of which wound he died.

When Butler lay under sentence of death he readily confessed whatever crimes he had committed, but he, as well as the before-mentioned criminal, charged much of his guilt upon the persuasions of the evidence Dyer. He particularly owned the fact of shooting the man at Farnham. Having always professed himself a Papist, he died in that religion, at the same time with the afore-mentioned criminal, at Tyburn.

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### **The Life of CAPTAIN JOHN MASSEY, who died for Piracy**

The gentleman of whom we are now to speak, though he suffered for piracy, was a man of another turn of mind than any of whom we have hitherto had occasion to mention. Captain John Massey was of a family I need not dwell on, since he hath at present two brothers living who make a considerable figure in their respective professions.

This unhappy person had a natural vivacity in his temper, which sometimes rose to such a height that his relations took it for a degree of madness. They, therefore, hoping by a compliance with his humours to bring him to a better sense of things, sent him into the army then in Flanders, under the command of the Duke of Marlborough; and there he assisted at the several sieges which were undertaken by the Confederate army after his arrival, viz., Mons, Douai, Bouchain, and several others. Yet though he was bold there, even to temerity, he never received so much as one wound through the whole course of the war, in which, after the siege of Lille, he commanded as a lieutenant, and that with great reputation.

On his return into England he at first wholly addicted himself to a religious sober life, the several accidents of the war having disposed him to a more serious temper by making him plainly perceive the hand of Providence in protecting and destroying, according as its wisdom seeth fit. But after a short stay in London, he unhappily fell into the acquaintance of a lewd woman, who so besotted him that he really intended to marry her, if the regiment's going to Ireland had not prevented it. But there the case was not much mended, since Captain Massey gave too much way

to the debaucheries generally practised in that nation.

On his coming back from thence, by the recommendation of the Duke of Chandois, he was made by the Royal African Company a lieutenant colonel in their service, and an engineer for erecting a fort on the Coast of Africa. He promised himself great advantage and a very honourable support from this employment, but he and the soldiers under his command being very ill used by the person who commanded the ship in which he went over (being denied their proportion of provisions and in all other respects treated with much indignity) it made a great impression on Captain Massey's mind, who could not bear to see numbers of those poor creatures perish, not only without temporal necessities, but wanting also the assistance of a divine in their last moments. For the chaplain of the ship remained behind in the Maderas, on a foresight perhaps, of the miseries he should have suffered in the voyage.

In this miserable condition were things when the Captain and his soldiers came into the River Gambia, where the designed fort was to be built. Here the water was so bad that the poor wretches, already in the most dreadful condition, were many of them deprived of life a few days after they were on shore. The Captain was excessively troubled at the sight of their misfortunes and too easily in hopes of relieving them gave way to the persuasion of a captain<sup>[29]</sup> of a lighter vessel than his own, who arrived in that port, and persuaded him to turn pirate rather than let his men starve.

After repeated solicitations, Captain Massey and his men went on board this ship, and having there tolerable good provisions, soon picked up their strength and took some very considerable prizes. At the plundering of these Massey was confused and amazed, not knowing well what to do, for though he was glad to see his men have meat, yet it gave him great trouble when he reflected on the methods by which they acquired it. In this disconsolate state his night was often so troublesome to him as his days, for, as he himself said, he seldom shut his eyes but he dreamt that he was sailing in a ship to the gallows, with several others round him.

After a considerable space, the ship putting into the island of Jamaica for necessary supply of water and provision, he made his escape to the Governor, and gave him such information that he took several vessels thereby; but not being easy there, he desired leave of Sir Nicholas Laws to return home. Sir Nicholas gave him letters of recommendation, but notwithstanding those, he no sooner returned in England but he was apprehended and committed for piracy. Soon after which he was bailed; but the persons who became security growing uneasy, he surrendered in their discharge, soon after which he was tried, convicted and condemned.

During the space he remained in prison under condemnation he behaved with so much gravity, piety and composedness, as surprised all who saw him, many of whom were inclined to think his case hard. No mercy was to be had and as he did not expect it, so false hopes never troubled his repose; but as death was to cut him off from the world, so he beforehand retired all his affections from thence and thought of nothing but that state whither he was going.

In his passage to execution he pointed to the African House,<sup>[30]</sup> said, *They have used me severely, but I pray God prosper and bless them in all their undertakings.*

Mr. Nicholson, of St. Sepulchre's, attended him in his last moments. Just before he died he read the following speech to the people.

Good People,

I beg of you to pray for my departing soul. I likewise pray God to forgive all the evidences that swore against me, as I do from my heart. I challenge all the world to say I ever did a dishonourable act or anything unlike a gentleman, but what might be common to all young fellows in this age. This was surely a rash action, but I did not designedly turn pirate. I am sorry for it, and I wish it were in my power to make amends to the Honourable African Company for what they have lost by my means. I likewise declare upon the word of a dying man that I never once thought of molesting his Grace the Duke of Chandois, although it has been maliciously reported that I always went with two loaded pistols to dispatch his Grace. As for the Duke, I was always, while living, devoted to his service, for his good offices done unto me, and I humbly beg Almighty God, that He would be pleased to pour down His blessings upon his good family. Good people, once more I beg of you to pray for my departing soul. I desire my dying words to be printed, as for the truth and sincerity of it, I sign them as a man departing this world.

John Massey

After he had pronounced these words, he signified it as his last request that neither his wife, nor any of his relations might see his body after it was in the coffin. Then praying a few moments to himself he submitted to his fate, being at the time of his death twenty-eight years old. He suffered at high-water mark, Execution Dock, on the 26th of July, 1723, his unhappy death being universally pitied.

<sup>[29]</sup>

This was Captain George Lowther, a redoubtable pirate. A more complete Story of Massey's adventures is given in Johnson's *History of the Pirates*.

In Leadenhall Street, along which he would pass on the way to Wapping.

### **The Life of PHILIP ROCHE, a Pirate, etc.**

As in the life of Captain Massey, my readers cannot but take notice of those great evils into which men are brought by over-forwardness and inconsideration, so in the life of the malefactor we are now to speak of, they will discern what a prodigious pitch of wickedness, rapine and cruelty, human nature is capable of reaching unto, when people abandon themselves to a desire of living after their own wicked inclinations, without considering the injuries they do others while they gratify their own lusts and sensual pleasures.

Philip Roche<sup>[31]</sup> was the son of a person of the same name in Ireland. His father gave him all the education his narrow circumstances would permit which extended however to reading and writing a tolerable good hand, after which he sent him to sea. Philip was a lad of ingenious parts, and instead of forgetting, as many do, all they have learnt, he on the contrary took all imaginable care to perfect himself in whatsoever he had but a slight notion of before he went to sea. He made abundance of coasting voyages about his native island, went once or twice to Barbadoes, and being a saving and industrious young fellow, picked up money enough to become first mate in a trading vessel to Nantes in France, by which being suffered to buy goods himself, he got considerably, and was in a fair way to attaining as great a fortune as he could reasonably expect. But this slow method of getting money did by no means satisfy Roche; he was resolved to grow rich at once, and not wait till much labour and many voyages had made him so.

When men once form to themselves such designs, it is not long before they find companions fit for their purpose. Roche soon met with one Neal, a fisherman of no education, barbarous but very daring, a fellow who had all the qualities that could conspire to make a dangerous villain, and who had already inured himself to the commission of whatever was black or bloody, not only without remorse but without reluctance. Neal recommended him to one Pierce Cullen, as a proper associate in those designs they were contriving; for this Cullen, as Neal informed him, was a fellow of principles and qualifications much like himself, but had somewhat a better capacity for executing them, and with Neal had been concerned in sinking a ship, after insuring her both in London and Amsterdam. But Providence had disappointed them in the success of their wicked design for Cullen having been known, or at least suspected of doing such a thing before, those with whom they had insured at London, instead of their paying the money, caused him to be seized and brought to a trial, which demolished all their schemes for cheating insurance offices.

Cullen brought in his brother to their confederacy, and after abundance of solicitation induced Wise to come in likewise. The project they had formed was to seize some light ship, and turn pirates in her, conceiving it no difficult matter afterwards to obtain a stronger vessel, and one better fitted for their purpose.

The ship they pitched on to execute this their villainous purpose was that of Peter Tartoue, a Frenchman of a very generous disposition, who on Roche and his companions telling him a melancholy story, readily entertained them; and perceiving Roche was an experienced sailor, he entrusted him upon any occasion with the care and command of the ship. Having done so one night, himself and the chief mate with the rest of the French who were on board went to rest, except a man and a boy, whom Roche commanded to go up and furl the sails. He then called the rest of his Irish associates to him upon the quarter-deck. There Roche, perceiving that Francis Wise began to relent, and fearing he should persuade others in the same measures, he told them that if every Irishman on board did not assist in destroying the French, and put him and Cullen in a capacity of retrieving the losses they had had at sea, they would treat whoever hesitated in obeying them with as little mercy as they did the Frenchmen; but if they would all assist, they should all fare alike, and have a share in the booty.

Upon this the action began, and two of them running up after the Frenchman and boy, one tossed the lad by the arm into the water, and the other driving the man down upon the deck he there had his brains dashed out by Roche and his companions. They fell next upon those who were retired to their rest, some of whom, upon the shrieks of the man and boy who were murdered, rising hastily out of their beds and running up upon deck to see what occasioned those dismal noises, were murdered themselves before they well knew where they were. The mate and the captain were next brought up, and Roche went immediately to binding them together, in order to toss them overboard, as had been consulted. 'Twas in vain for poor Tartoue to plead the kindness he had done them all and particularly Roche. They were deaf to all sentiments, either of gratitude or pity, and though the poor men entreated only so much time as to say their prayers, and recommend themselves to God, yet the villains (though they could be under no apprehensions, having already murdered all the rest of the men) would not even yield to this, but Cullen hastened Roche in binding them back to back, to toss them at once into the sea. Then hurrying down into the cabin, they tapped a little barrel of rum to make themselves good cheer, and laughed at the cries of the two poor drowned men, whom they distinctly heard calling upon God, until their voices and their breaths were lost in the waves.

After having drunk and eaten their fill, with as much mirth and jollity as if they had been at a feast, they began to plunder the vessel, breaking open the chests, and taking out of them what



they thought proper. Then to drinking they went again, pleasing themselves with the barbarous expedition which they resolved to undertake as soon as they could get a ship proper to carry them into the West Indies, intending there to follow the example the buccaneers had set them, and rob and plunder all who fell into their hands. From these villainies in intention, the present state of their affairs called upon them to make some provision for their immediate safety. They turned therefore into the Channel, and putting the ship into Portsmouth, there got her new painted and then sailed for Amsterdam, Roche being unanimously recognised their captain, and all of them promising faithfully to submit to him through the course of their future expeditions.

On their arrival in Holland, they had the ship a second time new painted, and thinking themselves now safe from all discovery began to sell off Captain Tartoue's cargo as fast as they could. No sooner had they completed this, but getting one Mr. Annesley to freight them with goods to England (himself also going as a passenger) they resolved with themselves to make prize of him and his effects, as they had also done with the French captain. Mr. Annesley, poor man, little dreaming of their design, came on board as soon as the wind served; and the next night a brisk gale blowing, they tore him suddenly out of his bed and tossed him over. Roche and Cullen being with others in the great cabin, he swam round and round the ship, called out to them, and told them they should freely have all his goods if they would take him in and save his life, for he had friends and fortunes enough in England to make up that loss. But his entreaties were all vain to a set of wretches who had long ago abandoned all sentiments of humour and mercy. They therefore caroused as usual, and after sharing the booty, steered the vessel for England.

Some information of their villainies had by that time reached thither, so that upon a letter being stopped at the post office, which Roche, as soon as they had landed, had written to his wife, a messenger was immediately sent down, who brought Philip up in custody. Being brought to the Council table, and there examined, he absolutely denied either that himself was Philip Roche, or that he knew of any one of that name. But his letters under his own hand to his wife being produced, he was not able any longer to stand in that falsehood.

Yet those in authority knowing that there was not legal proof sufficient to bring these abominable men to justice, offered Roche his life, provided he gave such information that they might be able to apprehend and convict any three of his companions more wicked than himself; but he was so far from complying therewith that he suffered those of his crew who were taken to perish in custody rather than become an evidence against them. This was the fate of Neal, who perished of want in the Marshalsea, having in vain petitioned for a trunk in which was a large quantity of money, clothes and other things to a considerable value, which had been seized in Ireland by virtue of a warrant from the Lord Justice of that Kingdom, on the account of the detention of which, while he perished for want of necessaries and clothes, Neal most heavily complained, forgetting that these very things were the plunder of those unhappy persons whom they had so barbarously murdered, after having received so much kindness and civility from them.

In the meanwhile Roche, being confined in Newgate, went constantly to the chapel and appeared of so obliging a temper that many persuaded themselves he could not be guilty of the bloody crimes laid to his charge; and taking advantage of these kind thoughts of theirs, he framed a new story in defence of himself. He said that there happened a quarrel on board the ship between an Irishman and a Frenchman, and that Tartoue taking part with his own nation, threatened to lash the Irishman severely, though he was not in any way in the wrong. This, he pretended, begat a general quarrel between the two nations, and the Irish being the stronger, they overpowered and threw the French overboard in the heat of their anger, without considering what they did.

Throughout the whole time he lay in Newgate, he very much delighted himself with the exercise of his pen, continually writing upon one subject or other, and often assisting his fellow prisoners in writing letters or whatever else they wanted in that kind. When he was told that Neal, who died in the Marshalsea, gushed out at all parts of his body with Wood, so that before he expired he was as if he had been dipped in gore, Roche replied, it was a just judgment that he who had always lived in blood, should die covered with it.

Sometime afterwards, being told that one of his companions had poisoned himself he said, Alas! that so evil an end should follow so evil a life; for his part he would suffer Providence to take its course with him, and rather die the most ignominious death than to his other crimes add that of self-murder. The rest who had been apprehended dying one by one in the same dreadful condition with Neal, that is, with the blood gushing from every part of their body, which looked so much like a judgment that all who saw it were amazed, he (Roche) began to think himself perfectly safe after the death of his companions, supposing that now there was nobody to bear any testimony against him; and therefore, instead of appearing in any way dismayed, he most earnestly desired the speedy approach of an Admiralty sessions. It was not long before it happened and when he found what evidence would be produced against him, he appeared much less solicitous about his trial than anybody in his condition would have been expected to be, for he very well knew it was impossible for them to prove him guilty of the murders and as impossible for him to be acquitted of the piracy.

After receiving sentence of death, he declared himself a Papist, and said that he could no longer comply with the service of the Church of England, and come to the chapel. He did not, however, think that he was in any danger of death, but supposed that the promises which had been made him on this first examination would now take place and prevent the execution of his sentence. When, therefore, the messenger returned from Hanover<sup>[32]</sup>, and brought an express order that he should die, he appeared exceedingly moved thereat, and without reflecting at all on the horrid

and barbarous treatment with which he had used others, he could not forbear complaining of the great hardship he suffered in being put into the death warrant, after a promise had been made him of life, though nothing is more certain than that he never performed any part of those conditions upon which it was to have taken place.

At the place of execution he was so faint, confused, and in such a consternation that he could not speak either to the people, or to those who were nearer at hand, dying with the greatest marks of dejection and confusion that could possibly be seen in any criminal whatever. He was about thirty years old at the time of his execution, which was at high-water mark, Execution Dock, on the 14th of August, 1723.

[31]

A detailed account of this villain is given in Johnson's *History of the Pirates*.

[32]

Where the warrant had evidently been taken for the signature of the king or a minister.

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### **The Life of HUMPHRY ANGIER, a Highwayman and Footpad**

From the life of Roche, the course of those papers from which I extract these accounts leads me to mention this criminal, that the deaths of malefactors may not only terrify those who behold them dying, but also posterity, who, by hearing their crimes and the event which they brought on, may avoid falling into the one, for fear of feeling the other.

Humphry Angier was by birth of the Kingdom of Ireland, his father being a man in very ordinary circumstances in a little town a few miles distant from Dublin. As soon as this son was able to do anything, he sent him to the city of Cork, and there bound him apprentice to a cooper. His behaviour while an apprentice was so bad that his master utterly despaired to do any good with him, and therefore was not sorry that he ran away from him. However, he found a way to vex him sufficiently, for he got into a crew of loose fellows, which so far frightened the old cooper that he was at a considerable expense to hire persons to watch his house for the four years that Angier loitered about that city. At last his father even took him from thence, and brought him over into England where he left him at full liberty to do what he thought fit; resolving with himself that if his son would take to ill-courses, it should be where the fame of his villainies might not reflect upon him and his family.

He was now near eighteen years of age and being in some fear that some persons whom he had wronged might bring him into danger, he listed himself in the king's service, and went down with a new raised regiment into Scotland, where he hoped to make something by plundering the inhabitants, it being in the time of the Rebellion<sup>[33]</sup>. But he did not succeed very well there, and on his return fell into the company of William Duce, whom we have mentioned before. His conversation soon seduced him to follow the same course of life, and that their intimacy might be the more strongly knit, he married Duce's sister. Then engaging himself with all that gang, he committed abundance of robberies in their company, but was far from falling into that barbarous manner of beating the passengers which was grown customary and habitual to Mead, Butler, and some others of his and Duce's companions.

Angier told a particular story of them, which made a very great impression upon him, and cannot but give my readers of an idea of that horrible spirit which inspired those wretches. Mead and Butler came one evening to him very full of their exploits, and the good luck they had had. Mead particularly, having related every circumstance which had happened since their last parting, said that amongst others whom they had robbed they met a smooth-faced shoemaker, who said he was just married and going home to his friends. They persuaded him to turn out of the road to look in the hedge for a bird's nest, whither he was no sooner got, but they bound, gagged and robbed him, and afterwards turning back, barbarously clapped a pistol to his head and shot out his brains. After this Angier declared he would never drink in the company of Mead, and when Butler sometimes talked after the same manner, he used to reprove him by telling him that cruelty was no courage, at which Butler and some of his companions sometimes laughed, and told him he had singular notions of courage.

After this, he and his wife (Duce's sister) set up a little alehouse by Charing Cross, which soon against his will, though not without his consent, became a bawdy-house, a receptacle for thieves, etc. This sort of company rendered his house so suspicious and so obnoxious to the magistrates for the City of Westminster, that he quickly found the necessity of moving from thence. He then went and set up a brandy-shop, where the same people came, though as he pretended much to his dissatisfaction. While he kept the alehouse, there were two odd accidents befell him, which brought him for the first time to Newgate. It happened that while he was out one day, a Dutch woman picked up a gentleman and brought him to Angier's house, where, while he was asleep, she picked his pocket and left him. For this Angier and his maid were taken up, and tried at the Old Bailey. He was also at the same time tried for another offence, viz., an Irishwoman coming to his house and drinking pretty hard there, he at last carried her upstairs, and throwing her upon a bed pretended a great affection for her person; but his wife coming in and pretending to be jealous of the woman, pulled her off the bed and in so doing picked her pocket of four guineas. But of this there being no direct evidence against him, he was also acquitted. However, it ruined

his house and credit, and drove him upon what was too much his inclination, the taking money by force upon the road.

He now got into an acquaintance with Carrick, Carrol, Lock, Kelly, and many others of that stamp, with whom he committed several villainies, but always pretending to be above picking pockets, which he said was practised by none of their crew but Hugh Kelly, who was a very dextrous fellow in his way. However, when Angier was in custody, abundance of people applied to him to help them to their gold watches, snuff-boxes, etc.; but as he told them, so he persisted in it always, that he knew nothing of the matter; and Kelly being gone over into America and there settled, there was no hopes of getting any of them again.

One evening he and Milksop, one of his companions, being upon the road to St. Albans, a little on this side of it, met a gentleman's coach, and in it a young man and two ladies. They immediately called to the coachman to stop, but he neglecting to obey their summons, they knocked him off from the box, having first prevented him from whipping off, by shooting one of his horses. They then dragged him under the coach, which running over him hurt him exceedingly and even endangered his life. Then they robbed the young gentleman and the ladies of whatever they had about them valuable, using them very rudely and stripping things off them in a very harsh and cruel way. Angier excused this by saying at the time he did it he was much in liquor.

In the beginning of the year '20, Angier, who had so long escaped punishment for the offences which he had committed, was very near suffering for one in which he had not the least hand; for a person of quality's coachman being robbed of a watch and some money, a woman of the town, whom Angier and one of his companions had much abused, was thereupon taken up, having attempted to pawn the fellow's watch after he had advertised it. She played the hypocrite very dexterously upon her apprehension, and said that the robbery was not committed by her, but that Angier, Armstrong and another young man were the persons who took it, and by her help they were seized and committed to Newgate. At the ensuing sessions the woman swore roundly against them, but the fellow being more tender, and some circumstances of their innocence plainly appearing, they were acquitted by the jury and that very justly in this case in which they had no hand.

During the time he lay under sentence, he behaved himself with much penitence for another offence, always calling earnestly to God for His assistance and grace to comfort him under those heavy sorrows which his follies and crimes had so justly brought upon him.

At the place of execution he did not appear at all terrified at death, but submitted to it with the same resignation which for a long space he had professed since his being under confinement. Immediately before he suffered he recollected his spirits and spoke in the following terms to that crowd which always attends on such melancholy occasions.

Good People,

I see many of you here assembled to behold my wretched end. I hope it will induce you to avoid those evils which have brought me hither. Sometime before my being last taken up, I had formed within myself most steady purposes of amendment, which it is a great comfort to me, even here that I never broke them, having lived at Henley upon Thames, both with a good reputation, and in a manner which deserved it. I heartily forgive and I hope God would do the same to Dyer, whose evidence hath taken away my life. I hope he will make a good use of that time which the price of my blood and that of others has procured him. I heartily desire pardon of all whom I have injured and declare that in the several robberies I have committed, I have been always careful to avoid committing any murder.

After this he adjusted the rope about his own neck, and submitted to that sentence which the Law directed, being at that time about twenty-nine years of age. He suffered on the 9th of September, 1723.

[33]

The Jacobite rising of 1715.

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### **The Life of CAPTAIN STANLEY, a Murderer**

There cannot be a greater misfortune than to want education, except it be the having a bad one. The minds of young persons are generally compared to paper on which we may write whatever we think fit, but if it be once blurred and blotted with improper characters, it becomes much harder to impress proper sentiments thereon, because those which were first there must be totally erased. This seems to have been too much the case with the unhappy person of whom the thread of these narrations requires that I should speak, viz., Captain Stanley.

This unhappy young gentleman was the son of an officer in the army who married the sister of Mr. Palmer, of Duce Hill, in Essex, where she was brought to bed of this unfortunate son John, in the year 1698. The first rudiments he received were those of cruelty and blood, his father at five years old often parrying and thrusting him with a sword, pricking him himself and encouraging other officers to play with him in the same manner, so that his boy, as old Stanley phrased it,

might never be afraid of a point—a wretched method of bringing up a child and which was highly likely to produce the sad end he came to.

He served afterwards in the army with his father in Spain and Portugal, where he suffered hardships enough, but they did not very much affect him, who acquired by his hopeful education so savage a temper as to delight in nothing so much as trampling on the dead carcasses in the fields after an engagement.

Returning into England with his father, old Stanley had the misfortune to slab a near relation of my Lord Newbury's, in the Tilt Yard,<sup>[34]</sup> for which he was committed prisoner to Newgate. Afterwards being released and commanded into Ireland, he carried over with him this son John and procured for him an ensign's commission in a regiment there. Poor young Stanley's sprightly temper gained him abundance of acquaintance and (if it be not to profane the name) of friends amongst the young rakes in Ireland, some of whom were persons of very great quality, and had such an affection for him as to continue their visits and relieve his necessities when under his last misfortunes in Newgate. But such company involving him at that time in expenses he was no way able to support, he was obliged shortly to part for ready money with his ensign's commission, which gave his father great pain and uneasiness.

Not long after, he came again into England and to London, where he pursued the same methods, though his father importuned him to apply to General Stanhope, as a person he was sure would assist him, having been always a friend to their family, and particularly to old Stanley himself. But Jack was become a favourite with the ladies, and had taken an easier road to what he accounted happiness, living either upon the benevolence of friends, the fortune of the dice, or the favours of the sex. A continual round of sensual delights employed his time, and he was so far from endeavouring to attain any other commission or employment in order to support him, that there was nothing he so much feared as his being obliged to quit that life he loved; for old Stanley was continually soliciting for him, and as he had very good interest, nothing but his son's notorious misbehaviour made him not prevail. In the current of his extravagancies Jack fixed himself often upon young men coming into the world, and under pretence of being their tutor in the fashionable vices of the town, shared in their pleasures and helped them squander their estates.

Of this stamp was a gay young Yorkshire squire, who by the death of an uncle and by the loss of his father while a boy, had had so little education as not to know how to use it. Him Stanley got hold of, and persuaded him that nothing was so advantageous to a young gentleman as travel, and drew him to make a tour of Flanders and Holland in his company. Though a very wild young fellow, Stanley gave a very tolerable account of the places, especially the fortifications which he had seen, and sufficiently demonstrated how capable he might have been of making an exalted figure in the world, if due care had been taken to furnish him with any principles in his youth. But the neglect of that undid him, and every opportunity which he afterwards had of acquiring anything, instead of making him an accomplished gentleman, did him mischief. Thus his journey to Paris in company with the afore-mentioned gentleman helped him to an opportunity of learning to fence to the greatest perfection, so that the skill he was sensible he had in the sword made him ever ready to quarrel and seek occasions to use it.

Amongst the multitude of his amours he became acquainted and passionately fond of one Mrs. Maycock, whose husband was once an eminent tradesman upon Ludgate Hill. By her he had a child of which also he was very fond. This woman was the source of the far greater part of his misfortunes, for when his father had procured him a handsome commission in the service of the African Company, and he had received a considerable sum of money for his voyage, appearing perfectly satisfied himself, and behaving in so grave and decent a manner as filled his family and relations with very agreeable hopes, they were all blasted by Mrs. Maycock's coming with her child to Portsmouth, where he was to embark. She so far prevailed upon his inclinations as to get him to give her one half of the Company's money and to return to town with the other half himself. On his coming up to London he avoided going to his father's, who no sooner heard how dishonourably his son had behaved, but laying it more to heart than all the rest of his misfortunes, grief in a short time put an end to them all by his death.

When the news of it came to young Stanley, he fell into transports of grief and passion, which as many of his intimate companions said, so disturbed his brain that he never afterwards was in a right temper. This, indeed, appeared by several accidents, some of which were sworn at his trial, particularly that while he lodged in the house of Mr. Underhill, somebody having quoted a sentence of Latin in his company, he was so disturbed at the thoughts of his having had such opportunities of acquiring the knowledge of that language and yet continuing ignorant thereof, through his negligence and debauchery, that it made at that time so strong an impression on his spirits, that starting up, he drew a penknife and attempted to stab himself, without any other cause of passion. At other times he would fall into sudden and grievous rages, either at trifles, or at nothing at all, abuse his best friends, and endeavour to injure himself, and then coming to a better temper, begged them to forgive him, for he did not know what he did.

During the latter part of his life, his circumstances were so bad that he was reduced to doing many dirty actions which I am persuaded otherwise would not have happened, such as going into gentlemen's select companies at taverns, without any other ceremony than telling them that his impudence must make him welcome to a dinner with them, after which, instead of thanking them for their kindness, he would often pick a quarrel with them, though strangers, drawing his sword and fighting before he left the room. Such behaviour made him obnoxious to all who were not

downright debauchees like himself, and hindered persons of rank conversing with him as they were wont.

In the meantime his favourite Mrs. Maycock, whom he had some time lived with as a wife and even prevailed with his mother to visit her as such, being no longer able to live at his rate, or bear with his temper, frequented a house in the Old Bailey, where it was supposed, and perhaps with truth, that she received other company. This made Stanley very uneasy, who like most young rakes thought himself at liberty to pursue as many women as he pleased, but could not forgive any liberties taken by a woman whom he, forsooth, had honoured with his affections.

One night therefore, seeing her in Fleet Street with a man and a woman, he came up to her and gently tapped her on the shoulder. She turning, cried, *What! My dear Captain!* And so on they went walking to his house in the Old Bailey. There some words happened about the mutual misfortunes they had brought upon one another. Mrs. Maycock reproached him with seducing her, and bringing on all the miseries she had ever felt; Stanley reflected on her hindering his voyage to Cape Coast, the extravagant sums he had spent upon her, and her now conversing with other men, though she had had three or four children by him. At last they grew very high, and Mrs. Maycock, who was naturally a very sweet-tempered woman, was so far provoked, as Stanley said, that she threw a cup of beer at him; upon which some ill-names passing between them, Stanley drew his sword and stabbed her between the breasts eight inches deep; immediately upon which he stopped his handkerchief into the wound.

He was quickly secured and committed to Wood Street Compter,<sup>[35]</sup> where he expressed very little concern at what had happened, laughing and giving himself abundance of airs, such as by no means became a man in his condition. On his commitment to Newgate, he seemed not to abate the least of that vivacity which was natural to his temper, and as he had too much mistaken vice for the characteristic of a fine gentleman, so nothing appeared to him so great a testimony of gallantry and courage as behaving intrepidly while death was so near its approach. He therefore entertained all who conversed with him in the prison, and all who visited him from without, with the history of his amours and the favours that had been bestowed on him by a multitude of fine ladies. Nay, his vanity and impudence was so great as to mention some of their names, and especially to asperse two ladies who lived near Cheapside Conduit.<sup>[36]</sup> But there is great reason to believe that part of this was put on to make his madness more probable at his trial, where he behaved very oddly, and when he received sentence of death, took snuff at the bar, and put on abundance of airs that were even ridiculous anywhere, and shocking and scandalous upon so melancholy an occasion.

After sentence, his carriage under his confinement altered not so much as one would have expected; he offering to lay wagers that he should never be hanged, notwithstanding his sentence, for he was resolved not to die like a dog on a string, when he had it in his power always to go out of the world a nobler way, by which he meant either a knife or opium, which were the two methods by one of which he resolved to prevent his fate. But when he found that all his pretences of madness were like to produce nothing, and that he was in danger of dying in every respect like a brute, he laid aside much of his ill-timed gaiety, and began to think of preparing for death after another manner.

These gentlemen who assisted him while in Newgate, were so kind as to offer to make up a considerable sum of money, if it could have been of any use; but finding that neither that nor their interest could do anything to save him, they frankly acquainted him therewith and begged him not to delude himself with false hopes. All the while he was in Newgate, a little boy whom he had by Mrs. Maycock, continued with him, and lay constantly in his bosom. He manifested the utmost tenderness and concern for that poor child, who by his rashness had been deprived of his mother, and whom the Law would, by its just sentence, now likewise deprive of its father. Being told that Mr. Bryan, Mrs. Maycock's brother on Tower Hill was dead, merely through concern at his sister's misfortunes and the deplorable end that followed them, Stanley clapped his hands together and cried, *What, more death still? Sure I am the most unfortunate wretch that was ever born.*

Some few days before his execution, talking to one of his friends, he said, *I am perfectly convinced that it is false courage to avoid the just sentence of the Law, by executing the rash dictates of one's rage by one's own head. I am heartily sorry for the rash expression I have been guilty of, of that sort, and am determined to let the world see my courage fails me no more in my death than it has done in my life; and, my dear friend,* added he, *I never felt so much ease, quiet and satisfaction in all my life, as I have experienced, since my coming to this resolution.*

But though he sometimes expressed himself in a serious and religious manner yet passion would sometimes break in upon him to the last and make him burst out into frightful and horrid speeches. Then again he would grow calm and cool, and speak with great seeming sense of God's providence in his afflictions.

He was particularly affected with two accidents which happened to him not long before his death, and which struck him with great concern at the time they happened. The first of these was a fall from his horse under Tyburn, in which he was stunned so that he could not recover strength enough to remount, but was helped on his horse again by the assistance of two friends. Not long after which, he had as bad an accident of the same kind under Newgate, which he said, made such an impression on him, that he did not go abroad for many mornings afterwards, without recommending himself in the most serious manner to the Divine protection.

Another story he also told, with many marks of real thankfulness for the narrow escape he then made from death, which happened thus. At a cider-cellar in Covent Garden he fell out with one Captain Chickley, and challenging him to fight in a dark room, they were then shut up together for some space. But a constable being sent for by the people of the house, and breaking the door open, delivered him from being sent altogether unprepared out of the world, Chickley being much too hard for him, and having given him a wound quite through the body, himself escaping with only a slight cut or two.

As the day of execution drew near, Mr. Stanley appeared more serious and much more attentive to his devotions than hitherto he had been. Yet could he not wholly contain himself even then, for the Sunday before he died, after sermon, at which he had behaved himself decently and modestly, he broke out into this wild expression, that he was only sorry he had not fired the whole house where he killed Mrs. Maycock. When he was reproved for these things he would look ashamed, and say, 'twas true, they were very unbecoming, but they were what he could not help, arising from certain starts in his imagination that hurried him into a short madness, for which he was very sorry as soon as he came to himself.

At the place of execution, to which he was conveyed in a mourning coach, he turned pale, seemed uneasy, and complained that he was very sick, entreating a gentleman by him to support him with his hand. He desired to be unbound that he might be at liberty to pray kneeling, which with some difficulty was granted. He then applied himself to his devotions with much fervency, and then submitted to his fate, but when the cap was drawn over his eyes he seemed to shed tears abundantly. Immediately before he was turned off he said his friends had provided a hearse to carry away his body and he hoped nobody would be so cruel as to deny his relations his dead limbs to be interred, adding, that unless he were assured of this, he could not die in peace.

Such was the end of a young man in person and capacity every way fitted to have made a reputable figure in the world, if either his natural principles, or his education had laid any restraint upon his vices; but as his passions hurried him beyond all bounds, so they brought a just end upon themselves, by finishing a life spent in sensual pleasures with an ignominious death, which happened at Tyburn in the twenty-fifth year of his age, on the 23rd of December, 1722.

[34]

This was an open space, facing the banquetting-house of old Whitehall, and included part of what is now Horse Guards' Parade.

[35]

This was one of the sheriff's compters—the other was in the Poultry—and served for debtors as well as criminals. It stood about half-way up Wood Street, on the east side.

[36]

There were two conduits in Cheapside; the Great, which stood in the middle of the street, near its junction with the Poultry, and the Little, which was at the other end, facing Foster Lane and Old Change.

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### **The Life of STEPHEN GARDINER, a Highwayman and Housebreaker**

Stephen Gardiner was the son of parents of middling circumstances, living at the time of his birth in Moorfields. This, perhaps, was the immediate cause of his ruin, since he learnt there, while a boy, to idle away his time, and to look on nothing as so great a pleasure as gaming and cudgel playing. This took up equally his time and his thoughts, till he grew up to about fourteen years old, when his friends placed him out as an apprentice to a weaver.

While he was with his master he did so many unlucky tricks as occasioned not only severe usage at home, but incurred also the dislike and hatred of all the neighbours; so that instead of interposing to preserve him from his master's correction, they were continually complaining and getting him beaten; nay, sometimes when his master was not ready enough to do it, would beat him themselves. Stephen was so wearied out with this kind of treatment, notwithstanding it arose solely from his own fault, that he determined to run away for good and all, thinking it would be no difficult matter for him to maintain himself, considering that dexterity with which he played at ninepins, skittles, etc. But experience quickly convinced him of the contrary, so in one month being much reduced after betaking himself to this life, by those misfortunes which were evident enough (though his passion for liberty and idleness hindered him from foreseeing them) that he had not so much as bread to eat.

In this distressed condition he was glad to return home again to his friends, imploring their charity, and that, forgetting what was passed, they would be so kind as to relieve him and put him in some method of providing for himself. Natural affection pleading for him, notwithstanding all his failings they took him home again, and soon after put him as a boy on board a corn vessel which traded to Holland and France; but the swearing, quarrelling and fighting of the sailors so frightened him, being then very young and unable to cope with them, that on his return he again implored the tenderness of his relations to permit his staying in England upon any terms, promising to live in a most sober and regular manner, provided that he might get his bread by hard labour at home, and not be exposed to the injuries of wind and weather and the abuses of

seamen more boisterous than both. They again complied and put him to another trade, but work, it seems, was a thing no shape could reconcile to him, and so he ran away from thence, too, and once more put himself for a livelihood upon the contrivance of his own brain.

He went immediately to his old employment and old haunt, Moorfields, where as long as he had any money he played at cards, skittles, etc., with the chiefs of those villainous gangs that haunt the place; and when reduced to the want both of money and clothes, he attempted to pick pockets, or by playing with the lads for farthings to recruit himself. But pocket-picking was a trade in which he had very ill-luck, for taking a wig out of a gentleman's pocket at the drawing of the state lottery,<sup>[37]</sup> the man suffered him totally to take it out, then seized him and cried out *Pickpocket*. The boy immediately dropped it, and giving it a little kick with his foot protected his innocence which induced a good-natured person there present to stand so far his friend that he suffered no deeper that bout. But a month after, being taken in the same manner, and delivered over to the mob, they handled him with such cruelty as scarce to leave him life, though he often upon his knees begged them to carry him before a Justice and let him be committed to Newgate. But the mob were not so to be prevailed on, and this severity, as he said, cured him effectually of that method of thieving.

But in the course of his rambling life, becoming acquainted with two young fellows, whose names were Garraway and Sly, they invited him to go with them upon some of their expeditions in the night. He absolutely refused to do anything of that kind for a long time, but one evening, having been so unlucky as to lose not only his money but all his clothes off his back, he went in search of Sly and Garraway, who received him with open arms, and immediately carried him with them upon those exploits by which they got their living. Garraway proposed robbing of his brother for their first attempt, which succeeded so far as to their getting into the house; but they found nothing there but a few clothes of his brother and sister, which they took away. But Garraway bid them not be discouraged at the smallness of the booty, for his father's house was as well furnished as most men's, and their next attack should be upon that. To this they agreed, and plundered it also, taking away some spoons, tankards, salts and several other pieces of plate of considerable value; but a quick search being made, they were all three apprehended, and Gardiner being the youngest was admitted an evidence against the other two, who were convicted.

Some weeks after, Gardiner got his liberty, but being unwarned, he went on still at the same rate. The first robbery he committed afterwards was in the house of the father of one of his acquaintances on Addle Hill, where Gardiner stole softly upstairs into the garret, and stole from thence some men's apparel to a very considerable value. A while after this, he became acquainted with Mr. Richard Jones, and with him went (mounted upon a strong horse) into Wales upon what in the canting dialect is called "the Passing Lay," which in plain English is thus: They get countrymen into an alehouse, under pretence of talking about the sale of cattle, then a pack of cards is found as if by accident, and the two sharpers fall to playing with one another until one offering to lay a great wager on the game, staking the money down, the other shows his hand to the countryman, and convinces him that it is impossible but he must win, offering to let him go halves in the wager. As soon as the countryman lays down the money, these sharpers manage so as to pass off with it, which is the meaning of their cant, and this practice he was very successful in; the country people in Wales, where they travelled, having not had opportunity to become acquainted with such bites as those who live in the counties nearer London have, where the country fellows are often as adroit as any of the sharpers themselves.

It happened that the person with whom Stephen travelled had parted with his wife and at Bristol had received a gold watch and chain, laced clothes and several other things of value. This immediately put it into Gardiner's head that he might make his fortune at once, by murdering him and possessing himself of his goods; knowing also that besides these valuable things, he had near a hundred guineas about him. In order to effect this, he stole a large brass pestle out of a mortar, at the next inn, and carried it unperceived in his boots, intending as he and his companion rode through the woods to dash his brains out with it. Twice for this purpose he drew it, but his heart relenting just when he was going to give the stroke he put it up again. At last it fell out of his boot and he had much ado to get it pulled up unperceived by his companion. The next day it dropped again, and Gardiner was so much afraid of Jones's perceiving it, and himself being thereupon killed from a suspicion of his design, that he laid aside all further thoughts of that matter.

But he took occasion a day or two after to part with him, whereupon the other as Stephen was going away, called out to him, *Hark ye, you Gardiner! I'll tell you somewhat*. Gardiner therefore turning back. *You are going up to London?* said Jones. *Yes*, replied Gardiner. *Then trust me*, said the other, *you're going up to be hanged*.

Between Abergavenny and Monmouth, Gardiner took notice of a little house, the windows of which were shut up, but the hens and cocks in the back yard showed that it was inhabited. Gardiner thereupon knocked at the door several times, to see if anybody was at home, but perceiving none, he ventured to break open some wooden bars that lay across the window, and getting in thereat found two boxes full of clothes, and writings relating to an estate. He took only one gown, as not daring to load himself with clothes, for fear of being discovered on the road, being then coming up to London.

A very short space after his return he committed that fact for which he died, which was by breaking open the house of Dorcas Roberts, widow, and stealing thence a great quantity of linen;

and he was soon after apprehended in bed with one of the fine shirts upon his back and the rest of the linen stowed under the bed. When carried before the Justice, he said that one Martin brought the linen to him, and gave him two fine shirts to conceal it in his brandy-shop; but this pretence being thought impossible both by the magistrate who committed him, and by the jury who tried him, he was convicted for that offence, and being an old offender he had no hopes of mercy.

He applied himself, therefore, with all the earnestness he was able, to prepare himself sufficiently for that change he was about to make. He said that an accident which happened about a year before gave him great apprehension, and for some time prevented his continuing in that wicked course of life. The accident he mentioned was this: being taken up for some trivial thing or other, and carried to St. Sepulchre's Watch-House, the constable was so kind as to dismiss him, but the bellman<sup>[38]</sup> of the parish happening to come in before he went out, the constable said, *Young man, be careful, I am much afraid this bellman will say his verses over you;* at which Gardiner was so much struck, he could scarce speak.

Stephen had a very great notion of mortifying his body, as some atonement for the crimes he had committed. He therefore fasted some time while under sentence, and though the weather was very cold, yet he went to execution with no other covering on him but his shroud. At Tyburn he addressed himself to the people and begged they would not reflect upon his parents, who knew nothing of his crimes. Seeing several of his old companions in the crowd, he called out to them and desired them to take notice of his death and by amending their lives avoid following him thither. He died the 3rd of February, 1723-4.

[37]

In 1720 a State Lottery was launched, with 100,000 tickets of £10 each. The prizes were converted into 3 per cent. stock. The issue was a failure and a loss of some £7,000 was incurred.

[38]

A parishioner of St. Sepulchre's bequeathed a sum of money for paying a bellman to visit condemned criminals in Newgate, on the night before their execution, and having rung his bell, to recite an admonitory verse and prayer. He was likewise to accost the cart on its way to the gallows, the following day, and give its inmates a similar admonition. The bell is still to be seen in the church.

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### **The Lives of SAMUEL OGDEN, JOHN PUGH, WILLIAM FROST, RICHARD WOODMAN, and WILLIAM ELISHA, Highwaymen, Footpads, Housebreakers, etc.**

Samuel Ogden was the son of a sailor in Southwark, who bred him to his own employment, in which he wrought honestly for many years until he fell very ill of dropsy, for the cure of which, being carried to St. Thomas's Hospital, he after his recovery applied himself to selling fish, instead of going again to sea. How he came to be engaged in the crimes he afterwards perpetrated we cannot well learn, and therefore shall not pretend to relate. However, he associated himself with a very numerous gang, such as Mills, Pugh, Blunt, Bishop, Gutteridge, and Matthews, who became the evidence against him. He positively averred that one of the robberies for which he was convicted, was the first he ever committed. He expressed the greatest horror and detestation for murder imaginable, protesting he was no ways guilty of that committed on Brixton Causeway.





#### STEPHEN GARDINER MAKING HIS DYING SPEECH AT TYBURN

This plate gives an excellent representation of an execution. The condemned man is in his shroud; the hangman is adjusting the knot, and at a signal the cart will drive away; nearby is the sheriff in his state carriage; and gazing on is a curious, morbid crowd of spectators.

*(From the Newgate Calendar)*

At the time of his trial at Kingston he behaved himself very insolently and audaciously; but when sentence had been passed upon him, most of that unruly temper was lost, and he began to think seriously of preparing for another world. He confessed that his sins were many, and that judgment against him was just, meekly accepting his death as the due rewards of his deeds. He was the example of seriousness and penitence to the other twelve malefactors who suffered with him, being about thirty-seven years of age at the time of his decease.

John Pugh, otherwise Blueskin, was born at Morpeth near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His father was a carrier in tolerable business and circumstance, who put him to be a servant in a silver-spinner's in Moorfields, where he soon learnt all sorts of wickedness, beginning with defrauding his master and doing any other little tricks of that kind, as opportunity would give him leave. We are told of him what perhaps can be hardly said of any other criminal who hath died in the same way for many years past, that though he was but twenty-two years of age, he had spent twelve of them in cheating, pilfering, and robbing. At last he fell into the gang that brought him to his death, for a robbery committed by several of them in the county of Surrey. Pugh, though so young a fellow, was so unaccountably stupid and wicked that though he made a large and particular confession of his guilt, yet it was done in such a manner as plainly showed his crimes made no just impression upon his heart; all he said, being in the language of the Kingston Ordinary, the sleepy apprehensions of unawakened ignorance, in which condition he continued to the last.

William Frost, a cripple, was the son of a pin-maker in Christ Church parish, Southwark, and as to his education, my account says it was in hereditary ignorance. He had wrought, it seems, while a boy at his father's trade of pin-making, but since he was thirteen or fourteen had addicted himself to that preparative trade to the gallows, shoeblacking. While he continued in this most honourable profession, abundance of opportunities offered for robbing in the night season, and we must do him the justice to say that they were not offered in vain. Thus by degrees he came on to robbing on the road and in the streets until he was apprehended, and upon the evidence of his companion was convicted.

The Sunday after this, he with the rest of the malefactors was brought to the parish church, which was the first time, as he declared, he had ever entered one, at least with an intention to hear and observe what was said. There he made a blundering sort of confession, and would perhaps have been more penitent if he had known well what penitence was; but he was a poor stupid, doltish wretch, scarce sensible even of the misfortune of being hanged. He was, however, very attentive in the cart to the prayer of those who were a little better instructed than himself, and finished a wretched life with an ignominious death at twenty-one years of age.

Richard Woodman was born at Newington, in Surrey. He got his bread some years by selling milk about, but thinking labour too great a price for victuals, he addicted himself to getting an easier livelihood by thieving. In this course he soon got in with a gang who let him want no instructions that were necessary to bring him to the gallows. Amongst them the above-mentioned lame man was his principal tutor. The last robbery but one that they ever committed was upon a poor man who had laid out his money in the purchase of a shoulder of mutton to feast his family, but they disappointed him by taking it away, and with it a bundle of clothes and other necessaries, by which the unfortunate person who lost them, though their value was not much in themselves, lost all he had.

His behaviour was pretty much of a piece with the rest of his companions, that is, he was so unaffected either with the shamefulness of his death or the danger of his soul that perhaps never any creatures went to death in a more odd manner than these did, whose behaviour cannot for all that be charged with any rudeness or want of decency. But religion and repentance were things so wholly new to them, and so unsuited to their comprehension, that there needed a much greater length of time than they had to have given them any true sense of their duty, to which it cannot be said they were so averse, as they were ignorant and incapable.

William Elisha was another of these wretches, but he seemed to have had a better education than most of them, though he made as ill use of it as any. He was once an evidence at Croydon assizes, where he convicted two of his companions, but the sight of their execution, and the consciousness of having preserved his own life merely by taking theirs, did not in the least contribute to his amendment, for he was no sooner at liberty but he was engaged in new crimes, until at last with those malefactors before mentioned, and with eight others, he was executed at Kingston, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, April 4th, 1724.

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#### **The Life of THOMAS BURDEN, a Robber**

Thomas Burden was born in Dorsetshire, of parents in tolerable circumstances, who being persons getting their living by seamen, they bred up their son to that profession, and sent him very young to sea. It does not appear that he ever liked that employment, but rather that he was hurried into it when he was very young by the choice of his parents, and therefore in no condition to choose better for himself. He was up in the Straits several years, and while there in abundance

of fights, at which time he had so much religion as to apply himself diligently to God in prayer for his protection, and made abundance of vows and resolutions of amendment, if it pleased the providence of God to preserve his life. But no sooner was the danger over, but all these promises were forgotten until the next time he was in jeopardy.

At this rate he went on until the war was over, and notwithstanding the aversion he always had to a military kind of life, yet such was his unconquerable aversion to labour, that he rather enlisted himself in the land service than submit thereto. Going, however, one day to Hounslow to the house of one of the staff officers of his regiment, and not finding him at home, but only a corporal who had been left at the house to give answers, with this corporal he sat chatting and talking until night; so that being obliged to stay there until the next morning, a discourse somehow or other happened between him and the person who entertained him, about William Zouch, an old man who lived alone on the common. And Burden having been drinking, it came into his head, how easily he might rob such an old man. Upon which, he immediately went to his house, and finding him sitting on the bench at his door, he began to talk with and ask him questions. The old man answered him with great mildness, until at last Burden drew an iron instrument out of his cane, threatening him with death if he did not reveal where his money was. Zouch thereupon brought it him in a pint pot, being but one-and-thirty shillings. Then tying the old man in his chair, Burden left him. But it seems he did not tie him so fast but that he easily got loose, and alarming the town, Burden was quickly taken, having fled along the Common, which was open to the eye for a long way, instead of taking into the town or the woods, which if he had, in all probability he might have escaped. When Whittington and Greenbury apprehended him, he did not deny the fact, but on the contrary offered them money to let him go.

After his conviction he manifested vast uneasiness at the thoughts of death, appearing wonderfully moved that he who had lived so long in the world with the reputation of an honest man, should now die with that of a thief, and in the manner of a dog. But as death grew nearer, and he saw there was no remedy, he began to be a little more penitent and resigned, especially when he was comforting himself with the hopes that his temporal punishment here might preserve him from feeling everlasting misery. With these thoughts having somewhat composed himself, he approached the place where he was to suffer, with tolerable temper and constancy, entreating the people who were there in very great numbers to pray for him, and begging that all by his example would learn to stifle the first motions of wickedness and sin, since such was the depravity of human nature that no man knew how soon he might fall. At the same place he delivered a paper in which he much extenuated the crime for which he suffered, and from whence he would feign have insinuated that it was a rash action committed when in drink, and which he should certainly have set right again when he was sober. In this frame of mind he suffered, on the 29th of April, 1724, being then about fifty years of age.

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### **The Life of FREDERICK SCHMIDT, Alterer of Bank-Notes**

When persons sin out of ignorance there is great room for pity, and when persons suddenly become guilty of evil through a precipitate yielding to the violence of their passions there is still room for extenuation. But when people sin, not only against knowledge but deliberately, and without the incitement of any violent passion such as anger or lust, even as nothing can be said in alleviation, so there is little or no room left for compassion.

Frederick Schmidt was a person born of a very honourable and wealthy family at Breslau, the capital of the Duchy of Silesia in the north-east of Germany. They educated this their son not only in such a manner as might qualify him for the occupation they designed him, of a merchant, but also gave him a most learned and liberal knowledge, such as suited a person of the highest rank. He lived, however, at Breslau as a merchant for many years, and at the request of his friends, when very young, he married a lady of considerable fortune, but upon some disgust at her behaviour they parted, and had not lived together for many years before his death.

He carried on a very considerable correspondence to Hamburg, Amsterdam and other places, and above a year before had been over in England to transact some affairs, and thought it, it seems, so easy a matter to live here by his wits, that he returned hither with the Baron Vanloden and the Countess Vanloden. It is very hard to say what these people really were, some people taking Schmidt for the baron's servant, but he himself affirmed, and indeed it seems most likely, that they were companions, and that both of them exerted their utmost skill in defrauding others to maintain her.

The method they took here for that purpose was by altering bank-notes, which they did so dexterously as absolutely to prevent all suspicion. They succeeded in paying away two of them, but the fraud being discovered by the cheque-book at the bank, Schmidt was apprehended and brought to a trial. There it was sworn that being in possession of a bank-note of £25 he had turned it into one of £85, and with the Baron Vanloden tendered it to one Monsieur Malloreay, who gave him goods for it, and another note of £20. It was deposed by the Baron Vanloden and Eleanora Sophia, Countess Vanloden, that Schmidt took the last mentioned note of £20 upstairs, and soon after brought it down again, the word "twenty" being taken out; upon which they drew it through a plate of gummed water, and then smoothing it between several papers with a box iron, the words "one hundred" were written in its place. Then he gave it to the Baron and the interpreter to go out with it and buy plate, which they did to the amount of £40. It appeared also, by the same witnesses, that Schmidt had owned to the Baron that he could write twenty hands,

and that if he had but three or four hundred pounds, he could swell them to fifty thousand. It was proved also by his own confession that he had written over to his correspondent in Holland, to know whether English bank-notes went currently there or not. Upon which he was found guilty by a party-jury, that singular favour permitted to foreigners by the equitable leniency of the Law of England. Yet after this he could hardly be persuaded that his life was in any danger; nay, when he came into the condemned hold, he told the unhappy persons there, in as good English as he could speak, that he should not be hanged with them.

For the first two or three days, therefore, that he was under sentence, he refused to look so much as on a book, or to say a prayer, employing that time with unwearied diligence in writing a multitude of letters to merchants, foreign ministers, and German men of quality and such like, still holding fast his old opinion that his life was not in the least danger; and when a Lutheran minister was so kind as to visit him, he would hardly condescend to speak with him. But when he had received a letter from him who had all along buoyed him up with hopes of safety, in which he informed him that all those hopes were vain, he then began to apply himself with a real concern to the Lutheran minister whom he had before almost rejected, but did not appear terrified or much affrighted thereat. However, quickly after, he fell into a fit of sickness and became so very weak as not to be able to stand. He confessed, however, to the foreign divine who attended him that he was really guilty of that crime for which he was to die, though it did not appear that he conceived it to be capital at the time he did it, nor, indeed, was he easily convinced it was so, until within a few days of his execution.

There had prevailed a report about the town that he had done something of the like nature at Paris, for which he had been obliged to fly, but he absolutely denied that, and seemed to think the story derived its birth from the Baron, who, he said, was an apothecary's son, and from his acquaintance with his father's trade, knew the secret of expunging waters. He added, that his airs of innocence were very unjust, he having been guilty of abundance of such tricks, and the Countess of many more than he. Thus, as is very common in such cases, these unhappy people blackened one another. But the Baron and the Countess had the advantage, since by their testimony poor Schmidt was despatched out of the way, and 'tis probable their credit at the time of his execution, was not in any great danger of being hurt by his character of them.

When he came to Tyburn, being attended in the cart by the Lutheran minister whom I have so often mentioned, he was forced to be held up, being so weak as not to be able to stand alone. He joined with the prayers at first, but could not carry on his attention to the end, looking about him, and staring at the other prisoners, with a curiosity that perhaps was never observed in any other prisoner in his condition what-so ever; neither his looks nor his behaviour seemed to express so much terror as was struck into others by the sight of his condition. So after recommending to the minister by letter, to inform his aged mother in Germany of his unhappy fate, he requested the executioner to put him to death as easily as he could. He then submitted to his fate on the 4th of April, 1724, being in the forty-fifth year of his age.

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### **The Life of PETER CURTIS, a Housebreaker, etc.**

Peter Curtis, *alias* Friend, was born of honest but industrious parents in the country, at a very great distance from London. Finding a method to get him put apprentice to a ship's carpenter, they were very much pleased therewith, hoping that they had settled him in a trade in which he might live well, and much beyond anything they could have expected to have done for him.

But Peter himself was of a very different opinion, for from the hour he came to it he greatly disliked his profession, and though he went to sea with his master once or twice, yet he failed not to take hold of the first opportunity to set himself at liberty by running away from him. From that time he devoted himself to live a life of pleasure, having contracted an obstinate aversion to business and to everything which looked like labour; though, as he acknowledged, the hand of Providence hindered him from accomplishing his wish, making this life that he chose a greater burden and hardship to him than that which he had relinquished.

He found means to get into gentlemen's service, and lived in them with tolerable reputation and credit for the space of several years. At last he was resolved to go to sea again, but he had so unconquerable an aversion to his own trade that he chose rather going in the capacity of a trumpeter, having learnt how to play on that instrument at one of his services. He sailed on board the *Salisbury*, in that expedition Sir George Byng made to the Straits of Messina, when he attacked and destroyed the Spanish Fleet.<sup>[39]</sup> There Peter had the good luck to escape without any hurt, though there were many killed and wounded on board that ship. He afterwards served in a regiment of dragoons, where by prudent management he saved no less than fourscore pounds. With this he certainly had it in his power to have put himself in some way of doing well, but he omitted it, and falling into the company of a lewd woman, she persuaded him to take lodgings with her, and they lived together for some space as man and wife.

During this time he made a shift to be bound for one of his companions, for a very considerable sum, which the other had the honesty to leave him to pay. The creditor, upon information that Curtis was packing up his awls<sup>[40]</sup> to go to sea, resolved to secure him for his debt. But not being able to catch him upon a writ, he made up a felonious charge against him, and having thereupon got him committed to the Poultry Compter, as soon as the Justice had discharged him, he got him taken for the debt, and recommitted to the same place. Here he was soon reduced to a very

melancholy condition, having neither necessities of life nor any prospect of a release. The wretched company with which such prisons are always full, corrupted him as to his honesty, and taught him first to think of making himself rich by taking away the properties of others.

When he came out of prison, upon an agreement with his creditor, he soon got into service with Mr. Fluellen Aspley, a very eminent chinaman by Stocks Market.<sup>[41]</sup> When he was there, the bad woman with whom he still conversed, was continually dunning his ears with how easy a matter it was for him to make himself and her rich and easy by pilfering from his master, telling him that she and her friends in the country would help him off with a thousand pounds worth of china, if need were, and baiting him continually, not to lose such an opportunity of enriching them. The fellow himself was averse to such practices, and nothing but her continual teasing could have induced him ever to have entertained a design of so base a nature.

At last he condescended so far as to enquire how it might be done with safety. *For that*, replied the woman, *trust to my management. I'll put you in a way to bring off the most valuable things in the house, and yet get a good character, and be trusted and valued by the family for having robbed them.* At that Curtis stared, and said, if she'd but put him to such a road he did not know but he might comply with her request. She thereupon opened her scheme to him this: *Here's my son, you shall lift him into the house, and after you have given him plate and what you think proper and my boy, who is a very dexterous lad, is got off with them, you have nothing to do but to put an end of a candle under the Indian cabinet in the counting-house, and leave things to themselves. The neighbourhood will soon be alarmed by the fire, and if you are apparently honest in what you take away publicly, there will be no suspicion upon you for what went before, which will be either thought to be destroyed in the fire, or to be taken away by some other means.*

This appeared so shocking a project to Curtis that he absolutely refused to comply with the burning, though with much ado he was brought to stealing a large quantity of plate, which he brought to this woman, but in attempting to sell it she was stopped, and the robbery discovered. However, there being no direct evidence at first against Curtis, he was released from his confinement on suspicion, even by the intercession of Mr. Aspley himself. But a little time discovering the mistake, and that he was really the principal in the robbery, he was thereupon again apprehended, and at the next sessions tried and convicted.

While he lay under sentence of death, he behaved himself as if he had totally resigned all thoughts of the world, or of continuing in it, praying with great fervency and devotion, making full and large confession, and doing every other act which might induce men to believe that he was a real penitent, and sincerely sorry and affected for the crime he had committed.

But it seems that this was all put on, for the true source of his easiness and resignation was the assurance he had in himself of escaping death either by pardon, or by an escape; for which purpose, he and those who were under sentence with him had provided all necessities, loosened their irons and intended to have effected it at the expense of the lives of their keepers. But their design being discovered the Saturday before their deaths, and Curtis perceiving that his hopes of pardon were ill-founded, began to apply himself to repenting in earnest. Yet there was very little time left for so great a work, especially considering that nothing but the necessity of the thing inclined him thereto, and that he had spent that respite allowed him by the clemency of the Law to prepare for death in contriving to fly from justice at the expense of the blood of others. How he performed this it is impossible for us to know, and must be left to be decided by the Great Judge to whom the secrets of all hearts are open. However, at his death he appeared tolerably composed and cheerful, and turning to the people said, *You see, they who contrived to burn the house and the people in it escaped, but I, who never consented to any such thing, die as you see.* Some discourse there was of his having buried a portmanteau and about fourteen hundred pounds; he was spoke to about it, and did not deny he had it. He said he hid it upon Finchley Common and that by the arms, which was the Spread Eagle, he took to be an ambassador's. As to the diamond ring he had been seen to wear, he did not affirm he came very honestly by it, but would not give any direct answer concerning it, and seemed uneasy that he should have such questions put to him at the very point of death. He suffered the 15th of June, 1724, about thirty years of age.

[39]

See note, page 49.

[40]

An old-fashioned play on the words "awl" and "all," and means, of course, packing up all his possessions.

[41]

A busy market for fish and vegetables, which occupied the site on which the present Mansion House stands. The market was moved, in 1737, to Farringdon Street.

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### **The Life of LUMLEY DAVIS, a Highwayman**

Such is the frailty of human nature that neither the best examples nor the most liberal education can warrant an honest life, or secure to the most careful parents the certainty of their children

not becoming a disgrace to them, either in their lives or by their deaths.

This malefactor, of whom the course of our memoirs now obliges us to make mention, was the son of a man of the same name, viz., Lumley Davis, who was, it seems, in circumstances good enough to procure his sons being brought up in one of the greatest and best schools in England. There his proficiency procured him an election upon the establishment, and he became respected as a person whose parts would do honour even to that remarkable seminary of learning where he had been bred. But unaccountably growing fond, all on a sudden, of going to some trade or employment and absolutely refusing to continue any longer at his studies, his friends were obliged to comply with the ardency of his request and accordingly put him apprentice to an eminent vintner at the One Tun Tavern, in the Strand.

He continued there but a little while before he was as much dissatisfied with that as he had been with learning, so that leaving his master, and leading an unsettled kind of life, he fell into great debts, being unable to satisfy which, when demanded, he was arrested and thrown into the Marshalsea. There for some time he continued in a very deplorable condition, till by the charitable assistance of a friend, his debt was paid and the fees of the prison discharged. After this he went into the Mint,<sup>[42]</sup> where drinking accidentally at one of the tap-houses in that infamous place, and being very much out of humour with the low and profligate company he was obliged to converse with there, he took notice of a very genteel man, who sat at the table by himself. He inquired of some persons with whom he was drinking, who that man was. They answered that they could not tell themselves; he was lately come over for shelter amongst them; he was a gentleman, as folks said, of much learning, and though he never conversed with anybody, yet was kind enough to afford them his assistance, either with his pen, or by his advice when they asked it. On this character Davis was very industrious to become his acquaintance, and Harman, which was the other man's name, not having been able to meet with anybody there with whom he could converse, he very readily embraced the society of Davis; with whom comparing notes, and finding their case to be pretty much the same, they often condoled one another's misfortunes and as often projected between themselves how to gain some supply without depending continually upon the charity of their friends.

In the meantime, Davis was so unfortunate as to fall ill of a languishing distemper, which brought him so low as to oblige him to apply for relief to that friend who had discharged him out of the Marshalsea. He was so good as to get him into St. Thomas's Hospital, and to supply him while there with whatever was necessary for his support. When he was so far recovered as to be able to go abroad, this kind and good friend provided for him a country habitation, where he might be able to live in privacy and comfort and indulge himself in those inclinations which he began again to show towards learning.

Some time after he had been there, not being able to support longer that quiet kind of life which before he did so earnestly desire, notwithstanding the entreaties of his friends, he came up to London again, where falling into idle company, he became addicted to the vices of drinking and following bad women, things which before he had both detested and avoided. Not long after this, he again found out Mr. Harman, and renewed his acquaintance with him. He enquired into his past adventures and how he had supported himself since they last had been together, and on perceiving that they were far from being on the mending hand with him, the fatal proposal was at last made of going upon the road, and there robbing such persons as might seem best able to spare it, and at the same time furnish them with the largest booty.

The first person they attacked was one John Nichols, Esq., from whom they took a guinea and seventeen shillings, with which they determined to make themselves easy a little, and not go that week again upon any such hazardous exploits. But alas, their resolutions had little success, for that very evening they were both apprehended and on full evidence at the next sessions were convicted and received sentence of death, within a very short time after they had committed the crime.

Davis all along flattered himself with the hopes of a pardon or a reprieve and therefore was not perhaps so serious as he ought, and as he otherwise would have been. Not that those hopes made him either licentious or turbulent, but rather disturbed his meditations and hindered his getting over the terrors which death always brings to the unprepared. But when, on his name being in the death warrant, he found there was no longer any hopes, he then, indeed, applied himself without losing a moment to the great concern of saving his soul, now there was no hopes of preserving his body.

However, neither his education nor all the assistance he could receive from those divines that visited him, could bring him to bear the approach of death with any tolerable patience. Even at the place of execution, he endeavoured as much as he could to linger away the time, spoke to the Ordinary to spin out the prayers, and to the executioner to forbear doing his office as long as it was possible. However, he spoke with great kindness and affection to his companion, Mr. Harman, shook hands with those who were his companions in death, and at last submitted to his fate, being then about twenty-three years of age.

<sup>[42]</sup>

The Southwark Mint was a sanctuary for insolvent debtors and a nest of infamy in general. It stood over against St. George's church.

## The Life of JAMES HARMAN, Highwayman

James Harman was the son of a merchant in the City of London, who took care to furnish his son with such an education as enabled him, when about fourteen years of age, to be removed to the University. His behaviour there was like that of too many others, spent in diversities instead of study, and in a progression of vice, instead of improving in learning. After having been there about three years, and having run into such debts as he saw no probability of discharging, he was forced to leave it abruptly; and his father, much grieved at this behaviour, bought him an ensign's commission in the army, where he continued in Jones's Regiment till it was disbanded. Then, indeed, being forced to live as he could, and the assistance of friends, though large, yet no ways suited to his expenses, he became so plunged in debt and other misfortunes that he was in necessity of going over to the Mint, where reflecting on his own follies, he became very reserved and melancholy. He would probably have quite altered his course of life if opportunity had offered, or if he had not fallen in that company which by a similarity of manner induced him to fall into the commission of such crimes as would not probably have otherwise entered his head.

The fact which he and the before-mentioned Davis committed, was their first and last attempt, but Mr. Harman, all the time he lay under sentence (without suffering himself to be amused by expectations of success from those endeavours which he knew his friends used to save his life,) accustomed himself to the thoughts of death, performing all the duties requisite from a person of his condition for atoning the evils of a misspent life, and making his peace with that Being from whom he had received so great a capacity of doing well, and which he had so much abused.

Having spent the whole time of his confinement after this manner, he did not appear in any degree shocked or confounded when his name being to the death warrant left him no room to doubt of what must be his fate. At the place of execution he appeared not only perfectly easy and serene, but with an air of satisfaction that could arise only from the peace he enjoyed within. Being asked if he had anything to say to the people, he rose up, and turning towards them said, *I hope you will all make that use of my being exposed to you as a spectacle which the Law intends, and by the sight of my death avoid such acts as may bring you hither, with the same Justice that they do me.*

He suffered about the twenty-fifth year of his age, the 28th of August, 1724, at Tyburn.

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## The Life of JOHN LEWIS, *alias* LAURENCE, a Thief, Highwayman, etc.

One great cause of that degeneracy we observe amongst the lower part of the human species arises from a mistake which has generally prevailed in the education of young people throughout all ages. Parents are sometimes exceedingly assiduous that their children should read well and write a good hand, but they are seldom solicitous about their making a due use of their reason, and hardly ever enquire into the opinions which, while children, they entertain of happiness or misery, and the paths which lead to either of them. This is the true and natural intent of all education whatsoever, which can never tend to anything but teaching persons how to live easily and seducing their affections to the bounds prescribed them by the law of God and their country.

John Lewis, *alias* Laurence, had doubtless parents who bred him somewhere, though the papers I have do not afford me light enough to say where. This indeed, I find, that he was bred apprentice to a butcher, took up his freedom in the City, and worked for a considerable space as a journeyman. For his honesty we have no vouchers for any part of that time, for in his apprenticeship he fell into the use of profligate company, who taught him all those vices which were destructive to his future life. He grew fond of everything which looked like lewdness and debauchery, drank hard, was continually idling about; above all, strumpets the most abandoned, both in their manner and discourse, were the very ultimate end of his wishes, insomuch that he would often say he had nothing to answer for in debauching modest women, for they were a set of creatures he could never so much as endure to converse with.

His usual method of living with his mistresses was this: as soon as the impudence and lewdness of a woman had made her infamous, even amongst the hackney coachmen, pickpockets, footpads and such others of his polite acquaintance, then Lewis thought her a fit person for his turn, and used to live with her for the space of perhaps a month; then growing tired of her, he went to look for another.

This practice of his grew at last so well known that he found it a little difficult to get women who would take up with him upon his terms; but there was one Moll Davis, who for her dexterity in picking of pockets amongst those of her own tribe went by the name of Diver, who was so great a scandal to her sex that the most abandoned of that low crew with whom he conversed, hated and despised her. With her Lewis went to live after his usual manner, and was very fond of her after his way, for about a fortnight; at the end of which he grew fractious, and in about nine weeks' time more he beat her. Moll wept and took on at a sad rate for his unkindness and told him that if would but promise faithfully never to live with any other woman, she should fairly present him with a brace of hundred pounds, which she had lodged in the hands of an uncle who knew nothing of her way of life, but lived reputably at such a place.

This was the right way of touching Lewis's temper. He began to put on as many good looks as his face was capable of wearing, and made use of as many kind expressions as he could remember out of the *Academy of Compliments*, until the day came that she was to meet her uncle at

Smithfield Market. They then went very lovingly together to an inn upon the paven stones, where Moll asked very readily at the bar if Mr. Tompkins (which was the name of her uncle) was there. The woman of the house made her a low curtsy and said he was only stepped over the way to be shaved, and she would call him. She went accordingly and brought the grave old man, who as soon as he came into the room said, *Well, Mary, is this thy husband? Yes, sir,* answered she, *this is the person I have promised to bring you.* Upon which the old man thrust out his hand and said, *Come, friend, as you have married my niece, you and I must be better acquainted.* Lewis scraped him a good bow as he could, and giving his hand in return, the old fellow laid hold on him somewhat above the wrist, stamped with his right foot, and then closing with him got him down.

In the meanwhile, half a dozen fellows broke into the room and one of them seizing him by the arms another pulled out a small twine, and bound him; then shoving him downstairs, they had no sooner got into Smithfield, then the mob cried out, *Here's the rogue! Here's the dog that held a penknife to the old grazier's throat, while a woman and another man robbed him.* It seems the story was true of Moll, who by thus taking and then swearing it upon Lewis, who had never so much as heard of it, escaped with impunity, and besides that got five guineas for her pains from the brother of the old man, who upon this occasion played the part of her uncle. If the grazier had been a hasty, rash man, Lewis had certainly hanged for the fact, but looking hard upon him at his trial, he told the Court he was sure that Lewis was not the man, for though his eyes were not very good, he could easily distinguish his voice, and added that the man who robbed him was taller than himself, whereas Lewis was much shorter. By which means he had the good luck to come off, though not without lying two sessions in Newgate.

As soon as he came abroad he threatened Moll Davis hard for what she had done, and swore as soon as he could find her to cut her ears off; but she made light of that, and dared him to come and look for her at the brandy-shop where she frequented. Lewis hearing that resolved to go thither and beat her, and knowing the usual time of her coming thither to be about eleven o'clock at night, he chose that time to come also. But Moll, the day before, had made one of her crew who had turned evidence, put him into his information, and the constables and their assistants being ready planted, they seized him directly and carried him to his old lodgings in Newgate.

He was acquitted upon this next sessions, there being no evidence against him but the informer, but the Court ordered him to find security for his good behaviour. That proved two months' work, so that in all it was a quarter of a year before he got out of Newgate for the second time. Then, hearing Davis had picked a gentleman's pockets of a considerable sum, and kept out of the way upon it, he resolved to be even with her for the trouble she had cost him, and for that purpose hunted through all her old places of resort, in order to find out how to have her apprehended. Moll hearing of it, got her sister, who followed the same trade with herself, to waylay him at the brandy-shop in Fleet Street. There Susan was very sweet upon him, and being as impudent as her sister, Lewis resolved to take up with her, at least for a night; but she pretended reasons why he could not go home with her, and he complaining that he did not know where to get a lodging, she gave him half a crown and a large silver medal, which she said would pawn for five shillings, and appointed to meet him the next night at the same place. In the morning Lewis goes with the silver piece to a pawnbroker at Houndsditch; the broker said he would take it into the next room and weigh it, and about ten minutes after returned with a constable and two assistants, the medal having been advertised in the papers as taken with eleven guineas in a green purse out of a gentleman's pocket, and was the very robbery for which Moll Davis kept out of the way.

When he got over this, he went down into the country, and having been so often in prison for naught, he resolved to merit it now for something. So on the Gravesend Road he went upon the highway, and having been, as I told you, bred up a butcher, the weapon he made use of to rob with was his knife. The first robbery he attempted was upon an old officer who was retired into that part of the country to live quiet. Lewis bolted out upon him from behind the corner of a hedge, and clapping a sharp pointed knife to his breast, with a volley of oaths commanded him to deliver. This was new language to the gentleman to whom it was offered, yet seeing how great an advantage the villain had of him, he thought it the most prudent method to comply, and gave him therefore a few shillings which were in his coat-pocket. Lewis very highly resented this, and told him he did not use him like a gentleman; that he would search him himself. In order to do this, clapping his knife into his mouth as he used to do when preparing a sheep for the shambles, he fell to ransacking the gentleman's pockets. He had hardly got his hand into one of them, but the gentleman snatched the knife out of his mouth and in the wrench almost broke his jaw. Lewis hereupon took to his heels, but the country being raised upon him, he was apprehended just as he was going to take water at Gravesend. But his pride in refusing the gentleman's silver happened very luckily for him here, for on his trial at the next assizes, the indictment being laid for a robbery, the jury acquitted him and he was once more put into a road of doing well, which according to his usual method he made lead towards the gallows.

The first week he was out, he broke open a house in Ratcliff Highway, from whence he took but a small quantity of things, and those of small value, because there happened to be nothing better in the way. In a few days after this, he snatched off a woman's pocket in the open street, for which fact being immediately apprehended, he was at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, tried and convicted, but by the favour of the Court ordered for transportation.

A woman whom at this time he called his wife, happened to be under the like sentence at the same time. They went therefore together, and were each of them such turbulent dispositions that the captain of the transport thought fit to promise them their liberty in a most solemn manner, as soon as they came on shore in Carolina, provided they would be but quiet. To this they agreed,

and they kept their words so well, that the captain performed his promise and released them at their arrival in South Carolina, upon which they made no long stay there, but found a method to come back in the same ship. Upon arrival in England they were actually married, but they did not live long together, Lewis finding that she conversed with other men, and being in fear, lest in hopes of favour, she should discover his return from transportation, and by convicting him save herself.

Upon these apprehensions, he thought fit to go again to sea, in a ship bound for the Straits; but falling violently sick at Genoa, they left him there. And though he might afterwards have gone to his vessel, his old thought and wishes returned and he took the advantage of the first ship to return to England. Here he found many of his old acquaintances, carrying on the business of plunder in every shape. He joined with them, and in their company broke open with much difficulty an alehouse in Fore Street, at the sign of the King of Hearts, where they took a dozen of tankards, which they apprehended to be of silver; but finding upon examination they were no better than pewter well scoured, they judged there would be more danger in selling them than they were worth. Therefore having first melted them, they threw them away; but being a little fearful of robbing in company, he took to his old method of robbing by himself in the streets. But the first attempt he made to do this was in the old Artillery Ground,<sup>[43]</sup> where he snatched a woman's pocket; and she crying out raised the neighbourhood. They pursued him, and after wounding two or three persons desperately, he was taken and committed to his old mansions in Newgate, and being tried at the next sessions was found guilty and from that time could not enjoy the least hopes of life. But he continued still very obdurate, being so hardened by a continual series of villainous actions that he seemed to have no idea whatsoever of religion, penitence or atoning by prayers, for the numerous villainies he had committed.

At the place of execution he said nothing to the people, only that he was sorry he had not stayed in Carolina, because if he had, he should never have come to be hanged, and so finished his life in the same stupid manner in which he had lived. He was near forty years of age at the time he suffered, which was on the 27th of June, 1720.

<sup>[43]</sup>

This was the exercising ground of the Train Bands and the Honourable Artillery Company. It was on the west side of Finsbury Square.

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### **The History of the WALTHAM BLACKS and their transactions to the death of RICHARD PARVIN, EDWARD ELLIOT, ROBERT KINGSHELL, HENRY MARSHALL, JOHN PINK and EDWARD PINK, and JAMES ANSELL *alias* PHILLIPS, at Tyburn, whose lives are also included**

Such is the unaccountable folly which reigns in too great a part of the human species, that by their own ill-deeds, they make such laws necessary for the security of men's persons and properties, as by their severity, unless necessity compelled them, would appear cruel and inhuman, and doubtless those laws which we esteem barbarous in other nations, and even some which appear so though anciently practised in our own, had their rise from the same cause.

I am led to this observation from the folly which certain persons were guilty of in making small insurrections for the sake only of getting a few deer, and going on, because they found the leniency of the laws could not punish them at present, until they grew to that height as to ride in armed troops, blacked and disguised, in order the more to terrify those whom they assaulted, and wherever they were denied what they thought proper to demand, whether venison, wine, money, or other necessaries for their debauched feasts, would by letter threaten plunder and destroying with fire and sword, whomever they thought proper.

These villainies being carried on with a high hand for some time in the years 1722 and 1723, their insolence grew at last so intolerable as to oblige the Legislature to make a new law against all who thus went armed and disguised, and associated themselves together by the name of Blacks, or entered into any other confederacies to support and assist one another in doing injuries and violences to the persons and properties of the king's subjects.

By this law it was enacted that after the first day of June, 1723, whatever persons armed with offensive weapons, and having their faces blacked, or otherwise disguised, should appear in any forest, park or grounds enclosed with any wall or fence, wherein deer were kept, or any warren where hares or conies are kept, or in any highway, heath or down, or unlawfully hunt, kill or steal any red or fallow deer, or rob any warren, or steal fish of any pond, or kill or wound cattle, or set fire to any house or outhouses, stack, etc., or cut down or any otherway destroy trees planted for shelter or profit, or shall maliciously shoot at any person, or send a letter demanding money or other valuable things, shall rescue any person in custody of any officer for any such offences, or by gifts or promise, procure any one to join with them, shall be deemed guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, and shall suffer pains of death as felons so convicted.

Nor was even this thought sufficient to remedy those evils, which the idle follies of some rash persons had brought about, but a retrospect was also by the same Act had to offences heretofore committed, and all persons who had committed any crimes punishable by this Act, after the second of February, 1722, were commanded to render themselves before the 24th of July, 1723, to some Justice of his Majesty's Court of King's Bench, or to some Justice of the Peace for the



county where they lived, and there make a full and exact confession of the crimes of such a nature which they had committed, the times when, and the places where, and persons with whom, together with an account of such persons' places of abode as had with them been guilty as aforesaid, in order to their being thereupon apprehended, and brought to judgment according to Law, on pain of being deemed felons, without benefit of clergy, and suffering accordingly; but were entitled to a free pardon and forgiveness in case that before the 24th of July they surrendered and made such discovery.

Justices of Peace by the said Act were required on any information being made before them by one or more credible persons, against any person charged with any of the offences aforesaid, to transmit it under their hands and seals to one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, who by the same Act is required to lay such information and return before his Majesty in Council; whereupon an order is to issue for the person so charged to surrender within forty days. And in case he refuse or neglect to surrender within that time, then from the day in which the forty days elapsed, he is to be deemed as a felon convict, and execution may be awarded as attainted of felony by a verdict.

Every person who, after the time appointed for the surrender of the person, shall conceal, aid or succour him, knowing the circumstances in which he then stands, shall suffer death as a felon, without benefit of clergy, and that people might the more readily hazard their persons for the apprehending such offenders, it is likewise enacted that if any person shall be wounded so as to lose an eye, or the use of any limb in endeavouring to take persons charged with the commission of crimes within this law, then on a certificate from the Justices of the Peace of his being so wounded, the sheriff of the county, if commanded within thirty days after the sight of such certificate, to pay the said wounded persons £50 under pain of forfeiting £10 on failure thereof, and in case any person should be killed in seizing such persons as aforesaid, then the said £50 is to be paid to the executors of the person to be killed.

It cannot seem strange that in consequence of so extraordinary an act of legislature, many of these presumptuous and silly people should be apprehended, and a considerable number of them having upon their apprehension been committed to Winchester gaol, seven of them were by *Habeas Corpus*, removed for the greater solemnity of their trial to Newgate, and for their offence brought up and arraigned at the King's Bench Bar, Westminster. There being convicted on full evidence, all of them of felony, and three of murder, I shall inform ye, one by one, of what has come to my hand in relation to their crimes, and the manner and circumstances with which they were committed.

Richard Parvin was master of a public-house at Portsmouth, a man of dull and dogmatic disposition, who continually denied his having been in any manner concerned with these people, though the evidence against him at his trial was as full and as direct as possibly could have been expected, and he himself evidently proved to have been on the spot where the violences committed by the other prisoners were transacted. In answer to this, he said that he was not with them, though indeed he was upon the forest, for which he gave this reason. He had, he said, a very handsome young wench who lived with him, and for that reason being admired by many of his customers, she took it in her head one day to run away. He hearing that she had fled across the forest, pursued her, and in that pursuit calling at the house of Mr. Parford, who keeps an alehouse in the forest, this man being an evidence against the other Blacks, took him it seems into the number, though as he said, he could fully have cleared himself if he had had any money to have sent for some witnesses out of Berkshire. But the mayor of Portsmouth seizing, as soon as he was apprehended, all his goods, put his family into great distress and whether he could have found them or not, hindered his being able to produce any witnesses at his trial.

He persevered in these professions of his innocency to the very last, still hoping for a reprieve, and not only feeding himself with such expectations while in prison, but also gazed earnestly when at the tree, in hopes that pardon would be brought him, until the cart drew away and extinguished life and the desire of life together.

Edward Elliot, a boy of about seventeen years of age, whose father was a tailor at a village between Petworth and Guildford, was the next who received sentence of death with Parvin. The account he gave of his coming into this society has something very odd in it, and which gives a fuller idea of the strange whims which possessed these people. The boy said that about a year before his being apprehended, thirty or forty men met him in the county of Surrey and hurried him away. He who appeared to be the chief of them told him that he enlisted him in the service of the King of the Blacks, in pursuance of which he was to disguise his face, obey orders of whatsoever kind they were, such as breaking down fish ponds, burning woods, shooting deer, taking also an oath to be true to them, or they by their art magic would turn him into a beast, and as such make him carry their burdens, and live like a horse upon grass and water.

He said, also, that in the space of time he continued with them, he saw several experiments of their witchcraft, for that once when two men had offended them by refusing to comply in taking their oath and obeying their orders, they caused them immediately to be blindfolded and stopping them in holes of the earth up to their chin, ran at them as if they had been dogs, bellowing and barking as it were in their ears; and when they had plagued them awhile in this ridiculous manner they took them out, and bid them remember how they offended any of the Black Nation again, for if they did, they should not escape so well as they had at present. He had seen them also, he said, oblige carters to drive a good way out of the road, and carry whatsoever venison or other thing they had plundered to the places where they would have them; that the

men were generally so frightened with their usage and so terrified with the oaths they were obliged to swear, that they seldom complained, or even spoke of their bondage.

As to the fact for which they died, Elliot gave this account: that in the morning when that fact was committed for which he died, Marshall, Kingshell and four others came to him and persuaded him to go to Farnham Holt, and that he need not fear disobliging any gentlemen in the country, some of whom were very kind to this Elliot. They persuaded him that certain persons of fortune were concerned with them and would bear him harmless if he would go. He owned that at last he consented to go with them, but trembled all the way, insomuch that he could hardly reach the Holt. While they were engaged in the business for which they came, viz., killing the deer, the keepers came upon them. Elliot was wandered a considerable way from his companions after a fawn which he intended to send as a present to a young woman at Guildford; him therefore they quickly seized and bound, and leaving him in that condition, went in search of the rest of his associates. It was not long before they came up with them. The keepers were six, the Blacks were seven in number, so they fell to it warmly with quarter-staffs. The keepers unwilling to have lives taken, advised them to retire, but upon their refusing, and Marshall's firing a gun, by which one of the keepers belonging to the Lady How was slain, they discharged a blunderbuss and shattered the thigh of one Barber, amongst the Blacks. Upon this three of his associates ran away, and the two others, Marshall and Kingshell were likewise taken, and so the fray for the present ended.

Elliot lay bound all the while within hearing, and in the greatest agonies imaginable, at the consideration that whatever blood was spilt he should be as much answerable for it as these who shed it; in which he was not mistaken, for the keepers returning after the fight was over, carried him away bound and he never had his fetters off after, till the morning of his execution. He behaved himself very soberly, quietly and with much seeming penitence and contrition. He owned the justice of the Law in punishing him, and said he more especially deserved to suffer, since at the time of the committing this fact, he was servant to a widow lady, where he wanted nothing to make him happy or easy.

Robert Kingshell was twenty-six years old, and lived in the same house with his parents, being apprentice to his brother a shoemaker. His parents were very watchful over his behaviour and sought by every method to prevent his taking to ill courses, or being guilty of any debauchery whatever. The night before this unhappy accident fell out, as he and the rest of the family were sleeping in their beds, Barber made a signal at his chamber window, it being then about eleven o'clock. Upon this Kingshell arose and got softly out of the window; Barber took him upon his horse, and away they went to the Holt, twelve miles distant, calling in their way upon Henry Marshall, Elliot and the rest of their accomplices. He said it was eight o'clock in the morning before the keepers attacked them, he owned they bid them retire, and that he himself told them they would, provided the bound man (Elliot) was released and delivered into their hands, but that proposition being refused, the fight at once grew warm. Barber's thigh was broken, and Marshall killed the keeper with a shot; being thereupon very hard pressed, three of their companions ran away, leaving him and Marshall to fight it out. Elliot being already taken, and Barber disabled, it was not long before they were in the same unhappy condition with their companions. From the time of their being apprehended, Kingshell laid aside all hopes of life, and applied himself with great fervency and devotion to enable him in what alone remained for him to do, viz., dying decently.

Henry Marshall, about thirty-six years of age, the unfortunate person by whose hand the murder was committed, seemed to be the least sensible of any of the evils he had done, although such was the pleasure of Almighty God that till the day before his execution, he neither had his senses, nor the use of his speech. When he recovered it, and a clergyman represented to him the horrid crime of which he had been guilty, he was so far from showing any deep sense of that crime of shedding innocent blood, that he made light of it, said he might stand upon his own defence, and was not bound to run away and leave his companions in danger. This was the language he talked for the space of twenty-four hours before his death, in which he enjoyed the use of speech; and so far was he from thanking those who charitably offered him their admonitions, that he said he had not forgot himself, but had already taken care of what he thought necessary for his soul. However, he did not attempt in the least to prevaricate, but fairly acknowledged that he committed the fact for which he died, though nothing could oblige him to speak of it in any manner as if he was sorry for or repented of it, farther than for having occasioned his own misfortunes; so strong is the prejudice which vulgar minds acquire by often repeating to themselves and in company certain positions, however ridiculous and false. And sure, nothing could be more so than for a man to fancy he had a right to imbrue his hands in the blood of another, who was in the execution of his office, and endeavouring to hinder the commission of an illegal act.

These of whom I have last spoken were all concerned together in the before-mentioned fact, which was attended with murder; but we are now to speak of the rest who were concerned in the felony only, for which they with the above-mentioned Parvin suffered. Of these were two brothers, whose names were John and Edward Pink, carters in Portsmouth, and always accounted honest and industrious fellows before this accident happened. They did not, however, deny their being guilty, but on the contrary ingenuously confessed the truth of what was sworn, and mentioned some other circumstances that had been produced at the trial which attended their committing it. They said they met Parvin's housekeeper upon that road, that they forced her to cut the throat of a deer which they had just taken upon Bear Forest, gave her a dagger which

they forced her to wear, and to ride cross-legged with pistols before her.

In this dress they brought her to Parvin's house upon the forest, where they dined upon a haunch of venison, feasted merrily and after dinner sent out two of their companions to kill more deer, not in the King's Forest, but in Waltham Chase, belonging to the Bishop of Winchester. One of these two persons they called their king, and the other they called Lyon. Neither of these brothers objected anything, either to the truth of the evidence given against them, or the justice of that sentence which had passed upon them, only one insinuating that the evidence would not have been so strong against him and Ansell, if it had not been for running away with the witness's wife, which so provoked him that they were sure they should not escape when he was admitted a witness.

These like the rest were hard to be persuaded that the things they had committed were any crimes in the eyes of God. They said deer were wild beasts, and they did not see why the poor had not as good a right to them as the rich. However, as the Law condemned them to suffer, they were bound to submit, and in consequence of that notion, behaved themselves very orderly, decently and quietly, while under sentence.

James Ansell, *alias* Stephen Philips, the seventh and last of these unhappy persons, was a man addicted to a worse and more profligate life than any of the rest had ever been; for he had held no settled employment, but had been a loose disorderly person, concerned in all sorts of wickedness for many years, both at Portsmouth, Guildford, and other country towns, as well as at London. Deer were not the only things that he had dealt in; stealing and robbing on the highway had been formerly his employment, and in becoming a Black, he did not as the others ascend in wickedness, but came down on the contrary, a step lower. Yet this criminal as his offences were greater, so his sense of them was much stronger than in any of the rest, excepting Kingshell, for he gave over all manner of hopes of life and all concerns about it as soon as he was taken.

Yet even he had no notion of making discoveries, unless they might be beneficial to himself, and though he owned the knowledge of twenty persons who were notorious offenders in the same kind, he absolutely refused to name them, since such naming would not procure himself a pardon; talking to him of the duty of doing justice was beating the air. He said, he thought there was no justice in taking away other people's lives, unless it was to save his own, yet no sooner was he taxed about his own going on the highway than he confessed it, said he knew very well bills would have been preferred against him at Guildford assizes, in case he had got off at the King's Bench, but that he did not greatly value them. Though formerly he had been guilty of some facts in that way, yet they could not all now be proved, and he should have found it no difficult matter to have demonstrated his innocence of those then charged upon him, of which he was not really guilty, but owed his being thought so to the profligate course of life he had for some time led, and his aversion to all honest employments.

Bold as the whole gang of these fellows appeared, yet with what sickness, what with the apprehension of death, they were so terrified that not one of them but Ansell, *alias* Philips, was able to stand up, or speak at the place of execution, many who saw them affirming that some of them were dead even before they were turned off.

As an appendix to the melancholy history of these seven miserable and unhappy persons, I will add a letter written at that time by a gentleman of the county of Essex, to his friend in London, containing a more particular account of the transactions of these people, than I have seen anywhere else. Wherefore, without any further preface, I shall leave it to speak for itself.

A letter to Mr. C. D. in London.

Dear Sir,

Amongst the odd accidents which you know have happened to me in the course of a very unsettled life, I don't know any which hath been more extraordinary or surprising than one I met with in going down to my own house when I left you last in town. You cannot but have heard of the Waltham Blacks, as they are called, a set of whimsical merry fellows, that are so mad to run the greatest hazards for the sake of a haunch of venison, and passing a jolly evening together.

For my part, though the stories told of these people had reached my ears, yet I confess I took most of them for fables, and I thought that if there was truth in any of them it was much exaggerated. But experience (the mistress of fools) has taught me the contrary, by the adventure I am going to relate to you, which though it ended well enough at last, I confess at first put me a good deal out of humour. To begin, then; my horse got a stone in his foot, and therewith went so lame just as I entered the forest, that I really thought his shoulder slipped. Finding it however impossible to get him along, I was even glad to take up at a little blind alehouse which I perceived had a yard and a stable behind it.

The man of the house received me very civilly, but when he perceived my horse was so lame as scarce to be able to stir a step, I observed he grew uneasy. I asked him whether I could lodge there that night, he told me no, he had no room, I desired him, then, to put something to my horse's foot, and let me sit up all night; for I was resolved not to spoil a horse which cost me twenty guineas by riding him in such a condition in which he was at present. The man made me no answer, and I proposed the same questions to the wife. She dealt more roughly and freely with

me, and told me that truly I neither could, nor should stay there, and was for hurrying her husband to get my horse out. However, on putting a crown into her hand and promising another for my lodging, she began to consider a little; and at last told me that there was indeed a little bed above stairs, on which she should order a clean pair of sheets to be put, for she was persuaded I was more of a gentleman than to take any notice of what I saw passed there.

This made me more uneasy than I was before. I concluded now I was got amongst a den of highwaymen, and expected nothing less than to be robbed and my throat cut. However, finding there was no remedy, I even set myself down and endeavoured to be as easy as I could. By this time it was very dark, and I heard three or four horsemen alight and lead their horses into the yard. As the men returned and were coming into the room where I was, I overheard my landlord say, *Indeed, brother, you need not be uneasy, I am positive the gentleman's a man of honour*; to which I heard another voice reply, *What could our death do to any stranger? Faith, I don't apprehend half the danger you do. I dare say the gentleman would be glad of our company, and we should be pleased with his. Come, hang fear, I'll lead the way.* So said, so done, in they came, five of them, all disguised so effectually that I declare, unless it were in the same disguise, I should not be able to distinguish any one of them.

Down they sat, and he who I suppose was constituted their captain *pro hac vice*, accosted me with great civility, and asked me if I would honour them with my company to supper. I acknowledge I did not yet guess the profession of my new acquaintances, but supposing my landlord would be cautious of suffering either a robbery or a murder in his own house, I know not how, but by degrees my mind grew perfectly easy. About ten o'clock I heard a very great noise of horses, and soon after men's feet tramping in a room over my head. Then my landlord came down and informed us supper was just ready to go upon the table.

Upon this we were all desired to walk up, and he whom I before called the captain, presented me, with a humorous kind of ceremony, to a man more dignified than the rest who sat at the end of the table, telling me at the same time, he hoped I would not refuse to pay my respects to Prince Oroonoko, King of the Blacks. It then immediately struck into my head who those worthy persons were, into whose company I was thus accidentally fallen. I called myself a thousand blockheads for not finding out before, but the hurry of things, or to speak the truth, the fear I was in, prevented my judging even from the most evident signs.

As soon as our awkward ceremony was over, supper was brought in; it consisted of eighteen dishes of venison in every shape, roasted, boiled with broth, hashed collops, pasties, umble pies, and a large haunch in the middle, larded. I easily saw that of three ordinary rooms of which the first floor of the house consisted, ours (by taking down the partitions) was very large, and the company in all twenty-one persons. At each of our elbows there was set a bottle of claret, and the man and woman of the house sat down at the lower end. Two or three of the fellows had good natural voices, and so the evening was spent as merrily as the rakes pass theirs in the King's Arms, or the City apprentices with their master's maids at Sadler's Wells. About two the company seemed inclined to break up, having first assured me that they should take my company as a favour any Thursday evening, if I came that way.

I confess I did not sleep all night with reflecting on what had passed, and could not resolve with myself whether these humorous gentlemen in masquerade were to be ranked under the denomination of knight-errants, or plain robbers. This I must tell you, by the by, that with respect both to honesty and hardship, their life resembles much that of the hussars, since drinking is all their delight, and plundering their employment.

Before I conclude my epistle, it is fit I should inform you that they did me the honour (with a design perhaps to have received me into their order) of acquainting me with those rules by which their society was governed.

In the first place their Black Prince assured me that their government was perfectly monarchical, and that when upon expeditions he had an absolute command; *but in the time of peace*, continued he, *and at the table, government being no longer necessary, I condescend to eat and drink familiarly with my subjects as friends. We admit no man*, continued he, *into our society until he has been twice drunk with us, that we may be perfectly acquainted with his temper, in compliance with the old proverb—women, children and drunken folks speak truth. But if the person who sues to be admitted, declares solemnly he was never drunk in his life, and it plainly appears to the society in such case, this rule is dispensed with, and the person before admission is only bound to converse with us a month. As soon as we have determined to admit him, he is then to equip himself with a good mare or gelding, a brace of pistols, and a gun of the size of this, to lie on the saddle bow. Then he is sworn upon the horns over the chimney,*

*and having a new name conferred by the society, is thereby entered upon the roll, and from that day forward, considered as a lawful member.*

He went on with abundance more of their wise institutions, which I think are not of consequence enough to tell you, and shall only remark one thing more, which is the phrase they make use of in speaking of one another, viz., *He is a very honest fellow and one of us.* For you must know it is the first article in their creed that there's no sin in deer-stealing.

In the morning, having given my landlady the other crown piece, I found her temper so much altered for the better, that in my conscience I believe she was not in the humour to have refused me anything, no, not even the last favour; and so walking down the yard and finding my horse in pretty tolerable order, I speeded directly home, much in amaze at the new people I had discovered. You see I have taken a great deal of pains in my letter; pray, in return, let me have as long a one from you, and let me see if all your London rambles can produce such another adventure.

I am, yours, etc.

Before I leave these people, I think it proper to acquaint my readers that their folly was not to be extinguished by a single execution. There were a great many young fellows of the same stamp, who were fools enough to forfeit their lives upon the same occasion. However, the humour did not run very long, though some of them were impudent enough to murder a keeper or two afterwards. Yet in the space of a twelvemonth, the whole nation of Blacks was extinguished, and these country rakes were contented to play the fool upon easier terms. The last blood that was shed on either side was that of a keeper's son at Old Windsor, whom some of these wise people fired at as he looked out of the window, by which means they drew on their own ruin and that of several numerous families by which the country was put in such terror that we have heard nothing of them since, though this Act of Parliament<sup>[44]</sup> as I shall tell you, has been by construction extended to some other criminals, who were not strictly speaking of the same kind as the Waltham Blacks.

[44]

The Black Act (9 Geo. I, cap. 2) was repealed so late as 1827.

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### **The Life of JULIAN, a Black Boy and Incendiary**

From speaking of artificial blacks, I come now to relate the unhappy death of one who was naturally of that colour. This poor creature's Julian. At the time of his execution he seemed to be about sixteen years of age, he had been stolen while young from his parents at Madras. He still retained his pagan ignorance both in respect to religion and our language.

He was brought over by one Captain Dawes, who presented him to Mrs. Elizabeth Turner, where he was used with the greatest tenderness and kindness, she often calling him to dance and sing after his manner before company; and he himself acknowledged that he had never been so happy in his life as he was there. Yet, on a sudden, he stole about twenty or thirty guineas, and then placing a candle under the sheets left it burning to fire the house, and consume the inhabitants in it. Of this, upon proof and his own confession made before Sir Francis Forbes and Mr. Turner, he was convicted.

While he remained under sentence, he was often heard to mumble in reproach and revengeful terms to himself. However, before his death he learned the Lord's Prayer, and when it was demanded whether he would be a Christian, he assented with great joy, which arose, it seems, from his having heard the common foolish opinion that when christened Blacks are to be set free. However, christened he was, and received at his baptism the name of John.

The place in which he was confined being very damp, the boy having nothing to lie on but a coat, caught so great a cold in his limbs that he almost lost the use of them before his death, and continued in a state of great pain and weakness; insomuch that when he was told he must prepare for his execution, he determined with himself to forestall it, and for that purpose desired one of the prisoners to lend him a penknife, but the man, it seems, had more grace than to grant his request, and he ended his life at Tyburn, according to his sentence.

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### **The Life of ABRAHAM DEVAL, a Lottery Ticket Forger**

Abraham Deval, who had been a clerk to the Lottery Office, at last took it into his head to coin tickets for himself, and had such good luck therein that he at one time counterfeited a certificate for £52 12s. Od., for seven blank lottery tickets, in the year 1723. Two or three other facts of the same nature he perpetrated with the like success, but happening to counterfeit two blank tickets of the lottery in the year in which he died, they were discovered, and he thereupon apprehended and tried at the Old Bailey. On the first indictment, for want of evidence he was acquitted, upon which he behaved himself with great insolence, lolled out his tongue at the Court, and told them he did not value the second indictment. But herein he happened to be mistaken, for the jury found him guilty of that indictment and thereupon he received sentence of death accordingly.

Notwithstanding that impudence with which he had treated the Court at his trial, he complained very loudly of their not showing him favour; nay, he even pretended that he had not justice done him. This he grounded upon the score that the ticket he was indicted for was No. 39, in the 651st course of payment. Now it seems that in searching of his brother-in-law Parson's room, the original ticket was found, though very much torn, from whence Deval would have had it taken to be no more than a duplicate, and much blamed his counsel for not insisting long enough upon this point, which if he had done, Deval entertained a strong opinion that he could not have been convicted.

The apprehension of this and the uneasiness he was under with his irons made him pass his last moments with great unquietness and discontent. He said it was against the law to put men in irons, that fettering English subjects (except they attempted to break prisons) was altogether illegal. But after having raved at this rate for a small space, when he found it did him no good, and that there were no hopes of a reprieve, he even began to settle himself to the performance of those duties which became a man in his sad condition and when he did apply himself thereto, nobody could appear to have a juster sense than he of that miserable and sad condition into which the folly and wickedness of his life had brought him.

It is certain the man did not want parts, though sometimes he applied them to the worst of purposes, and was cursed with an insolent and overbearing temper which hindered him from being loved or respected anywhere, and which never did him any service but in the last moments of his life, where if it had not been for the severity of his behaviour, Julian, the black boy, would have been very troublesome, both to him and to the other person who was under sentence at the same time.

At the place of execution Deval owned the fact, but wished the spectators to consider whether for all that he was legally convicted, and so suffered in the thirtieth year of his age.

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### **The Life of JOSEPH BLAKE, *alias* BLUESKIN, a Footpad and Highwayman**

As there is impudence and wickedness enough in the lives of most malefactors to make persons of a sober education and behaviour wonder at the depravity of human nature, so there are sometimes superlative rogues who, in the infamous boldness of their behaviour, as far exceed the ordinary class of rogues as they do honest people; and whenever such a monster as this appears in the world, there are enough fools to gape at him, and to make such a noise and outcry about his conduct as is sure to invite others of the gang to imitate the obstinacy of his deportment, through that false love of fame, which seems inherent to human nature. Amongst the number of these, Joseph Blake, better known by his nickname of Blueskin, always deserves to be remembered as one who thought wickedness the greatest achievement, and studiously took the paths of infamy in order to become famous.

By birth he was a native of this City of London. His parents being persons in tolerable circumstances kept him six years at school, where he did not learn half as much good from his master as he did evil from his schoolfellow, William Blewitt, from whose lessons he copied so well that all his education signified nothing. When he came from school he absolutely refused to go to any employment, but on the contrary set up for a robber when he was scarce seventeen, but from that time to the day of his death was unsuccessful in all his undertakings, hardly ever committing the most trivial fact but he experienced for it, either the humanity of the mob, or of the keepers of Bridewell, out of which or some other prison, he could hardly keep his feet for a month together.

He fell into the gang of Lock, Wilkinson, Carrick<sup>[45]</sup> Lincoln and Daniel Carroll, which last having so often been mentioned, perhaps my readers may be desirous to know what became of him. I shall therefore inform them that after Carrick and Molony were executed for robbing Mr. Young, as has been before related, he fled home to his own native country of Ireland, where for a while making a great figure till he had exhausted what little wealth he had brought over with him from England, he was obliged to go again upon the old method to supply him. But street-robbing being a very new thing at Dublin, it so alarmed that city that they never ceased pursuing him, and one or two more who joined with him, till catching them one night at their employment, they pursued Carrol so closely that he was obliged to come to a close engagement with a thief-taker, so he was killed upon the spot.

But to return to Blake, *alias* Blueskin. Being one night out with his gang, they robbed one Mr. Clark of eight shillings and a silver hilted sword, just as candles were going to be lighted, and a woman looking accidentally out of a window, perceived it, and cried out, *Thieves*. Wilkinson fired a pistol at her which, very luckily, upon her drawing in her head, grazed upon the stone of the window, and did no other mischief. Blake was also in the company of the same gang when they attacked Captain Langley, at the corner of Hyde Park Road, as he was going to the Camp<sup>[46]</sup>; but the Captain behaved himself so well that notwithstanding they shot several times through and through his coat, yet they were not able to rob him.

Not long after this Wilkinson being apprehended impeached a large number of persons, and with them Joseph Blake and William Lock. Blake hereupon made a fuller discovery than the other before Justice Blackerby; in which information there was contained no less than seventy robberies, upon which he also was admitted a witness. And having named Wilkinson, Lincoln, Carrick, Carrol, and himself to have been the five persons who murdered Peter Martin the

Chelsea pensioner, by the Park wall, Wilkinson was apprehended, tried and convicted, notwithstanding the information he had before given (which was thereby totally set aside); so that Blake himself became now an evidence against the rest of his companions, and discovered about a dozen robberies which they had committed.

Amongst these there was one very remarkable one. Two gentlemen in hunting caps were together in a chariot on the Hampstead Road, and they took from them two gold watches, rings, seals and other things to a considerable value. Junks, *alias* Levee, laid his pistol down by the gentleman all the while he searched him, yet he wanted either the courage or the presence of mind to seize and prevent their losing things of so great value. Not long after this, Oakey, Junks and this Blake, stopped a single man with a link before him in Fig Lane; and he not surrendering so easily as they expected, Junks and Oakey beat him over the head with their pistols, and then left him wounded in a terrible condition, taking from him one guinea and one penny. A very short time after this, Junks, Oakey and Flood were apprehended and executed for robbing Colonel Cope and Mr. Young of that very watch for which Carrick and Molony had been before executed, Joseph Blake being the evidence against them.

After this hanging work of his companions, he thought himself not only entitled to liberty but reward. Herein, however, he was mightily mistaken, for not having surrendered willingly and quietly, but being taken after long resistance and when he was much wounded, there did not seem to be the least foundation for this confident demand, he still remaining a prisoner in the Wood Street Compter, obstinately refusing to be transported for seven years, but insisting that as he had given evidence he ought to have his liberty. However, the magistrates were of another opinion, until at last by procuring two men to be bound for his good behaviour, he was carried before a wealthy alderman of the City and there discharged. At which time, somebody there present asking how long time might be given him before they should see him again at the Old Bailey, a gentleman made answer in about three sessions, in which time it seems he guessed very right, for the third session from thence, Blake was indeed brought to the Bar.

For no sooner were his feet at liberty but his hands were employed in robbing, and having picked up Jack Shepherd for a companion, they went out together to search for prey in the fields. Near the half-way house to Hampstead they met with one Pargiter, a man pretty much in liquor, whom immediately Blake knocked down into the ditch, where he must have inevitably perished if John Shepherd had not kept his head above the mud with great difficulty. For this fact, the next sessions after it happened the two brothers Brightwell in the Guards were tried, and if a number of men had not sworn them to have been upon duty at the time the robbery was committed, they had certainly been convicted, the evidence of the prosecutor being direct and full. Through the grief of this the elder Brightwell died a week after he was released from his confinement, and so did not live to see his innocence fully cleared by the confession of Blake.

A very short space after this, Blake and his companion Shepherd committed the burglary together in the house of Mr. Kneebone, where Shepherd getting into the house, let in Blake at the back door and stripped the house of a considerable value. For this, both Shepherd and he were apprehended, and the sessions before Blake was convicted his companion received sentence of death; but at the time Blake was taken up, he had made his escape out of the condemned hold.

He behaved with great impudence at his trial, and when he found nothing would save him, he took the advantage of Jonathan Wild coming to speak with him, to cut the said Wild's throat, making a large gash from the ear beyond the windpipe.<sup>[47]</sup> Of this wound Wild languished a long time, and happy had it been for him if Blake's wound had proved fatal, for then Jonathan had escaped death by a more dishonourable wound in the throat than that of a penknife; but the number of his crimes and the spleen of his enemies procured him a worse fate. Whatever Wild might deserve of others, he seems to have merited better usage from this Blake, for while he continued a prisoner in the Compter, Jonathan was at the expense of curing his wound, allowing him three shillings and sixpence a week, and after his last misfortune promised him a good coffin, actually furnishing him with money to support him in Newgate, and several good books, if he would have made any use of them; but because he freely declared to Blueskin that there was no hopes of getting him transported, the bloody villain determined to take away his life, and was so far from showing any signs of remorse when he was brought up again to Newgate, that he declared if he had thought of it before, he would have provided such a knife as should have cut his head off.

At the time that he received sentence there was a woman also condemned, and they being placed as usual in what is called the Bail Dock at the Old Bailey, Blake offered such rudeness to the woman that she cried out and alarmed the whole Bench. All the time he lay under condemnation he appeared utterly thoughtless and insensible of his approaching fate. Though from the cutting of Wild's throat, and some other barbarities of the same nature, he acquired amongst the mob the character of a brave fellow, yet he was in himself but a mean-spirited timorous wretch, and never exerted himself but either through fury and despair. His cowardice appeared manifestly in his behaviour at his death; he wept much at the chapel in the morning he was to die, and though he drank deeply to drive away fear, yet at the place of execution he wept again, trembled and showed all the signs of a timorous confusion, as well he might, who had lived wickedly and trifled with his repentance to the grave.

There was nothing in his person extraordinary. A dapper, well-set fellow of great strength, and great cruelty, equally detested by the sober part of the world for his audacious wickedness of his

behaviour, and despised by his companions for the villainies he committed even against them. He was executed in the twenty-eighth year of his age, on the 11th of November, 1724.

[45]

See page [85](#).

[46]

An encampment was formed in Hyde Park, about 1714. Writing to Martha Blount, Pope says "The tents are carried there this morning, new regiments with new clothes and furniture, far exceeding the late cloth and linen designed by his Grace (the Duke of Marlborough) for the soldiery."

[47]

See also the Life of Jonathan Wild, subsequently related.

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### **The Life of the Famous JOHN SHEPHERD, Footpad, Housebreaker and Prison-breaker**

Amongst the prodigies of ingenious wickedness and artful mischief which have surprised the world in our time, perhaps none has made so great a noise as John Shepherd, the malefactor of whom we are now to speak. His father's name was Thomas Shepherd, who was by trade a carpenter, and lived in Spitalfields, a man of an extraordinary good character, and who took all the care his narrow circumstances would allow, that his family might be brought up in the fear of God, and in just notions of their duty towards their neighbour. Yet he was so unhappy in his children that both his son John and another took to evil courses, and both in their turns have been convicted at the bar at the Old Bailey.

After the father's death, his widow did all she could to get this unfortunate son of hers admitted into Christ's Hospital, but failing of that, she got him bred up at a school in Bishopsgate Street, where he learned to read. He might in all probability have got a good education if he had not been too soon removed, being put out to a trade, viz., that of a cane-chair-maker, who used him very well, and with whom probably he might have lived honestly. But his mother dying a short time afterwards, he was put to another, a much younger man, who used him so harshly that in a little time he ran away from him, and was put to another master, one Mr. Wood in Wych Street. From his kindness and that of Mr. Kneebone (whom he robbed) he was taught to write and had many other favours done by that gentleman whom he so ungratefully treated. But good usage or bad, it was grown all alike to him now; he had given himself up to all the sensual pleasures of low life. Drinking all day, and getting to some impudent and notorious strumpet at night, was the whole course of his life for a considerable space, without the least reflection on what a miserable fate it might bring upon him here, much less the judgment that might be passed upon him hereafter.

Amongst the chief of his mistresses there was one Elizabeth Lion, commonly called Edgeworth Bess, the impudence of whose behaviour was shocking even to the greatest part of Shepherd's companions, but it charmed him so much that he suffered her for a while to direct him in every thing, and she was the first who engaged him in taking base methods to obtain money wherewith to purchase baser pleasures. This Lion was a large masculine woman, and Shepherd a very little slight-limbed lad, so that whenever he had been drinking and came to her quarrelsome, Bess often beat him into better temper, though Shepherd upon other occasions manifested his wanting neither courage nor strength. Repeated quarrels, however, between Shepherd and his mistress, as it does often with people of better rank, created such coldness that they spoke not together sometimes for a month. But our robber could not be so long without some fair one to take up his time, and drive his thoughts from the consideration of his crimes and the punishment which might one day befall them.

The creature he picked out to supply the place of Betty Lion was one Mrs. Maggott, a woman somewhat less boisterous in her temper, but full as wicked. She had a very great contempt for Shepherd, and only made use of him to go and steal money, or what might yield money, for her to spend in company that she liked better. One night when Shepherd came to her and told her he had pawned the last thing he had for half a crown, *Prithee*, says she, *don't tell me such melancholy stories but think how you may get more money. I have been in Whitehorse Yard this afternoon. There's a piece-broker there worth a great deal of money; he keeps his cash in a drawer under the counter, and there's abundance of good things in his shop that would be fit for me to wear. A word, you know, to the wise is enough, let me see now how soon you'll put me in possession of them.* This had the effect she desired; Shepherd left her about one o'clock in the morning, went to the house she talked of, took up the cellar window bars, and from thence entered the shop, which he plundered of money and goods, to the amount of £22. He brought it to his doxy the same day before she was stirring, who thereupon appeared very satisfied with his diligence, and helped him in a short time to squander what he had so dearly earned.

However, he still retained some affection for his old favourite, Bess Lion, who being taken up for some of her tricks, was committed to St. Giles's Round-house. Shepherd going to see her there, broke the doors open, beat the keeper, and like a true knight-errant, set his distressed paramour



at liberty. This heroic act got him so much reputation amongst the fair ladies in Drury Lane that there was nobody of his profession so much esteemed by them as John Shepherd, with his brother Thomas, who had taken to the same trade. Observing and being in himself in tolerable estimation with that debauched part of the sex, he importuned some of them to speak to his brother John to lend him a little money, and for the future to allow him to go out robbing with him. To both these propositions Jack (being a kind brother as he himself said) consented at the first word, and from thence forward the two brothers were always of one party: Jack having, as he impudently phrased it, lent him forty shillings to put himself in a proper plight, and soon after their being together having broke open an alehouse, where they got a tolerable booty, in a high fit of generosity, John presented it all to his brother, as, soon after, he did clothes to a very considerable extent, so that the young man might not appear among the damsels of Drury unbecoming Mr. Shepherd's brother.

About three weeks after their coming together, they broke open a linen-draper's shop, near Clare Market, where the brothers made good use of their time; for they were not in the house above a quarter of an hour before they made a shift to strip it of £50. But the younger brother acting imprudently in disposing of some of the goods, he was detected and apprehended, upon which the first thing he did was to make a full discovery to impeach his brother and as many of his confederates as he could. Jack was very quickly apprehended upon his brother's information, and was committed by Justice Parry to the Round-house, for further examination. But instead of waiting for that, Jack began to examine as well as he could the strength of the place of his confinement, which being much too weak for a fellow of his capacity, he marched off before night, and committed a robbery into the bargain, but vowed to be revenged on Tom who had so basely behaved himself (as Jack phrased it) towards so good a brother. However, that information going off, Jack went on in his old way as usual.

One day in May he and F. Benson being in Leicester Fields, Benson attempted to get a gentleman's watch, but missing his pull, the gentleman perceived it and raised a mob. Shepherd passing briskly to save his companion, was apprehended in his stead, and being carried before Justice Walters, was committed to New Prison, where the first sight he saw was his old companion, Bess Lion, who had found her way thither upon a like errand. Jack, who now saw himself beset with danger, began to exert all his little cunning, which was indeed his masterpiece. For this purpose he applied first to Benson's friends, who were in good circumstances, hoping by their mediation to make the matter up, but in this he miscarried. Then he attempted a slight information, but the Justice to whom he sent it, perceiving how trivial a thing it was, and guessing well at the drift thereof, refused it. Whereupon Shepherd, when driven to his last shift, communicated his resolution to Bess Lion. They laid their heads together the fore part of the night, and then went to work to break out, which they effected by force, and got safe off to one of Bess Lion's old lodgings, where she kept him secret for some time, frightening him with stories of great searches being made after him, in order to detain him from conversing with any other woman.

But Jack being not naturally timorous, and having a strong inclination to be out again in his old way with his companions, it was not long before he gave her the slip, and lodged himself with another of his female acquaintances, in a little by-court near the Strand. Here one Charles Grace desired to become an associate with him. Jack was very ready to take any young fellow in as a partner of his villainies, and Grace told him that his reason for doing such things was to keep a beautiful woman without the knowledge of his relations. Shepherd and he therefore getting into the acquaintance of one Anthony Lamb, an apprentice of Mr. Carter, near St. Clement's Church, they inveigled the young man to consent to let them in to rob his master's house. He accordingly performed it, and they took from Mr. Barton, who lodged there, to a very considerable value. But Grace and Shepherd quarrelling about the division, Shepherd wounded Grace in a violent manner, and on this quarrel betraying one another, they were all taken, Shepherd only escaping. But the misfortune of poor Lamb who had been drawn in, being so very young, so far prevailed upon several gentlemen who knew him, that they not only prevailed to have his sentence mitigated to transportation, but also furnished him with all necessaries, and procured an order that on his arrival there he should not be sold as the other felons were, but that he should be left at liberty to provide for himself as well as he could.

It seems that Shepherd's gang (which consisted of himself, his brother Tom, Joseph Blake, *alias* Blueskin, Charles Grace, James Sikes, to whose name his companions tacked their two favourite syllables, Hell and Fury) not knowing how to dispose of the goods they had taken, made use of one William Field for that purpose, who Shepherd in his ludicrous style, used to characterise thus: that he was a fellow wicked enough to do anything, but his want of courage permitted him to do nothing but carry on the trade he did, which was that of selling stolen goods when put into his hands.

But Blake and Shepherd finding Field somewhat dilatory, not thinking it always safe to trust him, they resolved to hire a warehouse and lodge their goods there, which accordingly they did, near the Horseferry in Westminster. There they placed what they had taken out of Mr. Kneebones' house, and the goods made a great show there, whence the people in the neighbourhood really took them for honest persons, who had so great a wholesale business on their hands as occasioned their taking a place where they by convenient for the water.

Field, however, importuned them (having got scent they had such a warehouse) that he might go and see the goods, pretending that he had it just now in his power to sell them at a very great price. They accordingly carried him thither and showed him the things. Two or three days

afterwards, though he had not courage enough to rob anybody else, Field ventured to break open the warehouse, and took every rag that had been lodged there; and not long after, Shepherd was apprehended for the fact and tried at the next sessions of the Old Bailey.

His appearance there was very mean, and all the defence he offered to make was that Jonathan Wild had helped to dispose of part of the goods and he thought it was very hard that he should not share in the punishment. The Court took little notice of so insignificant a plea and sentence being passed upon him, he hardly made a sensible petition for the favour of the Court in the report, but behaved throughout as a person either stupid or foolish, so far was he from appearing in any degree likely to make the noise he afterwards did.

When put into the condemned hold, he prevailed upon one Fowls, who was also under sentence, to lift him up to the iron spikes placed over the door which looks into the lodge. A woman of large make attending without, and two others standing behind her in riding hoods, Jack no sooner got his head and shoulders through between the iron spikes, than by a sudden spring his body followed with ease, and the women taking him down gently, he was without suspicion of the keepers (although some of them were drinking at the upper end of the lodge) conveyed safely out of the lodge door, and getting a hackney coach went clear off before there was the least notice of his escape, which, when it was known, very much surprised the keepers, who never dreamt of an attempt of that kind before.

As soon as John breathed the fresh air, he went again briskly to his old employment, and the first thing he did was to find out one Page, a butcher of his acquaintance in Clare Market, who dressed him up in one of his frocks, and then went with him upon the business of raising money. No sooner had they set out, but Shepherd remembering one Mr. Martin, a watchmaker near the Castle Tavern in Fleet Street, he prevailed upon his companion to go thither, and screwing a gimlet fast into the post of the door, they then tied the knocker thereto with a spring, and then boldly breaking the windows, they snatched three watches before a boy that was in the shop could open the door, and so marched clear off, Shepherd having the impudence, upon this occasion, to pass underneath Newgate.

However, he did not long enjoy his liberty, for strolling about Finchley Common, he was apprehended and committed to Newgate, and was put immediately in the Stone Room, where they put him on a heavy pair of irons, and then stapled him fast down to the floor. Being left there alone in the sessions time (most of the people in the gaol then attending at the Old Bailey) with a crooked nail he opened the lock, and by that means got rid of his chain, and went directly to the chimney in the room, where with incessant working he got out a couple of stones and by that means climbed up into a room called the Red Room, where nobody had been lodged for a considerable time. Here he threw down a door, which one would have thought impossible to have been done by the strength of man (though with ever so much noise); from hence with a great deal to do, he forced his passage into the chapel. There he broke a spike off the door, forcing open by its help four other doors. Getting at last upon the leads, he from thence descended gently (by the help of the blanket on which he lay, for which he went back through the whole prison) upon the leads of Mr. Bird, a turner who lives next door to Newgate; and looking in at the garret window, he saw the maid going to bed. As soon as he thought she was asleep, he stepped downstairs, went through the shop, opened the door, then into the street, leaving the door open behind him.

In the morning, when the keepers were in search after him, hearing of this circumstance by the watchman, they were then perfectly satisfied of the method by which he went off. However, they were obliged to publish a reward and make the strictest enquiry after him, some foolish people having propagated a report that he had not got out without connivance. In the meanwhile, Shepherd found it a very difficult thing to get rid of his irons, being obliged to lurk about and lie hid near a village not far from town, until with much ado he fell upon a method of procuring a hammer and taking his irons off.



JACK SHEPPARD IN THE STONE ROOM IN NEWGATE  
(From the Annals of Newgate)

He was no sooner freed from the encumbrance that remained upon him, than he came secretly into the town that night, and robbed Mr. Rawlin's house, a pawnbroker in Drury Lane. Here he got a very large booty, and amongst other things a very handsome black suit of clothes and a gold watch. Being dressed in this manner he carried the rest of the goods and valuable effects to two women, one of whom was a poor young creature whom Shepherd had seduced, and who was imprisoned on this account. No sooner had she taken care of the booty but he went among his old companions, pickpockets and whores in Drury Lane and Clare Market. There being accidentally espied fuddling at a little brandy-shop, by a boy belonging to an alehouse, who knew him very well, the lad immediately gave information upon which he was apprehended, and reconducted, with a vast mob, to his old mansion house of Newgate, being so much intoxicated with liquor that he was hardly sensible of his miserable fate. However, they took effectual care to prevent a third escape, never suffering him to be alone a moment, which, as it put the keepers to a great expense, they took care to pay themselves with the money they took of all who came to see him.

In this last confinement it was that Mr. Shepherd and his adventures became the sole topic of conversation about town. Numbers flocked daily to behold him, and far from being displeased at being made a spectacle of, he entertained all who came with the greatest gaiety that could be. He acquainted them with all his adventures, related each of his robberies in the most ludicrous manner, and endeavoured to set off every circumstance of his flagitious life as well as his capacity would give him leave, which, to say truth, was excellent at cunning, and buffoonery, and nothing else.

Nor were the crowds that thronged to Newgate on this occasion made up of the dregs of the people only, for then there would have been no wonder; but instead of that they were persons of the first distinction, and not a few even dignified with titles.<sup>[48]</sup> 'Tis certain that the noise made about him, and this curiosity of persons of so high a rank, was a very great misfortune to the poor wretch himself, who from these circumstances began to conceive grand ideas of himself, as well as strong hopes of pardon, which encouraged him to play over all his airs and divert as many as thought it worth their while by their presence to prevent a dying man from considering his latter end, who instead of repenting of his crimes, gloried in rehearsing them.

Yet when Shepherd came up to chapel, it was observed that all his gaiety was laid aside, and he both heard and assisted with great attention at Divine Service, though upon other occasions he avoided religious discourse as much as he could; and depending upon the petitions he had made to several noblemen to intercede with the king for mercy, he seemed rather to aim at diverting his time until he received a pardon, than to improve the few days he had to prepare himself for his last.

On the 10th of November, 1724, he was by *Certiorari* removed to the bar of the Court of King's Bench, at Westminster. An affidavit being made that he was the same John Shepherd mentioned in the record of conviction before him, Mr. Justice Powis awarded judgment against him, and a rule was made for his execution on the 16th.

Such was the unaccountable fondness this criminal had for life, and so unwilling was he to lose all hopes of preserving it, that he framed in his mind resolutions of cutting the rope when he should be bound in the cart, thinking thereby to get amongst the crowd, and so into Lincoln's Inn Fields, and from thence to the Thames. For this purpose he had provided a knife, which was with great difficulty taken from him by Mr. Watson, who was to attend him to death. Nay, his hopes were carried even beyond hanging, for when he spoke to a person to whom he gave what money he had remaining out of the large presents he had received from those who came to divert themselves at Shepherd's Show, or Newgate Fair, he most earnestly entreated him that as soon as possible his body might be taken out of the hearse which was provided for him, put into a warm bed, and if it were possible, some blood taken from him, for he was in great hopes that he might be brought to life again; but if he was not, he desired him to defray the expenses of his funeral, and return the overplus to his poor mother. Then he resumed his usual discourse about his robberies and in the last moments of his life endeavoured to divert himself from the thoughts of death. Yet so uncertain and various was he in his behaviour that he told one whom he had a great desire to see on the morning that he died, that he had then a satisfaction at his heart, as if he were going to enjoy two hundred pounds *per annum*.

At the place of execution, to which he was conveyed in a cart, with iron handcuffs on, he behaved himself very gravely, confessing his robbery of Mr. Philips and Mrs. Cook, but denied that he and Joseph Blake had William Field in their company when they broke open the house of Mr. Kneebone. After this he submitted to his fate on the 16th of November, 1724, much pitied by the mob.<sup>[49]</sup>

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While in Newgate he sat for his portrait to Sir James Thornhill.

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Over 200,000 persons witnessed his execution at Tyburn, and a riot which broke out concerning the disposal of his corpse was quelled by soldiers with fixed bayonets.

## The Life of LEWIS HOUSSART, the French Barber, a Murderer

As there is not any crime more shocking to human nature or more contrary to all laws human and divine than murder, so perhaps there has been few committed in these last years accompanied with more odd circumstances than that for which this criminal suffered.

Lewis Houssart was born at Sedan, a town in Champagne in the kingdom of France. His own paper says that he was bred a surgeon and qualified for that business. However that were, he was here no better than a penny barber, only that he let blood, and thereby got a little and not much money. As to the other circumstances of his life, my memoirs are not full enough to assist me in speaking thereto. All I can say of him is that while his wife, Anne Rondeau, was living, he married another woman, and the night of the marriage before sitting down to supper, he went out a little space. During the interval between that and his coming in, it was judged from the circumstances that I shall mention hereafter, that he cut the throat of the poor woman who was his first wife, with a razor. For this being apprehended he was tried at the Old Bailey, but for want of proof sufficient was acquitted.

Not long after he was indicted for bigamy, i.e., for marrying his second wife, his first having been yet alive. Scarce making any defence upon this indictment he was found guilty. He said thereupon, it was no more than he expected, and that he did not trouble himself to preserve so much as his reputation in this respect; for in the first place he knew they were resolved to convict him, and in the next, he said, where there was no fault, there was no shame; that his first wife was a Socinian, an irrational creature, and was entitled to the advantages of no nation nor people because she was no Christian, and accordingly the Scripture says, with such a one have no conversation, no, not so much as to eat with them. But an appeal was lodged against him by Solomon Rondeau, brother and heir to Anne his wife, yet that appearing to be defective, it was quashed, and he charged upon another, whereunto joining issue upon six points they came to be tried at the Old Bailey, where the following circumstances appeared upon the trial.

First, that at the time he was at supper at his new wife's house, he started on a sudden, looked aghast and seemed to be very much frightened. A little boy deposed that the prisoner gave him money to go to his own house in a little court, and fetch the mother of the deceased Anne Rondeau to a gentleman who would be at such a place and wait for her. When the mother returned from that place and found nobody wanting her, or that had wanted her, she was very much out of humour at the boy's calling her; but that quickly gave way to the surprise of finding her daughter murdered as soon as she entered the room. This boy who called her was very young, yet out of the number of persons who were in Newgate he singled out Lewis Houssart, and declared that he was the only man among them who gave him money to go on the errand for old Mistress Rondeau.

Upon this and several other corroborating proofs, the jury found him guilty, upon which he arraigned the justice of a Court which hitherto had been preserved without a taint, declaring that he was innocent, and that they might punish if they would, but they could not make him guilty, and much more to the like effect; but the Court were not troubled with that, so he scarce endeavoured to make any other defence.

While in the condemned hold amongst the rest of the criminals, he behaved himself in a very odd manner, insisted upon it that he was innocent of the fact laid to his charge, threw out most opprobrious language against the Court that condemned him, and when he was advised to lay aside such heats of passionate expressions, he said he was sorry he did not more fully expose British justice upon the spot at the Old Bailey, and that now since they had tied up his hands from acting, he would at least have satisfaction in saying what he pleased.

When this Houssart was first apprehended he appeared to be very much affected with his condition, was continually reading good books, praying and meditating, and showing the utmost signs of a heart full of concern, and under the greatest emotions, but after he had once been convicted, it made a thorough change in his temper. He quite laid aside all the former gravity of his temper and gave way, in the contrary, to a very extraordinary spirit of obstinacy and unbelief. He puzzled himself continually, and if Mr. Deval, who was then under sentence, would have given leave, attempted to puzzle him too, as to the doctrines of a future state, and an identical resurrection of the body. He said he could not be persuaded of the truth thereof in a literal sense; that when the individual frame of flesh which he bore about him was once dead, and from being flesh became again clay, he did not either conceive or believe that it, after lying in the earth, or disposed of otherwise perhaps for the space of a thousand years, should at the last day be reanimated by the soul which possessed it now, and become answerable even to eternal punishment for crimes committed so long ago. It was, he said, also little agreeable to the notions he entertained of the infinite mercy of God, and therefore he chose rather to look upon such doctrines as errors received from education, than torment and afflict himself with the terrors which must arise from such a belief. But after he had once answered as well as he could these objections, Mr. Deval refused to harken a second time to any such discourses and was obliged to have recourse to harsh language to oblige him to desist.

In the meanwhile his brother came over from Holland, on the news of this dreadful misfortune, and went to make him a visit in the place of his confinement while under condemnation, going to condole with him on the heavy weight of his misfortunes. Upon which, instead of receiving the kindness of his brother in the manner it deserved, Houssart began to make light of the affair, and treated the death of his wife and his own confinement in such a manner that his brother leaving

him abruptly, went back to Holland more shocked at the brutality of his behaviour than grieved for the misfortune which had befallen him.

It being a considerable space of time that Houssart lay in confinement in Newgate and even in the condemned hold, he had there, of course, abundance of companions. But of them all he affected none so much as John Shepherd, with whom he had abundance of merry and even loose discourse. Once particularly, when the sparks flew very quickly out of the charcoal fire, he said to Shepherd, *See, see! I wish these were so many bullets that might beat the prison down about our ears, and then I might die like Sampson.*

It was near a month before he was called up to receive sentence, after which he made no scruple of saying that since they had found him guilty of throat-cutting, they should not lie, he would verify their judgment by cutting his own throat. Upon which, when some who were in the same sad state with himself, pointed out to him how great a crime self-murder was, he immediately made answer that he was satisfied it was no crime at all; and upon this he fell to arguing in favour of the mortality of the soul, as if certain that it died with the body, endeavouring to cover his opinions with false glosses on that text in Genesis where it is said, that God breathed into man a living soul. From hence he would have inferred that when a man ceased to live, he totally lost that soul, and when it was asked of him where then it went, he said, he did not know, nor did it concern him much.

The standers-by, who notwithstanding their profligate course of life had a natural abhorrence of this theoretical impiety, reprov'd him in very sharp terms for making use of such expression, upon which he replied, *Ay! would you have me believe all the strange notions that are taught by the parsons? That the devil is a real thing? That our good God punishes souls for ever and ever? That Hell is full of flames from material fire, and that this body of mine shall feel it? Well, you may believe it if you please, but it is so with me that I cannot.*

Sometimes, however, he would lay aside these sceptical opinions for a time, talk in another strain, and appear mightily concerned at the misfortunes he had drawn upon his second wife and child. He would then speak of Providence, and the decrees of God with much seeming submission, would own that he had been guilty of many and grievous offences, say that the punishment of God was just, and desire the prayers of the minister of the place, and those that were about him.

When he reflected on the grief it would give his father, near ninety years old, to hear of his misfortunes and that his son should be shamefully executed for the murder of his wife, he was seen to shed tears and to appear very much affected; but as soon as these thoughts were a little out of his head, he resumed his former temper and was continually asking questions in relation to the truth of the Gospel dispensation, and the doctrines therein taught of rewards and punishments after this life.

Being a Frenchman and not perfectly versed in our language, a minister of the Reformed Church of that nation was prevailed upon to attend him. Houssart received him with tolerable civility, seemed pleased that he should pray by him, but industriously waved aside all discourses of his guilt, and even fell out into violent passions if confession was pressed upon him as a duty. In this strange way he consumed the time allowed him to prepare for another world.

The day before his execution he appeared more than ordinarily attentive at the public devotions in the chapel. A sermon was then made with particular regard to that fact for which he was to die; he heard that also seemingly with much care, but when he was asked immediately after to unburden his conscience in respect of the death of his wife, he not only refused it, but also expressed a great indignation that he should be tormented as he called it, to confess a thing of which he was not guilty.

In the evening of that day the foreign minister and he whose duty it was to attend him, both waited upon him at night in order to discourse with him on those strange notions he had of the mortality of the soul, and a total cessation of being after this life. But when they came to speak to him to this purpose, he said they might spare themselves any arguments upon that head, for he believed a God and a resurrection as firmly as they did. They then discoursed to him of the nature of a sufficient repentance, and of the duty incumbent upon him to confess that great crime for which he was condemned, and thereby give glory unto God. He fell at this into his old temper, and said with some passion, *If you will pray with me, I'll thank you, and pray with you as long as you please; but if you come only to torture me with my guilt, I desire you would let me alone altogether.*

His lawyers having pretty well instructed him in the nature of an appeal, and he coming thereby to know that he was now under sentence of death, at the suit of the subject and not of the King, he was very assiduous to learn where it was he was to apply for a reprieve; but finding it was the relations of his deceased wife from whom he was to expect it, he laid aside all those hopes, as conceiving it rightly a thing impossible to prevail upon people to spare his life, who had almost undone themselves in prosecuting him.

In the morning of the day of execution he was very much disturbed at being refused the Sacrament, which as the minister told him, could not be given him by the canon without his confession. Yet this did not prevail; he said he would die without receiving it, as he had before answered a French minister, who said, *Lewis Houssart, since you are condemned on full evidence, and I see no reason but to believe you guilty, I must, as a just pastor, inform you that if*

*you persist in this denial, and die without confession, you can look for nothing but to be d—; to which Houssart replied, You must look for damnation to yourself for judging me guilty, when you know nothing of the matter.*

This confused frame of mind he continued in until he entered the cart for his execution, persisting in a like declaration of innocence all the way he went, though sometimes intermixed with short prayers to God to forgive his manifold sins and offences.

At the place of execution he turned very pale and grew very sick. The ministers told him they would not pray by him unless he would confess the murder for which he died. He said he was very sorry for that, but if they would not pray by him he could not help it, he would not confess what he was totally ignorant of. Even at the moment of being tied up he persisted and when such exhortations were again repeated, he said: *Pray do not torment me, pray cease troubling me. I tell you I will not make myself worse than I am.* And so saying, he gave up the ghost without any private prayer when left alone or calling upon God or Christ to receive his spirit. He delivered to the minister of Newgate, however, a paper, the copy which follows, from whence my readers will receive a more exact idea of the man from this, his draught of himself, than from any picture I can draw.

The Paper delivered by Lewis Houssart at his death.

I, Lewis Houssart, am forty years old, and was born in Sedan, a town in Champagne, near Boullonois. I have left France above fourteen years. I was apprentice to a surgeon at Amsterdam, and after examination was allowed by the college to be qualified for that business, so that I intended to go on board a ship as surgeon, but I could never have my health at sea. I dwelt sometime at Mæstricht, in the Dutch Brabant, where my aged father and brother now dwell. I travelled through Holland and was in almost every town. My two sisters are in France and also many of my relations, for the earth has scarce any family more numerous than ours. Seven or eight years have I been in London, and here I met with Anne Rondeau, who was born at the same village with me, and therefore I loved her. After I had left her, she wrote to me, and said she would reveal a secret. I promised her to be secret, and she told me she had not been chaste, and the consequence of it was upon her, upon which I gave her my best help and assistance. Since she is dead I hope her soul is happy.

Lewis Houssart

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### **The Life of CHARLES TOWERS, a Minter in Wapping**

Notwithstanding it must be apparent, even to a very ordinary understanding, that the Law must be executed both in civil and criminal cases, and that without such execution those who live under its protection would be very unsafe, yet it happens so that those who feel the smart of its judgment (though drawn upon them by their own misdeeds, follies or misfortunes which the Law of man cannot remedy or prevent) are always clamouring against its supposed severity, and making dreadful complaints of the hardships they from thence sustain. This disposition hath engaged numbers under these unhappy circumstances to attempt screening themselves from the rigour of the laws by sheltering in certain places, where by virtue of their own authority, or rather necessities, they set up a right of exemption and endeavour to establish a power of preserving those who live within certain limits from being prosecuted according to the usual course of the Law.

Anciently, indeed, there were several sanctuaries which depended on the Roman Catholic religion, and which were, of course, destroyed when popery was done away by Law. However, those who had sheltered themselves in them kept up such exemption, and by force withstood whatever civil officers attempted to execute process for debt, and that so vigorously that at length they seemed to have established by prescription what was directly against Law. These pretended privileged places increased at last to such an extent that in the ninth year of King William, the legislature was obliged to make provision by a clause in an Act of Parliament, requiring the sheriffs of London, Middlesex, and Surrey, the head bailiff of the Dutchy Liberty, or the bailiff of Surrey, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, to execute with the assistance of the *posse comitatus* any writ or warrant directed to them for seizing any person within any pretended privilege place such as Whitefriars, the Savoy, Salisbury Court, Ram Alley, Mitre Court, Fuller's Rents, Baldwin's Gardens, Montague Close or the Minories, Mint, Clink, or Dead Man's Place.<sup>[50]</sup> At the same time they ordered the assistance for executing the Law, of any who obey the sheriff or other person or persons in such places as aforesaid, with very great penalties upon persons who attempt to rescue persons from the hands of justice in such place.

This law had a very good effect with respect to all places excepting those within the jurisdiction of the Mint, though not without some struggle. There, however, they still continued to keep up those privileges they had assumed, and accordingly did maintain them by so far misusing persons who attempted to execute processes amongst them, by ducking them in ditches, dragging them through privies or "lay stalls," accompanied by a number of people dressed up in frightful habits, who were summoned upon blowing a horn. All which at last became so very great a grievance that the legislature was again forced to interpose, and by an act of the 9th of the late King, the Mint, as it was commonly called, situated in the parish of St. George's, Southwark, in the county

of Surrey, was taken away, and the punishment of transportation, and even death, inflicted upon such who should persist in maintaining there pretended privileges.

Yet so far did the Government extend its mercy, as to suffer all those who at the time of passing the Act were actually shelterers in the Mint (provided that they made a just discovery of their effects) to be discharged from any imprisonment of their persons for any debts contracted before that time. By this Act of Parliament, the privilege of the Mint was totally taken away and destroyed.

The persons who had so many years supported themselves therein were dissipated and dispersed. But many of them got again into debt, and associating themselves with other persons in the same condition, with unparalleled impudence they attempted to set up (towards Wapping) a new privileged jurisdiction under the title of the Seven Cities of Refuge. In this attempt they were much furthered and directed by one Major Santloe, formerly a Justice of Peace, but being turned out of commission, he came first a shelterer here, and afterwards a prisoner in the Fleet. These people made an addition to these laws which had formerly been established in such illegal sanctuaries, for they provided large books in which they entered the names of persons who entered into their association, swearing to defend one another against all bailiffs and such like. In consequence of which, they very often rescued prisoners out of custody, or even entered the houses of officers for that purposes. Amongst the number of these unhappy people, who by protecting themselves against the lesser judgments of the Law involved themselves in greater difficulties, and at last drew on the greatest and most heavy sentence which it could pronounce, was him we now speak of.

Charles Towers was a person whose circumstances had been bad for many years, and in order to retrieve them he had turned gamester. For a guinea or two, it seems, he engaged for the payment of a very considerable debt for a friend, who not paying it at his time, Towers was obliged to fly for shelter into the Old Mint, then in being. He went into the New, which was just then setting up, and where the Shelterers took upon them to act more licentiously and with greater outrages towards officers of Justice than the people in any other places had done. Particularly they erected a tribunal on which a person chosen for that purpose sat as a judge with great state and solemnity. When any bailiff had attempted to arrest persons within the limits which they assumed for their jurisdiction, he was seized immediately by a mob of their own people, and hurried before the judge of their own choosing. There a sort of charge or indictment was preferred against him, for attempting to disturb the peace of the Shelterers within the jurisdiction of the Seven Cities of Refuge. Then they examined certain witnesses to prove this, and thereupon pretending to convict such bailiff as a criminal, he was sentenced by their judge aforesaid to be whipped or otherwise punished as he thought fit, which was executed frequently in the most cruel and barbarous manner, by dragging him through ditches and other nasty places, tearing his clothes off his back, and even endangering his life.

One West, who had got amongst them, being arrested by John Errington, who carried him to his house by Wapping Wall, the Shelterers in the New Mint no sooner heard thereof, but assembling on a Sunday morning in a great number, with guns, swords, staves, and other offensive weapons, they went to the house of the said John Errington, and there terrifying and affrighting the persons in the house rescued John West, pursuant, as they said, to their oaths, he being registered as a protected person in their books of the Seven Cities of Refuge. In this expedition Charles Towers was very forward, being dressed with only a blue pea-jacket, without hat, wig or shirt, with a large stick like a quarter-staff in his hand, his face and breast being so blackened that it appeared to be done with soot and grease, contrary to the Statute made against those called The Waltham Blacks, and done after the first day of June, 1723, when that Statute took place.

Upon an indictment for this, the fact being very fully and dearly proved, notwithstanding his defence, which was that he was no more disguised than his necessity obliged him to be, not having wherewith to provide himself clothes, and his face perhaps dirty and daubed with mud, the jury found him guilty, and he thereupon received sentence of death.

Before the execution of that sentence, he insisted strenuously on his innocence as to the point on which he was found guilty and condemned, viz., having his face blacked and disguised within the intent and meaning of the Statute, but he readily acknowledged that he had been often present and assisted at such mock courts of justice as were held in the New Mint, though he absolutely denied sitting as judge when one Mr. Westwood, a bailiff, was most abominably abused by an order of that pretended court. He seemed fully sensible of the ills and injuries he had committed by being concerned amongst such people, but often said that he thought the bailiffs had sufficiently revenged themselves by the cruel treatment they had used the riotous persons with, when they fell within their power, particularly since they hacked and chopped a carpenter's right arm in such a manner that it was obliged to be cut off; had abused others in so terrible a degree that they were not able to work, or do anything for their living. He himself had received several large cuts over the head, which though received six weeks before, yet were in a very bad condition at the time of his death.

As to disguises, he constantly averred they were never practised in the New Mint. He owned they had had some masquerades amongst them, to which himself amongst others had gone in the dress of a miller, and his face all covered with white, but as to any blacking or other means to prevent his face being known when he rescued West he had none, but on the contrary was in his usual habit as all the rest were that accompanied him. He framed as well as he could a petition

for mercy, setting forth the circumstances of the thing, and the hardship he conceived it to be to suffer upon the bare construction of an Act of Parliament. He set forth likewise, the miserable condition of his wife and two children already, she being also big of a third. This petition she presented to his Majesty at the Council Chamber door, but the necessity there was of preventing such combinations for obstructing justice, rendered it of no effect. Upon her return, and Towers being acquainted with the result, he said he was contented, that he went willingly into a land of quiet from a world so troublesome and so tormenting as this had been to him. Then he kneeled down and prayed with great fervency and devotion, after which he appeared very composed and showed no rage against the prosecutor and witnesses who had brought on his death, as is too often the case with men in his miserable condition.

On the day appointed for his execution, he was carried in a cart to a gallows whereon he was to suffer in Wapping, the crowd, as is not common on such occasions, lamenting him, and pouring down showers of tears, he himself behaving with great calmness and intrepidity. After prayers had been said, he stood up in the cart, and turning towards the people, professed his innocence in being in a disguise at the time of rescuing Mr. West, and with the strongest asserverations said that it was Captain Buckland and not himself who sat as judge upon Mr. Jones the bailiff, though, as he complained, he had been ill-used while he remained a prisoner upon that score. To this he added that for the robberies and thefts with which he was charged, they were falsities, as he was a dying man. Money indeed, he said, might be shaken out of the breeches pocket of the bailiff when he was ditched, but that whether it was or was not so, he was no judge, for he never saw any of it. That as to any design of breaking open Sir Isaac Tiliard's house, he was innocent of that also. In fine, he owned that the judgment of God was exceeding just for the many offences he committed, but that the sentence of the Law was too severe, because, as he understood it, he had done nothing culpable within the intent of the Statute on which he died. After this, he inveighed for some time against bailiffs, and then crying with vehemency to God to receive his spirit, he gave up the ghost on the 4th of January, 1724-5.

However the death of Towers might prevent people committing such acts as breaking open the houses of bailiffs, and setting prisoners at liberty, yet it did not quite stifle or destroy those attempts which necessitous people made for screening themselves from public justice, insomuch that the Government were obliged at last to cause a Bill to be brought into Parliament for the preventing such attempts for the future, whereupon in the 11th year of the late King, it passed into a law to this effect:

That if any number of persons not less than three, associate themselves together in the hamlet of Wapping, Stepney, or in any other place within the bills of mortality, in order to shelter themselves from their debts, after complaint made thereof by presentment of a grand jury, and should obstruct any officer legally empowered and authorised in the execution of any writ or warrant against any person whatsoever, and in such obstructing or hindering should hurt, wound or injure any person; then any offender convicted of such offence, should suffer as a felon and be transported for seven years in like manner as other persons are so convicted. And it is further enacted by the same law that upon application made to the judge of any Court, out of which the writs therein mentioned are issued, the aforesaid judge, if he see proper, may grant a warrant directly to the sheriff, or other person proper to raise the *posse comitatus*, where there is any probability of resistance. And if in the execution of such warrant any disturbance should happen, and a rescue be made, then the persons assisting in such rescue, or who harbour or conceal the persons so rescued, shall be transported for seven years in like manner as if convicted of felony, but all indictments upon this statute are to be commenced within six months after the fact committed.

[50]

Ram Alley was on the south side of Fleet Street, between Sergeants' Inn and Mitre Court; Fuller's Rents is now Fulwood Place, Holborn; Baldwin's Gardens runs from Gray's Inn Road to Leather Lane; Montague Close was on the Southwark side, near London Bridge; Dead Man's Place was a crooked street at the east end of Bankside.

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### **The Life of THOMAS ANDERSON, a Scotch Thief**

Amongst a multitude of tragical adventures it is with some satisfaction that I mention the life of a person who was of the number of those few which take warning in time, and having once felt the rod of affliction, fear it ever afterwards.

Thomas Anderson was the son of reputable parents in the city of Aberdeen, in Scotland. His father was of the number of those unhappy people who went over to Darien when the Scots made their settlement there in the reign of the late King William, his son Thomas being left under the care of his mother then a widow. By this his education suffered, and he was put apprentice to a glazier, although his father had been a man of some fashion, and the boy always educated with hopes of living genteelly. However, he is not the first that has been so deceived, though he took it so to heart that at first going to his master his grief was so great as had very nigh killed him. He continued, however, with his master two years, and then making bold with about nine guineas of his, and thirteen of his mother's, he procured a horse and made the greatest speed he could to Edinburgh.

Tom was sensible enough that he should be pursued, and hearing of a ship ready to sail from



Leith for London, he went on board it, and in five days' time having a fair wind they arrived in the river of Thames. As soon as he got on shore Tom had the precaution to take lodging in a little street near Bur Street in Wapping, there he put his things; and his stock now being dwindled to twelve guineas, he put two of them in his fob, with his mother's old gold watch, which he had likewise brought along with him, and then went out to see the town. He had not walked far in Fleet Street, whither he had conveyed himself by boat, but he was saluted by a well-dressed woman, in a tone almost as broad as his own. Conscious of what he had committed he thought it was somebody that knew him and would have taken him up. He turned thereupon pale, and started. The woman observing his surprise, said, *Sir, I beg your pardon I took you for one Mr. Johnson, of Hull, my near relation; but I see you are not the same gentleman, though you are very like him.*

Anderson thereupon taking heart, walked a little way with her, and the woman inviting him to drink tea at her lodgings, he accepted it readily, and away they went together to the bottom of Salisbury Court, where the woman lived. After tea was over, so many overtures were made that our new-come spark was easily drawn into an amour, and after a considerable time spent in parley, it was at last agreed that he should pass for her husband newly come from sea; and this being agreed upon, the landlady was called up, and the story told in form. The name the woman assumed was that of Johnson, and Tom consequently was obliged to go by the same. So after compliments expressed on all sides for his safe return, a supper was provided, and about ten o'clock they went to bed together.

Whether anything had been put in the drink, or whether it was only owing to the quantity he had drunk, he slept very soundly until 11 o'clock in the morning, when he was awakened by a knocking at the door; upon getting up to open it, he was a little surprised at finding the woman gone and more so at seeing the key thrown under the door. However, he took it up and opened it: his landlady then delivered him a letter, which as soon as she was gone he opened, and found it to run in these terms:

Dear Sir,

You must know that for about three years I have been an unfortunate woman, that is, have conversed with many of your sex, as I have done with you. I need not tell you that you made me a present of what money you had about you last night, after the reckoning over the way at The George was paid. I told my landlady when I went out this morning that I was going to bring home some linen for shirts; you had best say so too, and so you may go away without noise, for as I owe her above three pound for lodging, 'tis odds but that as you said last night you were my husband, she will put you in trouble, and that I think would be hard, for to be sure you have paid dear enough for your frolic. I hope you will forgive this presumption, and I am yours next time you meet me.

Jane Johnson

Tom was not a little chagrined at this accident, especially when he found that not only the remainder of the two guineas, but also his mother's gold watch, and a gold chain and ring was gone into the bargain. However, he thought it best to take the woman's word, and so coming down and putting on the best air he could, he told his landlady he hoped his wife would bring the linen home time enough to go to breakfast, and that in the meanwhile he would go to the coffee-house, and read the news. The woman said it was very well, and Tom getting to the waterside, directed them to row to the stairs nearest to his lodging by Bur Street, ruminating all the way he went on the accident which had befallen him.

The rumours of Jonathan Wild, then in the zenith of his glory, had somehow or other reached the ears of our North Briton. He thereupon mentioned him to the watermen, who perceiving that he was a stranger, and hoping to get a pot of drink for the relation, obliged him with the best account they were able of Mr. Wild and his proceedings. As soon, therefore, as Anderson came home, he put the other two guineas in his pocket, and over he came in a coach to the Old Bailey, where Mr. Wild had just then set up in his office, Mr. Anderson being introduced in form, acquainted him in good blunt Scotch how he had lost his money and his watch. Jonathan used him very civilly, and promised his utmost diligence in recovering it. Tom being willing to save money, enquired of him his way home by land on foot, and having received instructions he set out accordingly. About the middle of Cheapside a well-dressed gentleman came up to him. *Friend,* says he, *I have heard you ask five or six people, as I followed you, your way to Bur Street. I am going thither and so if you'll walk along with me, 'twill save you the labour of asking further questions.*

Tom readily accepted the gentleman's civility, and so on they trudged, until they came within twenty yards of the place, and into Tom's knowledge. *Young man,* then says the stranger, *since I have shown you the way home you must not refuse drinking a pint with me at a tavern hard by, of my acquaintance.* No sooner were they entered and sat down, but a third person was introduced into their company, as an acquaintance of the former. A good supper was provided, and when they had drunk about a pint of wine apiece, says the gentleman who brought him thither to Anderson, *You seem an understanding young fellow. I fancy your circumstances are not of the best. Come, if you have a tolerable head and any courage, I'll put you in a way to live as easy as you can wish.*

Tom pricked up his ears upon this motion, and told him that truly, as to his circumstances, he had

guessed very right, but that he wished he would be so good as to put him into any road of living like a gentleman. *For to say the truth, sir,* says he, *it was with that view I left my own country to come up to London.*

*Well spoken, my lad,* says the other, *and like a gentleman thou shalt live. But hark ye, are you well acquainted with the men of quality's families about Aberdeen? Yes, sir,* says he. *Well then,* replied the stranger, *do you know none of them who has a son about your age? Yes, yes,* replied Tom, *My Lord J—— sent his eldest son to our college at Aberdeen to be bred, and he and I are much alike, and not above ten days difference in our ages. Why then,* replied the spark, *it will do, and here's to your honour's health. Come, from this time forward, you are the Honourable Mr. ——, son and heir apparent to the Right Honourable, the Lord ——.*

To make the story short, these sharpers equipped him like the person they put him upon the town to be, and lodging him at the house of a Scotch merchant who was in the secret, with no less than three footmen all in proper livery to attend him. In the space of ten days' time, they took up effect upon his credit to the amount of a thousand pounds. Tom was cunning enough to lay his hands on a good diamond ring, two suits of clothes, and a handsome watch, and improved mightily from a fortnight's conversation with these gentlemen. He foresaw the storm would quickly begin, the news of his arrival under the name he had assumed, having been in the papers a week; so to prevent what might happen to himself, he sends his three footmen on different errands, and making up his clothes and some holland shirts into a bundle, called a coach and drove off to Bur Street, where having taken the remainder of his things that had been there ever since his coming to town, he bid the fellow drive him to the house of a person near St. Catherine's, to whom he had known his mother direct letters when in Scotland.

Yet recollecting in the coach that by this means he might be discovered by his relations, he called to the coachman before he reached there, and remembering an inn in Holborn, which he had heard spoken of by the Scotch merchant, where he had lodged in his last adventure, bid the fellow drive thither, saying he was afraid to be out late, and if he made haste he would give him a shilling. When he came thither and had had his two portmanteaus carried into the inn, pretending to be very sick he went immediately upstairs to bed, having first ordered a pint of wine to be burnt and brought upstairs.

Reflecting in the night on the condition he was in and the consequence of the measures he was taking, he resolved with himself to abandon his ill-courses at once and try to live honestly in some plantation of the West Indies. These meditations kept him pretty much awake, so that it was late in the morning before he arose. Having ordered coffee for his breakfast, he gave the chamberlain a shilling to go and fetch the newspapers, where the first thing he saw was an account of his own cheat in the body of the paper, and at the end of it an advertisement with a reward for apprehending him. This made him very uneasy, and the rather because he had no clothes but those which he had taken up as aforesaid; so he ordered the chamberlain to send for a tailor, and pretended to be so much indisposed that he could not get out. When the tailor came, he directed him to make him a riding suit with all the expedition he could. The tailor promised it in two days' time. The next day, pretending to be still worse, he sent the chamberlain to take a place for him in the Bristol coach, which being done, he removed himself and his things early in the morning to the inn where it lay, and set out the next day undiscovered for Bristol.

Three days after his arrival he met with a captain bound for the West Indies, with whom having agreed for a passage, he set sail for Jamaica. But a fresh gale at sea accidentally damaging their rudder, they were obliged to come to an anchor in Cork, where the captain himself and several other passengers went on shore. Anderson accompanied him to the coffee-house, where calling for the papers that last came in, he had like to have swooned at the table on finding himself to have been discovered at Bristol, and to have sailed in such a ship the day before the persons came down to apprehend him in order to his being carried back to London.

As soon as he came a little to himself, he stepped up to the man of the house and asked him for the vault [privy], which being shown him, he immediately threw the paper down; and as soon as he came out, finding the captain ready to go, he accompanied him with great satisfaction on board again, where things being set to rights, by the next day at ten o'clock they sailed with a fair wind, and without any further cross accident arrived safe at Jamaica. There Tom had the good luck to pick up a woman with a tolerable fortune, and about three years later remitted £300 home to the jeweller who had been defrauded of the watch and the ring, and directed him to pay what was over, after deducting his own debt, to the people who had trusted him with other things, and who upon his going off had recovered most of them, and were by this means made a tolerable satisfaction.

He resided in the West Indies for about five years in all, and in that time, by his own industry acquired a very handsome fortune of his own, and therewith returned to Scotland.

I should be very glad if this story would incline some people who have got money in not such honest ways (though perhaps less dangerous) to endeavour at extenuating the crimes they have been guilty of, by making such reparation as in their power, by which at once they atone for their fault, and regain their lost reputation; but I am afraid this advice may prove both unsuccessful and unseasonable and therefore shall proceed in my narrations as the course of these memoirs directs me.

There cannot, perhaps, be a greater misfortune to a man than his having a woman of ill-principles about him, whether as a wife or otherwise. When they once lay aside principles either of modesty or honesty, women become commonly the most abandoned; and as their sex renders them capable of seducing, so their vices tempt them not often to persuade men to such crimes as otherwise, perhaps, they would never have thought of. This was the case of the malefactor, the story of whose misfortunes we are now to relate.

Joseph Picken was the son of a tailor in Clerkenwell, who worked hard at his employment and took pleasure in nothing but providing for, and bringing up his family. This unhappy son, Joseph, was his darling, and nothing grieved him so much upon his death-bed, as the fears of what might befall the boy, being then an infant of five years old. However, his mother, though a widow, took so much care of his education, that he was well enough instructed for the business she designed him, viz., that of a vintner, to which profession he was bound at a noted tavern near Billingsgate.

He served his time very faithfully and with great approbation, but falling in love, or to speak more properly, taking a whim of marriage in his head, he accepted of a young woman in the neighbourhood as his partner for life. Soon after this, he removed to Windsor, where he took the tap at a well-accustomed inn, and began the world in a very probable way of doing well. However, partly through his own misfortunes, and partly through the extravagance of his wife, in a little more than a twelve months' time he found himself thirty pound in debt, and in no likelihood from his trade of getting money to pay it. This made him very melancholy, and nothing added so great a weight to his load of affliction as the uneasiness he was under at the misfortunes which might befall his wife, to whom as yet this fall in his circumstances was not known.

However, fearing it would be soon discovered in another way, at last he mentioned it to her, at the same time telling her that she must retrench her expenses, for he was now so far from being able to support them that he could hardly get him family bread. Her mother and she thereupon removed to a lodging, where by the side of the bed, poor Picken used to slumber upon the boards, heavily disconsolate with the weight of his misfortunes. One day after talking of them to his wife, he said: *I am now quite at my wits' end. I have no way left to get anything to support us; what shall I do? Do,* answered she, *why, what should a man do that wants money and has any courage, but go upon the highway.*

The poor man, not knowing how else to gain anything, even took her advice, and recollecting a certain companion of his who had once upon a time offered the same expedient for relieving their joint misfortunes, Picken thereupon found him out, and without saying it was his wife's proposal, pretended that his sorrows had at last so prevailed upon him that he was resolved to repair the injuries of Fortune by taking away something from those she had used better than him. His comrade unhappily addicted himself still to his old way of thinking, and instead of dissuading him from his purpose, seemed pleased that he had taken such a resolution. He told him that for his part he always thought danger rather to be chosen than want, and that while soldiers hazarded their lives in war for sixpence a day, he thought it was cowardice to make a man starve, where he had a chance of getting so much more than those who hazarded as much as they did.

Accordingly Picken and his companion provided themselves that week with all necessaries for their expedition, and going upon it in the beginning of the next, set out and had success, as they called it, in two or three enterprises. But returning to London in the end of the week, they were apprehended for a robbery committed on one Charles Cooper, on Finchley Common, for which they were tried the next sessions, and both capitally convicted.

Through fear of death and want of necessaries, Joseph Picken fell into a low and languishing state of health, under which, however, he gave all the signs of penitence and sorrow that could be expected for the crimes he had committed. Yet though he loaded his wife with the weight of all his crimes, he forebore any harsh or shocking reproaches against her, saying only that as she had brought him into all the miseries he now felt, so she had left him to bear the weight of them alone, without either ever coming near him, or affording him any assistance. However, he said he was so well satisfied of the multitude of his own sins, and the need he had of forgiveness from God, that he thought it a small condition to forgive her, which he did freely from his heart.

In these sentiments he took the Holy Sacrament, and continued with great calmness to wait the execution of his sentence. In the passage to execution and even at the fatal tree, he behaved himself with amazing circumstances of quietness and resignation, and though he appeared much less fearful than any of those who died with him, yet he parted with life almost as soon as the cart was drawn away. He was about twenty-two years of age, or somewhat more, at the time he suffered, which was on the 24th of February, 1724-5, much pitied by the spectators, and much lamented by those that knew him.

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### **The Life of THOMAS PACKER, a Highwayman**

Thomas Packer, the companion of the last-named criminal both in his crimes and in his punishment, was the son of very honest and reputable parents, not far from Newgate Street. His father gave him a competent education, designing always to put him in a trade, and as soon as he was fit for it placed him accordingly with a vintner at Greenwich. There he served for some years, but growing out of humour with the place, he made continual instances to his friends to be removed. They, willing and desirous to comply with the young man's honours, at length after

repeated solicitation prevailed with his master to consent, and then he was removed to another tavern in town. There he completed his time, but ever after being of a rambling disposition, was continually changing places and never settled.

Amongst those in which he had lived, there was a tavern where he resided as a drawer for about six weeks. Here he got into acquaintance of a woman, handsome, indeed, but of no fortune, and little reputation. His affection for this woman and the money he spent on her, was the chief occasion of those wants which prevailed upon him to join with Picken in those attempts which were fatal to them both. It cannot, indeed, be said that the woman in any degree excited him to such practices. On the contrary, the poor creature really endeavoured by every method she could to procure money for their support, and did all that in her lay (while Packer was under his misfortunes) to prevent the necessities of life from hindering him in that just care which was necessary to secure his interest in that which was to come.

Packer was in himself a lad of very great good nature, and not without just principles if he had been well improved, but the rambling life he had led, and his too tender affection for the before-mentioned woman, led him into great crimes rather than he would see her sustain great wants. The reflection which he conceived his death would bring upon his parents, and the miseries which he dreaded it would draw upon his wife and child, seemed to press him heavier than any apprehension for himself to his own sufferings, which from the time of his commitment he bore with the greatest patience, and improved to the utmost of his power. As he was sensible there was no hopes of remaining in this world, so he immediately removed his thought, his wishes and his hopes from thence, applied himself seriously to his devotions, and never suffered even the woman whom he so much loved to interfere or hinder them in any degree.

As it had been his first week of robbing, and his last too, he had little confession to make in that respect. He acknowledged, however, the fact which they had done in that space, and seemed to be heartily penitent, ashamed and sorry for his offences. At the place of execution he behaved with the same decency which accompanied him through all the sorrowful stations of his sad condition. He was asked whether he would say anything to the people, but he declined it, though he had a paper in his hand which he had designed to read, which for the satisfaction of the public, I have thought fit to annex.

The paper left by Thomas Packer.

Good People,

I see a large number of you assembled here, to behold a miserable end of us whom the Law condemns to death for our offence, and for the sake of giving you warning, makes us in our last moments, public spectacles. I submit with the utmost resignation to the stroke of the Law, and I heartily pray Almighty God that the sight of my shameful death, may inspire every one of you with lasting resolutions of leading an honest life. The facts for which both Picken and I die were really committed by us, and consequently the sentence under which we suffer, is very just. Let me then press ye again that the warnings of our deaths may not be in vain, but that you will remember our fate, and by urging that against your depraved wishes, prevent following our steps; which is all I have to say.

Thomas Packer

He was about twenty years of age at the time he suffered, which was with the afore-mentioned malefactor at Tyburn, much pitied by all the spectators.

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### **The Life of THOMAS BRADLEY, a Street-Robber**

One must want humanity and be totally void of that tenderness which denominates both a man and a Christian if we feel not some pity for those who are brought to a violent and shameful death from a sudden and rash act, excited either by necessity or through the frailty of human nature sinking under misfortune or hurried into mischief by a sudden transport of passion. I am persuaded, therefore, that the greater part, if not all of my readers will feel the same emotions of tenderness and compassion for the miserable youth of whom I am now going to speak.

Thomas Bradley was the son of an officer in the Custom-House at Liverpool. The father took care of his education, and having qualified him for a seafaring business in reading and writing, placed him therein. He came up accordingly with the master of a vessel to London, where some misfortunes befalling the said master, Thomas was turned out of his employment and left to shift for himself. Want pinched him. He had no friends, nor anybody to whom he might apply for relief, and in the anguish with which his sufferings oppressed him, he unfortunately resolved to steal rather than submit to starving or to begging. One fact he committed, but could never be prevailed on to mention the time, the person or the place.

The robbery for which he was condemned was upon a woman carrying home another woman's riding-hood which she had borrowed; and he assaulting her on the highway took it from her, which was valued at 25s. Upon this he was capitally convicted at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, nor could never be prevailed on by a person to apply for a pardon. On the contrary, he said it was his greatest grief that notwithstanding all he could do to stifle it, the news would

reach his father, and break his heart. He was told that such thoughts were better omitted than suffered to disturb him, when he was on the point of going to another (and if he repented thoroughly) to a better life; at which he sighed and said their reasoning was very right, and he would comply with it if he could. From that time he appeared more composed and cheerful, and resigned to his fate. This temper he preserved to the time of his execution, and died with as much courage and penitence as is ever seen in any of those unhappy persons who suffer at the same place.

At the time of his death he was not quite nineteen years of age. He died between the last mentioned malefactor and him whose life we are next to relate.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM LIPSAT, a Thief**

William Lipsat was the son of a person at Dublin, in very tolerable circumstances, which he strained to the utmost to give this lad a tolerable education. When he had acquired this he sent him over to an uncle of his at Stockden, in Worcestershire, where he lived with more indulgence than even when at home, his uncle having no children, and behaving to him with all the tenderness of a parent. However, on some little difference (the boy having long had an inclination to see this great City of London) he took that occasion to go away from his uncle, and accordingly came up to town, and was employed in the service of one Mr. Kelway. He had not been long there before he received a letter from his father, entreating him to return to Dublin with all the speed he was able. This letter was soon followed by another, which not only desired, but commanded him to come back to Ireland. He was not troubled at thinking of the voyage and going home to his friends, but he was very desirous of carrying money over with him to make a figure amongst his relations, which not knowing how to get, he at last bethought himself of stealing it from a place in which he knew it lay. After several struggles with himself, vanity prevailed, and he accordingly went and took away the things, viz., 57 guineas and a half, 25 Caroluses,<sup>[51]</sup> 5 Jacobuses, 3 Moidores, six piece of silver, two purses valued at twelve pence. These, as he said, would have made his journey pleasant and his reception welcome, which was the reason he took them. The evidence was very dear and direct against him, so that the jury found him guilty without hesitation.

From the time of his condemnation to the day he died, he neither affected to extenuate his crime, nor reflect, as some are apt to do, on the cruelty of the prosecutors, witnesses, or the Court that condemned him. So far from it, that he always acknowledged the justice of his sentence, seemed grieved only for the greatness of his sin and the affliction of the punishment of it would bring upon his relations, who had hitherto always born the best of characters, though by his failing they were now like to be stigmatised with the most infamous crimes. However, since his grief came now too late, he resolved as much as he was able to keep such thoughts out of his head, and apply himself to what more nearly concerned him, and for which all the little time he had was rather too short. In a word, in his condition, none behaved with more gravity, or to outward appearance with more penitence than this criminal did.

He suffered with the same resignation which had appeared in everything he did from the time of his condemnation, on the 1st of February, 1724-5, with the before-mentioned malefactors, being then scarce eighteen years of age.

[51]

Carolus was a gold coin of Charles I, worth 20s.-23s.; a Jacobus, coined by James I, was of the same value; the moidore was worth about 27s.

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### **The Life of JOHN HEWLET, a Murderer**

There are several facts which have happened in the world, the circumstances attending which, if we compare them as they are related by one or other, we can hardly fix in our own mind any certainty of belief concerning them, such an equality is there in the weight of evidence of one side and of the other. Such, at the time it happened, was the case of the malefactor before us.

John Hewlet was born in Warwickshire, the son of Richard Hewlet, a butcher, and though not bred up with his father, he was yet bred to the same employment at Leicester, from which, malicious people said he acquired a bloody and barbarous disposition. However, he did not serve his time out with his master, but being a strong, sturdy young fellow, and hoping some extraordinary preferment in the army, with that view he engaged himself in the First Regiment of the Guards, during the reign of the late King William.

In the war he gained the reputation of a very brave, but a very cruel and very rough fellow, and therefore was relied on by his officers, yet never liked by them. Persons of a similar disposition generally live on good terms with one another. Hewlet found out a corporal, one Blunt, much of the same humour with himself, never pleased when in safety, nor afraid though in the midst of danger.

At the siege of Namur, in Flanders, these fellows happened to be both in the trenches when the French made a desperate sally and were beaten off at last with much loss and in such confusion that their pursuers lodged themselves in one of the outworks, and had like to have gained

another, in the attack on which a young cadet of the regiment in which Blunt served was killed. Blunt observing it, went to the commanding officer and told him that the cadet had nineteen pistoles in his pocket, and it was a shame the French should have them. *Why, that's true, corporal,* said the Colonel, *but I don't see at present how we can help it.* No, replied Blunt, *give me but leave to go and search his pockets, and I'll answer for bringing the money back.* *Why, fool,* said the Colonel, *dost thou not see the place covered with French? Should a man stir from hence they would pour a whole shower of small shot upon him. I'll venture that,* says Blunt. *But how will you know the body?* added the Colonel. *I am afraid we have left a score besides him behind us.* *Why, look ye, sir,* said the Corporal, *let me have no more objections, and I'll answer that, he was clapped, good Colonel, do you see, and that to some purpose; so that if I can't know him by his face, I may know him by somewhat else.* Well, said the Colonel, *if you have a mind to be knocked on the head, and take it ill to be denied, you must go, I think.*

On which Blunt, waiting for no further orders, marched directly in the midst of the enemy's fire to the dead bodies, which lay within ten yards of the muzzle of their pieces, and turning over several of the dead bodies, he distinguished that of the cadet, and brought away the prize for which he had so fairly ventured.

This action put Hewlet on his mettle. He resolved to do something that might equal it, and an opportunity offered some time after, of performing such a service as no man in the army would have undertaken. It happened thus: the engineer who was to set fire to the train of a mine which had been made under a bastion of the enemy's, happened to have drank very hard over night, and mistaking the hour, laid the match an hour sooner than he ought. A sentinel immediately came out, called out aloud, *What, have you clapped fire to the train? There's twenty people in the mine who will be all blown up; it should not have been fired till 12 o'clock.*

On hearing this Hewlet ran in with his sword drawn, and therewith cut off the train the moment before it would have given fire to all the barrels of powder that were within, by which he saved the lives of all the pioneers who were carrying the mines still forward at the time the wild fire was unseasonably lighted by the engineer.

At the battle of Landau he had his skull broken open by a blow from the butt end of a musket. This occasioned his going through the operation called trepanning, which is performed by an engine like a coffee-mill, which being fixed on the bruised part of the bone, is turned round, and cuts out all the black till the edges appear white and sound. After this cure had been performed upon him, he never had his senses in the same manner as he had before, but upon the least drinking fell into a passion which was but very little removed from madness.

He returned into England after the Peace of Ryswick, and being taken into a gentleman's service, he there married a wife, by whom he had nine children. Happy was it for them that they were all dead before his disastrous end.

How Hewlet came to be employed as a watchman a little before his death, the papers I have give me no account of, only that he was in that station at the time of the death of Joseph Candy, for whose murder he was indicted for giving him a mortal bruise on the head with his staff.

On the 26th of December, 1724, upon full evidences of eye-witnesses, the jury found him guilty, he making no other defence than great assertions of his innocence, and an obstinate denial of the fact. After his conviction, being visited in the condemned hold, instead of showing any marks of penitence or contrition, he raved against the witnesses who had been produced to destroy him, called them all perjured, and prayed God to inflict some dreadful judgment on them. Nay, he went so far as to desire that he ought himself have the executing thereof, wishing that after his death his apparition might come and terrify them to their graves. When it was represented to him how odd this behaviour was, and how far distant from that calmness and tranquillity of mind with which it became him to clothe himself before he went into the presence of his Maker, these representations had no effect; he still continued to rave against his accusers, and against the witnesses who had sworn at his trial. As death grew nearer he appeared not a bit terrified, nor seemed uneasy at all at leaving this life, only at leaving his wife, and as he phrased it, some old acquaintance in Warwickshire. However, he desired to receive the Sacrament, and said he would prepare himself for it as well as he could.

He went to the place of execution in the same manner in which he had passed the days of his confinement till that time. At Tyburn he was not satisfied with protesting his innocence to the people, but designing to have one of the Prayer Books which was made use of in the cart, he kissed it as people do when they take oath, and then again turning to the mob, declared as he was a dying man, he never gave Candy a blow in his life. Thus with many ejaculations he gave way to fate in an advanced age at Tyburn, at the same time with the malefactors last mentioned.

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## **The Lives of JAMES CAMMEL and WILLIAM MARSHAL, Thieves and Footpads**

James Cammel was born of parents in very low circumstances, and the misfortunes arising therefrom were much increased by his father dying while he was an infant, and leaving him to the care of a widow in the lowest circumstances of life. The consequence was what might be easily foreseen, for he forgot what little he had learned in his youngest days, loitering away his time about Islington, Hoxton, Moorfield, and such places, being continually drinking there, and

playing at cudgels, skittles, and such like. He never applied himself to labour or honest working for his bread, but either got it from his mother or a few other friends, or by methods of a more scandalous nature—I mean pilfering and stealing from others, for which after he had long practised it, he came at last to an untimely death.

He was a fellow of a froward disposition, hasty and yet revengeful, and made up of almost all the vices that go to forming a debauchee in low life. He had had a long acquaintance with the person that suffered with him for their offences, but what made him appear in the worst light was that he had endeavoured to commit acts of cruelty at the time he did the robbery. Notwithstanding he insisted not only that he was innocent of the latter part of the offence but that he never committed the robbery at all, though Marshal his associate did not deny it.

They had been together in these exploits for some time, and once particularly coming from Sadlers Wells, they took from a gentlewoman a basket full of bed-child linen to a very great value, which offering to sell to a woman in Monmouth Street, she privately sent for a constable to apprehend them. One of their companions who went with them observing this, he tipped them the wink to be gone, which the old woman of the house perceiving, caught hold of Marshal by the coat; and while they struggled, the third man whipped off a gold watch, a silver collar and bells, and a silver plate for holding snuffers, and pretending to interpose in the quarrel slipped through them, and out at the door, as Cammel and Marshal did immediately after him.

Once upon a time it happened that Marshal had no money, and his credit being at a par, and a warrant out to take him for a great debt, and another to take him for picking of pockets, he was in a great quandary how to escape both. He strolled into St. James's Park, and walking there pretty late behind the trees, a woman came up to the seat directly before him, when she fell to roaring and crying. Marshal being unseen, clapped himself down behind the seat, and listened with great attention. He perceived the woman had her pocket in her hand, and heard her distinctly say that a rogue not to be contented with cutting one pocket and taking it away, but he must cut the other and let it drop at her foot. Then she wiped her eyes and laying down her pocket by her, began to shake her petticoats to see if the other pocket had not lodged between them as the former had done. So Marshal took the opportunity and secretly conveyed that away, thinking one lamentation might serve for both. Upon turning the pocket out, he found only a thread paper, a housewife and a crown piece. Upon this crown piece he lived a fortnight at a milk-house, coming twice a day for milk, and hiding himself at nights in some of the grass plots, it being summer.

But his creditor dying, and the person whose pocket he had picked going to Denmark, he came abroad again, and soon after engaged with Cammel in the fact for which they were both hanged. It was committed upon a man and a woman coming through the fields from Islington, and the things they took did not amount to above 30 shillings. After they were convicted and had received sentence of death, Cammel sent for *The Practice of Piety*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, and such other good books as he thought might assist him in the performance of their duty. Yet notwithstanding all the outward appearance of resignation to the Divine Will, the Sunday before his execution, upon the coming in to the chapel of a person whom he took to be his prosecutor, he flew into a very great passion, and expressed his uneasiness that he had no instrument there to murder him with; and notwithstanding all that could be said to him to abate his passion, he continued restless and uneasy until the person was obliged to withdraw, and then with great attention applied himself to hear the prayers, and discourse that was made proper for that occasion.

Marshal in the meanwhile continued very sick, but though he could not attend the chapel, did all that could be expected from a true penitent. In this condition they both continued until the time of their death, when Marshal truly acknowledged the fact, but Cammel prevaricated about it, and at last peremptorily denied it. They suffered on the 30th of April, 1725, Cammel appearing with an extraordinary carelessness and unconcern, desired them to put him out of the world quickly, and was very angry that they did not do it in less time.

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### **The Life of JOHN GUY, a Deer-stealer**

One would have thought that the numerous executions which had happened upon the appearance of those called the Waltham Blacks,<sup>[52]</sup> and the severity of that Act of Parliament which their folly had occasioned, would effectually have prevented any outrages for the future upon either the forests belonging to the Crown, or the parks of private gentlemen; but it seems there were still fools capable of undertaking such mad exploits.

It is said that Guy being at a public house with a young woman whom, as the country people phrase it, was his sweetheart, a discourse arose at supper concerning the expeditions of the deer-stealers, which Guy's mistress took occasion to express great admiration of, and to regard them as so many heroes, who had behaved with courage enough to win the most obdurate heart, adding that she was very fond of venison, and she wished she had known some of them. This silly accident proved fatal to the poor fellow, who engaging with one Biddisford, an old deer-stealer, they broke into such forests and parks and carried off abundance of deer with impunity. But the keepers at last getting a number of stout young fellows to their assistance, waylaid them one night, when they were informed by the keeper of an alehouse that Guy and Biddisford intended to come for deer.

I must inform my reader that the method these young men took in deer-stealing was this. They

went into the park on foot, sometimes with a crossbow, and sometimes with a couple of dogs, being armed always, however, with pistols for their own defence. When they had killed a buck, they trussed him up and put him upon their backs and so walked off, neither of them being able to procure horses for such service.

On the night that the keepers were acquainted with their coming, they sent to a neighbouring gentleman for the assistance of two of his grooms; the fellows came about 11 o'clock at night, and tying their horses in a little copse went to the place where the keepers had appointed to keep guard. This was on a little rising ground, planted with a star grove, through the avenues of which they could see all round them without being discerned themselves. No sooner, therefore, had Guy and his companion passed into the forest, but suffering them to pass by one of the entries of the grove where they were, they immediately issued out upon them, and pursued them so closely that they were within a few yards of them when they entered the coppice, where the two grooms had left their horses. They did not stay so much as to untie them, but cutting the bridles, mounted them and rode off as hard as they could, turning them loose as soon as they were in safety, and got home secure, because the keepers could not say they had done anything but walk across the forest.

This escape of theirs and some others of the same nature, made them so bold that not contented with the deer in chases and such places, they broke into the paddock of Anthony Duncombe, Esq., and there killed certain fallow deer. One Charles George who was the keeper, and some of his assistants hearing the noise they made, issued out, and a sharp fight beginning, the deer-stealers at last began to fly. But a blunderbuss being fired after them, two of the balls ripped the belly of Biddisford, who died on the spot; and soon after the keepers coming up, John Guy was taken. And being tried for this offence at the ensuing sessions of the Old Bailey, he was convicted and received sentence of death, though it was some days after before he could be persuaded that he should really suffer.

When he found himself included in the death warrant, he applied himself heartily to prayer and other religious duties, seeming to be thoroughly penitent for the crimes he had committed, and with great earnestness endeavoured to make amends for his follies, by sending the most tender letters to his companions who had been guilty of the same faults, to induce them to forsake such undertakings, which would surely bring them to the same fate which he suffered, for so inconsiderable a thing perhaps as a haunch of venison. Whether these epistles had the effect for which they were designed, I am not able to say, but the papers I have by me inform me that the prisoner Guy died with very cheerful resolution, not above twenty-five years of age, the same day with the malefactors before mentioned.

[\[52\]](#)

See page [164](#).

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### **The Life of VINCENT DAVIS, a Murderer**

It is an observation made by some foreigners (and I am sorry to say there's too much truth in it) that though the English are perhaps less jealous than any nation under the heavens, yet more men murder their wives amongst us than in any other nation in Europe.

Vincent Davis was a man of no substance and who for several years together had lived in a very ill correspondence with his wife, often beating and abusing her, until the neighbours cried out shame. But instead of amending he addicted himself still more and more to such villainous acts, conversing also with other women. And at last buying a knife, he had the impudence to say that that knife should end her, in which he was as good as his word; for on a sudden quarrel he slabbed her to the heart. For this murder he was indicted, and also on the Statute of Stabbing, [\[53\]](#) of both of which on the fullest proof he was found guilty.

When Davis was first committed, he thought fit to appear very melancholy and dejected. But when he found there was no hopes of life, he threw off all decency in his behaviour and, to pass for a man of courage, showed as much vehemence of temper as a madman would have done, rattling and raving to everyone that came in, saying it was no crime to kill a wife; and in all other expressions he made use of, behaved himself more like a fool or a man who had lost his wits than a man who had lived so long and creditably in a neighbourhood as he had done, excepting in relation to his wife. But he was induced, with the hopes of passing for a bold and daring fellow, to carry on this scene as long as he could, but when the death warrant arrived, all this intrepidity left him, he trembled and shook, and never afterwards recovered his spirits to the time of his death.

The account he gave of the reason of his killing his wife in so barbarous a manner was this; that a tailor's servant having kept him out pretty late one night, and he coming home elevated with liquor abused her, upon which she got a warrant for him and sent him to New Prison. After this, the prisoner said, he could never endure her; she was poison to his sight, and the abhorrence he had for her was so great and so strong that he could not treat her with the civility which is due to every indifferent person, much less with that regard which Christianity requires of us towards all who are of the same religion. So that upon every occasion he was ready to fly out into the greatest passions, which he vented by throwing everything at her that came in his way, by which means the knife was darted into her bosom with which she was slain.



Notwithstanding the barbarity which seemed natural to this unhappy man, the cruelty with which he treated his wife in her last moments, the spleen and malice with which he always spoke of her, and the little regret he showed for having imbrued his hands in her blood, he yet had an unaccountable tenderness for his own person, and employed the last days of his confinement in writing many letters to his friends, entreating them to be present at his execution in order to preserve his body from the hands of the surgeons, which of all things he dreaded. And in order to avoid being anatomised, he affronted the court at the Old Bailey, at the time he received sentence of death, intending as he said to provoke them to hang him in chains, by which means he should escape the mangling of the surgeon's knives, which to him seemed ten thousand times worse than death itself. Thus confused he passed the last moments of his life, and with much ado recollected himself so as to suffer with some kind of decency, which he did on the 30th of April, at the same time with the last-mentioned malefactor.

[53]

1 Jac. I, cap. 8, "When one thrusts or stabs another, not then having a weapon drawn, or who hath not then first stricken the party stabbing, so that he dies thereof within six months after, the offender shall not have the benefit of clergy, though he did it not of malice aforethought." Blackstone.

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### **The Life of MARY HANSON, a Murderer**

Amongst the many frailties to which our nature is subject, there is not perhaps a more dangerous one than the indulging ourselves in ridiculous and provoking discourses, merely to try the tempers of other people. I speak not this with regard to the criminal of whom we are next to treat, but of the person who in the midst of his sins drew upon himself a sudden and violent death by using such silly kind of speeches towards a woman weak in her nature, and deprived of what little reason she had by drink.

This poor creature, flying into an excess of passion with Francis Peters, who was some distant relation to her by marriage, she wounded him suddenly under the right pap with a knife, before she could be prevented by any of the company; of which wound he died. The warm expressions she had been guilty of before the blow, prevailed with the jury to think she had a premeditated malice, and thereupon they found her guilty.

Fear of death, want of necessaries, and a natural tenderness of body, brought on her soon after conviction so great a sickness that she could not attend the duties of public devotion, and reduced her to the necessity of catching the little intervals of ease which her distemper allowed her, to beg pardon of God for that terrible crime for which she had been guilty.

There was at the same time, one Mary Stevens in the condemned hold (though she afterwards received a reprieve) who was very instrumental in bringing this poor creature to a true sense of herself and of her sins; she then confessed the murder with all its circumstances, reproached herself with having been guilty of such a crime as to murder the person who had so carefully took her under his roof, allowed her a subsistence and been so peculiarly civil to her, for which he expected no return but what was easily in her power to make. This Mary Stevens was a weak-brained woman, full of scruples and difficulties, and almost distracted at the thoughts of having committed several robberies. After receiving the Sacrament, she not only persuaded this Mary Hanson to behave herself as became a woman under her unhappy condition, but also persuaded two or three other female criminals in that place to make the best use of that mercy which the leniency of the Government has extended them.

There was a man suffered to go twice a day to read to them, and probably it was he who drew up the paper for Mary Hanson which she left behind her, for though it be very agreeable to the nature of her case, yet it is penned in the manner not likely to come from the hands of a poor ignorant woman. Certain it is, however, that she behaved herself with great calmness and resolution at the time of her death, and did not appear at all disturbed at that hurry which, as I shall mention in the next life, happened at the place of execution. The paper she left ran in these words, viz.:

Though the poverty of my parents hindered me from having any great education, yet I resolve to do as I know others in my unhappy circumstances have done, and by informing the world of the causes which led me to that crime for which I so justly suffer, that by shunning it they may avoid such a shameful end; and I particularly desire all women to take heed how they give way to drunkenness, which is a vice but too common in this age. It was that disorder in which my spirits were, occasioned by the liquor I had drunk, which hurried me to the committing a crime, at the thoughts of which on any other time my blood would have curdled. I hope you will afford me your prayers for my departing soul, as I offer up mine to God that none of you may follow me to this fatal place.

Having delivered this paper, she suffered at about thirty years old.

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### **The Life of BRYAN SMITH, a Threatening Letter Writer**

I have already observed how the Black Act was extended for punishing Charles Towers,<sup>[54]</sup> concerned in setting up the New Mint, who as he affirmed died only for having his face accidentally dirty at the time he assaulted the bailiff's house. I must now put you in mind of another clause in the same act, viz., that for punishing with death those who sent any threatening letters in order to affright persons into a compliance with their demands, for fear of being murdered themselves, or having their houses fired about their ears. This clause of the Act is general, and therefore did not extend only to offences of this kind when committed by deer-stealers and those gangs against whom it was particularly levelled at that time, but included also whoever should be guilty of writing such letters to any person or persons whatsoever; which was a just and necessary construction of the Act, and not only made use of in the case of this criminal, but of many more since, becoming particularly useful of late years, when this practice became frequent.

Bryan Smith, who occasions this observation, was an Irishman, of parts so very mean as perhaps were never met with in one who passed for a rational creature; yet this fellow, forsooth, took it into his head that he might be able to frighten Baron Swaffo, a very rich Jew in the City, out of a considerable sum of money, by terrifying him with a letter. For this purpose he wrote one indeed in a style I daresay was never seen before, or since. Its spelling was *à la mode de brogue*, and the whole substance of the thing was filled with oaths, curses, execrations and threatenings of murder and burning if such a sum of money was not sent as he, in his great wisdom, thought it fit to demand.

The man's management in sending this and directing how he would have an answer was of a piece with his style, and altogether made the discovery no difficult matter. So that Bryan being apprehended, was at the next sessions at the Old Bailey tried and convicted on the evidence of some of his countrymen, and when, after receiving sentence, there remained no hopes for him of favour, to make up a consistent character he declared himself a Papist, and as is usual with persons of that profession, was forbidden by his priest to go any more to the public chapel.

However, to do him justice as far as outward circumstances will give us leave to judge, he appeared very sorry for the crime he had committed, and having had the priest with him a considerable time the day before his death, he would needs go to the place of execution in a shroud.

As he went along he repeated the Hail Mary and Paternoster.

But there being many persons to suffer, and the executioner thereby being put into a confusion, Smith observing the hurry slipped the rope over his head, and jumped at once over the corpses in the cart amongst the mob. Had he been wise enough to have come in his clothes, and not in a shroud, it is highly probable he had made his escape; but his white dress rendering him conspicuous even at a distance, the sheriffs officers were not long before they retook him and placed him in his former situation again.

Hope and fear, desire of life, and dread of immediate execution, had occasioned so great an emotion of his spirits that he appeared in his last moments in a confusion not to be described, and departed the world in such an agony that he was a long time before he died, which was at the same time with the malefactor before-mentioned, viz., on the 30th of April, 1725.

[54]

See page [198](#).

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## The Life of JOSEPH WARD, a Footpad

There are some persons who are unhappy, even from their cradles, and though every man is said to be born to a mixture of good and evil fortune, yet these seem to reap nothing from their birth but an entry into woe, and a passage to misery.

This unhappy man we are now speaking of, Joseph Ward, is a strong instance of this, for being the son of travelling people, he scarce knew either the persons to whom he owed his birth, or the place where he was born. However, they found a way to instruct him well enough to read, and that so well that it was afterwards of great use to him, in the most miserable state of his life.

He rambled about with his father and mother until the age of fourteen, when they dying, he was left to the wide world, with nothing to provide for himself but his wits; so that he was almost under necessity of going into a gang of gipsies that passed by that part of the country where he was. These gipsies taught him all their arts of living, and it happened that the crew he got into were not of the worst sort either, for they maintained themselves rather by the credulity of the country folks, than by the ordinary practices of those sort of people, stealing of poultry and robbing hedges of what linen people are careless enough to leave there. I shall have another and more proper occasion to give my readers the history of this sort of people, who were anciently formidable enough to deserve an especial Act of Parliament<sup>[55]</sup> altered and amended in several reigns for banishing them from the Kingdom.

But to go on with the story of Ward; disliking this employment, he took occasion, when they came into Buckinghamshire, to leave them at a common by Gerrard's Cross, and come up to London. When he came here, he was still in the same state, not knowing what to do to get bread. At last

he bethought himself of the sea, and prevailed on a captain to take with him a pretty long voyage. He behaved himself so well in his passage, that his master took him with him again, and used him very kindly; but he dying, Ward was again put to his shifts, though on his arrival in England he brought with him near 30 guineas to London.

He look up lodgings near the Iron Gate at St. Catherine's, and taking a walk one evening on Tower Wharf, he there met with a young woman, who after much shyness suffered him to talk to her. They met there a second and a third time. She said she was niece to a pewterer of considerable circumstances, not far from Tower Hill, who had promised, and was able to give her five hundred pounds; but the fear of disoblighing him by marriage, hindered her from thinking of becoming a wife without his approbation of her spouse.

These difficulties made poor Ward imagine that if he could once persuade the woman to marriage, he should soon mollify the heart of her relation, and so become happy at once. With a great deal to do, Madam was prevailed upon to consent, and going to the Fleet they were there married, and soon returned to St. Catherine's, to new lodgings which Ward had taken, where he had proposed to continue a day or two and then wait upon the uncle.

Never man was in his own opinion more happy than Joseph Ward in his new wife, but alas! all human happiness is fleeting and uncertain, especially when it depends in any degree upon a woman. The very next morning after their wedding, Madam prevailed on him to slip on an old coat and take a walk by the house which she had shown him for her uncle's. He was no sooner out of doors, but she gave the sign to some of her accomplices, who in a quarter of an hour's time helped her to strip the lodging not only of all which belonged to Ward, but of some things of value that belonged to the people of the house. They were scarce out of doors before Ward returned, who finding his wife gone and the room stripped, set up such an outcry as alarmed all the people in the house.

Instead of being concerned at Joseph's loss they clamoured at their own, and told him in so many words that if he did not find the woman, or make them reparation for their goods, they would send him to Newgate. But alas! it was neither in Ward's power to do one, nor the other. Upon which the people were as good as their word, for they sent for a constable and had him before a Justice. There the whole act appearing, the justice discharged him and told them they must take their remedy against him at the Common Law. Upon this Ward took the advantage and made off, but taking to drinking to drive away the sorrows that encompassed him, he at last fell into ill-company, and by them was prevailed on to join in doing evil actions to get money. He had been but a short time at this trade, before he committed the fact for which he died.

Islington was the road where he generally took a purse, and therefore endeavoured to make himself perfectly acquainted with many ways that lead to that little town, which he effected so well, that he escaped several times from the strictest pursuits. At last it came into his head that the safest way would be to rob women, which accordingly he put into practice, and committed abundance of thefts that way for the space of six weeks, particularly on one Mrs. Jane Vickary, of a gold ring value twenty shillings, and soon after of Mrs. Elizabeth Barker, of a gold ring set with garnets. Being apprehended for these two facts, he was committed to New Prison, where either refusing or not being able to make discoveries, he remained in custody till the sessions at the Old Bailey. There the persons swearing positively to his face, he was after a trivial defence convicted, and received sentence of death accordingly.

As he had no relations that he knew of, nor so much as one friend in the world, the thoughts of a pardon never distracted his mind a moment. He applied himself from the day of his sentence to a new preparation for death, and having in the midst of all his troubles accustomed himself to reading, he was of great use to his unhappy companions in reading the Scripture, and assisting them in their private devotions. He made a just use of that space which the mercy of the English Law allows to persons who are to suffer death for their crimes to make their peace with their Creator.



#### TRIAL OF A HIGHWAYMAN AT THE OLD BAILEY

The manacled rogue is seen in the foreground, his head bowed in despair, as the witness by his side unfolds his damning evidence. Through one window is shown the robbery for which he is being tried; the other affords a prophetic glimpse of the villain's end at Tyburn Tree.

*(From the Newgate Calendar)*

There was but one person who visited this offender while under the sentence of the Law, and he, thinking that the only method by which he could do him service was to save his life, proposed to him a very probable method of escaping, which for reasons not hard to be guessed at, I shall forbear describing. He pressed him so often and made the practicability of the thing so plain that the criminal at last condescended to make the experiment, and his friend promised the next day to bring him the materials for his escape.

That night Ward, who began then to be weak in his limbs with the sickness which had lain upon him ever since he had been in the prison, fell into a deep sleep, a comfort he had not felt since the coming on of his misfortunes. In this space he dreamed that he was in a very barren, sandy place, which was bounded before him by a large deep river, which in the middle of the plain parted itself into two streams that, after having run a considerable space, united again, having formed an island within the branches. On the other side of the main river, there appeared one of the most beautiful countries that could be thought of, covered with trees, full of ripe fruit, and adorned with flowers. On the other side, in the island which was enclosed, having a large arm of water running behind it and another smaller before, the soil appeared sandy and barren, like that whereon he stood.

While he was musing at this sight, he beheld a person of a grave and venerable aspect, in garb and appearance like a shepherd, who asked him twice or thrice, if he knew the meaning of what he there saw, to which he answered, *No. Well, then, says the stranger, I will inform you. This sight which you see is just your present case. You have nothing to resolve with yourself but whether you will prepare by swimming across this river immediately, forever to possess that beautiful country that lies before you; or by attempting the passage over the narrow board which crosses the first arm of the river and leads into the island, where you will be again amidst briars and thorns, and must at last pass that deep water, before you can enter the pleasant country you behold on the other side.*

This vision made so strong an impression on the poor man's spirits that when his friend came he refused absolutely to make his escape, but suffered with great marks of calmness and true repentance, at Tyburn, in the twenty-seventh year of his age.

[55]

This was the statute of 1530 (22 Hen. VIII, c. 10) directed against "outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians." It was amended 1 & 2 Ph. & Mary, c. 4 and 5 Eliz., c. 10 and sundry other legislation was of a similar tenour.

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### The Life of JAMES WHITE, a Thief

Stupidity, however it may arise, whether from a natural imperfection of the rational faculties, or from want of education, or from drowning it wholly in bestial and sensual pleasures, is doubtless one of the highest misfortunes which can befall any man whatsoever; for it not only leaves him little better than the beasts which perish, exposed to a thousand inconveniences against which there is no guard but that of a clear and unbiassed reason, but it renders him also base and abject when under misfortunes, the sport and contempt of that wicked and debauched part of the human species who are apt to scoff at despairing misery, and to add by their insults to the miseries of those who sink under their load already.

James White, who is to be the subject of the following narration, was the son of very honest and reputable parents, though their circumstances were so mean as not to afford wherewith to put their son to school, and they themselves were so careless as not to procure his admission into the Charity School. By all which it happened that the poor fellow knew hardly anything better than the beasts of the field, and addicted himself like them, to filling his belly and satisfying his lust. Whenever, therefore, either of those brutish appetites called, he never scrupled plundering to obtain what might supply the first, or using force that might oblige women to submit against their wills unto the other.

While he was a mere boy, and worked about as he could with anybody who would employ him, he found a way to steal and carry off thirty pounds weight of tobacco, the property of Mr. Perry, an eminent Virginian merchant; for which he was at the ensuing assizes at the Old Bailey, tried and convicted, and thereupon ordered for transportation, and in pursuance of that sentence sent on board the transport vessel accordingly. Their allowance there was very poor, such as the miserable wretches could hardly subsist on, viz., a pint and a half of fresh water, and a very small piece of salt meat *per diem* each; but that wherein their greatest misery consisted was the hole in which they were locked underneath the deck, where they were tied two and two, in order to prevent those dangers which the ship's crew often runs by the attempts made by felons to escape. In this disconsolate condition he passed his time until the arrival of the ship in America, where he met with a piece of good luck (if attaining liberty may be called good luck) without acquiring at the same time a means to preserve life in any comfort. It happened thus.

The super-cargo falling sick, under the usual distemper which visits strangers at first coming if they keep not to the exact rules of temperance and forbearance of strong liquors, ran quickly so much in debt with his physician that he was obliged immediately to go off, by doing which six felons became their own masters, of whom James White was one. He retired into the woods and lived there in a very wretched manner for some time, till he met with some Indian families in that retreat, who according to the natural uncultivated humanity of that people cherished and relieved him to the utmost of their power.

Soon after this, he went to work amongst some English servants, in order to ease them, telling them how things stood with him, viz., that he had been transported, and that for fear of being seized he fled into the woods, where he had endured the greatest hardships. The servants pitying his desperate condition relieved him often, without the knowledge of their mistress until they got him into a planter's service, where though he worked hard he was sure to fare tolerably well. But at length being ordered to carry water in large vessels over the rocks to the ship that rode in the bay underneath it, his feet were thereby so intolerably cut that he was soon rendered lame and incapable of doing it any longer. The family thereupon grew weary of keeping him in that decrepit state he was in, and so for what servile scullion-like labour he was able to do, a master of a ship took him on board and carried him to England.

On his return hither, he went directly to his friends in Cripplegate parish and told them what had befallen him, and how he was driven home again almost as much by force as he was hurried abroad. They were too poor to be able to conceal him, and he was therefore obliged to go and cry fruit about the streets publicly, that he might not want bread. He went on in this mean but honest way, without committing any new acts that I am able to learn, for the space of some months. Then being seen and known by some who were at that employed (or at least employed themselves) in detecting and taking up all such persons as returned from transportation, White amongst the rest was seized, and the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey convicted on the Statute. He pleaded that he was only a very young man, and if the Court would have so much pity on him as to send him over again, he would be satisfied to stay all his life-time in America; but the resolution which had been taken to spare none who returned back into England, because such persons were more bloody and dangerous rogues than any other, and when prompted by despair, apt to resist the officers of justice, took place, and he was put into the death warrant.

Both before and after receiving sentence, he not only abandoned himself to stupid, heedless indolence, but behaved in so rude and troublesome a manner as occasioned his being complained of by those miserable wretches who were under the same condemnation, as a greater grievance to them than all their other misfortunes put together. He would sometimes threaten women who came into the hold to visit modestly, tease them with obscene discourse, and after his being prisoner there committed acts of lewdness to the amazement and horror of the most wicked and abandoned wretches in that dreadful place. Being however severely reprimanded for continuing so beastly a course of life, when life itself was so near being extinguished, he laid the crime to his own ignorance, and said that if he were better instructed he would behave better, but he could not bear being abused, threatened and even maltreated by those who were in the same state with himself. From this time he addicted himself to attend more carefully to religious discourses than most of the rest, and as far as the amazing dullness of his intellects would give him leave, applied to the duties of his sad state.

Before his death he gave many testimonies of a sincere and unaffected sorrow for his crimes, but as he had not the least notion of the nature, efficacy or preparation necessary for the Sacrament, it was not given him as is usually done to malefactors the day of their death. At the place of execution he seemed surprised and astonished, looked wildly round upon the people, and then asking the minister who attended him what he must do now, the person spoke to instructed him; so shutting his hands close, he cried out with great vehemence, *Lord receive my soul.*

His age was about twenty-five at the time he suffered, which was on the 6th day of November,

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## **The Life of JOSEPH MIDDLETON, Housebreaker and Thief**

Amongst the numbers of unhappy wretches who perish at the gallows, most pity seems due to those who, pressed by want and necessity, commit in the bitter exigence of starving, some illegal act purely to support life. But this is a very scarce case, and such a one as I cannot in strictness presume to say that I have hitherto met with in all the loads of papers I have turned over to this purpose, though as the best motive to excite compassion, and consequently to obtain mercy, it is made very often a pretence.

Joseph Middleton was the son of a very poor, though honest, labouring man in the county of Kent, near Deptford, who did all that was in his power to bring up his children. This unfortunate son was taken off his hand by an uncle, a gardener, who brought up the boy to his own business, and consequently to labour hard enough, which would, to an understanding person, appear no such very great hardship where a man had continually been inured to it even from his cradle, and had neither capacity nor the least probability of attaining anything better. Yet such an intolerable thing did it seem to Middleton that he resolved at any cost to be rid of it, and to purchase an easier way of spending his days.

In order to this, he very wisely chose to go aboard a man-of-war then bound for the Baltic. He was in himself a stupid, clumsy fellow, and the officers and seamen in the ship treated him so harshly, the fatigue he went through was so great, and the coldness of the climate so pinching to him, that he who so impatiently wished to be rid of the country work, now wished as earnestly to return thereto. Therefore, when on the return of Sir John Norris, the ship he was in was paid off and discharged, he was in an ecstasy of joy thereat, and immediately went down again to settle hard to labour as he had done before, experience having convinced him that there were many more hardships sustained in one short ramble than in a staid though laborious life.

In order, as is the common phrase, to settle in the world, he married a poor woman, by whom he had two children, and thereby made her as unhappy as himself; what he was able to earn by his hands falling much short of what was necessary to keep house in the way he lived, this reduced him to such narrowness of circumstances that he was obliged (as he would have it believed) to take illegal methods for support.

His own blockish and dastardly temper, as it had prevented his ever doing good in any honest way, so it as effectually put it out of his power to acquire anything considerable by the rapine he committed; for as he wanted spirit to go into a place where there was immediate danger, so his companions, who did the act while he scouted about to see if anybody was coming, and to give them notice, when they divided the booty gave him just what they thought fit, and keep the rest to themselves. He had gone on in this miserable way for a considerable space, and yet was able to acquire very little, his wants being very near as great while he robbed every night, as they were when he laboured every day, so that in the exchange he got nothing but danger into the bargain.

At last, he was apprehended for breaking into the house of John de Pais and Joseph Gomeroon, and taking there jewels and other things to a great value, though his innocence in not entering the place would sufficiently excuse him, for he pleaded at his trial that he was so far from breaking the house that he was not so much as on the ground of the prosecutor when it was broke, but on the contrary, as appeared by their own evidence, on the other side of the way. But it being very fully proved by the evidence that Joseph Middleton belonged to the gang, that he waited there only to give them an intelligence, and shared in the money they took, the jury found him guilty.

While he lay under conviction, he did his utmost to understand what was necessary for him to do in order to salvation. He applied himself with the utmost diligence to praying God to instruct him and enlighten his understanding, that he might be able to improve by his sufferings and reap a benefit from the chastisements of his Maker. In this frame of mind he continued with great steadiness and calmness till the time of his execution, at which he showed some fear and confusion, as the sight of such a death is apt to create even in the stoutest and best prepared breast. This Joseph Middleton, at the time of his exit, was in about the fortieth year of his age.

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## **The Life of JOHN PRICE, <sup>[56]</sup> a Housebreaker**

A profligate life naturally terminates in misery, and according unto the vices which it has most pursued, so are its punishments suited unto it. Drunkenness besots the understanding, ruins the constitution, and leaves those addicted to it in the last stages of life, in want and misery, equally destitute of all necessaries, and incapable to procure them. Lewdness and lust after loose women enervate both the vigour of the brain and strength of the body, induce weaknesses that anticipate old age, and afflict the declining sinner with so many evils, as makes him a burden to himself and a spectacle to others. But if, for the support of all these, men fall into rapacious and wicked courses, plundering others who have frugally provided for the supply of life, in order to indulge their own wicked inclinations, then indeed the Law of society interposes generally before the Law of Nature, and cuts off with a sudden and ignominious death those who would otherwise probably have fallen by the fruits of their own sins.

This malefactor, John Price, was one of these wretched people who act as if they thought life was given them only to commit wickedness and satiate their several appetites with gross impurities, without considering how far they offend either against the institutions of God or the laws of the land. It does not appear that this fellow ever followed any employment that looked like honesty, except when he was at sea. The terrors of a sick-bed alarmed even a conscience so hardened as Price's, and the effects of an ill-spent life appeared so plainly in the weak condition he found himself in, that he made, as he afterwards owned, the most solemn vows of amendment, if through the favour of Providence he recovered his former health. To this he was by the goodness of God restored, but the resolutions he made on that condition were totally forgotten. As soon as he returned home, he sought afresh the company of those loose women and those abandoned wretches who by the inconveniences into which they had formerly led him, had obliged him to seek for shelter by a long voyage at sea.

What little money he had received when the ship was paid off, was quickly lavished away, so that on the 11th of August, 1725, he with two others named Cliffe and Sparks, undertook, after having well weighed the attempt, to enter the house of the Duke of Leeds by moving the sash, and so plunder it of what was to be got. By their assistance Cliffe got in at the window, and afterwards handed out a cloak, hat, and other things to his companions Sparks and Price, but they were all immediately apprehended. Cliffe made an information by which he discovered the whole fact, and it was fully proved by Mr. Bealin that Price, when first apprehended, owned that he had been with Cliffe and Sparks. Upon the whole the jury found him guilty, upon which he freely acknowledged the justice of their verdict at the bar.

All the time he lay under conviction he behaved himself as a person convinced of his own unworthiness of life, and therefore repined not at the justice of that sentence which condemned him to death, though in his behaviour before his trial there had appeared much of that rough and boisterous disposition usual in fellows of no education, who have long practised such ways of living. Yet long before his death he laid aside all that ferocity of mind, appearing calm and easy under the weight of his sufferings, and so much dissatisfied with the trouble he had met with in the world that he appeared scarce desirous of remaining in it. He was not able himself to give any account of his age, but as far as could be guessed from his looks, he might be about thirty when executed, which was at the same time with the malefactor last mentioned; Cliffe, whose information had hanged him, being reprieved.

[56]

A fuller account of this rogue will be found on page [276](#).

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## LIVES OF THE CRIMINALS

### VOLUME TWO

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#### THE PREFACE

*In the Preface to my former volume I endeavoured to give my readers some idea of the English Crown Law, in order to shew how consistent it was with right reason, how perfectly just, and at the same time how full of mercy. In this, I intend to pursue the thread of that discourse, and explain the methods by which Justice in criminal cases is to be sought, and the means afforded by our Law to accuse the guilty and to prevent punishment from falling on the innocent. In order to do this the more regularly, it is fit we begin with the apprehension of offenders, and shew the care of the Legislature in that respect.*

*In sudden injuries, such as assaults on the highway, attempts to murder or to commit any felony whatsoever, there is no necessity for any legal officer to secure the person who is guilty, for every private man hath sufficient authority to seize and bring such criminal, either to a constable or to a Justice of the Peace, in order to have the fact clearly examined and such course taken therein as may conduce to the impartial distribution of Justice. And because men are apt to be scrupulous of interesting themselves in matters which do not immediately concern either their persons or their properties, so the Law hath provided punishments for those who, for fear of risking their private safety or advantage, suffer those who offend against the public to escape unpunished; hence hundreds are liable to be sued for suffering a robber to escape, and that method of pursuit which is called hue and cry is permitted, if no probable way may be left for felons to escape. Now a hue and cry is raised thus: the person robbed, for example, goes to the constable of the next town, tells him the case, described the felon, and the way he went. Whereupon the constable, be it day or night, is to take the assistance of those in his own town, and pursue him according to those directions immediately, at the same time sending with the utmost expedition to the neighbouring towns, who are to make like pursuit, and to send like notice until the felon be found.*

*So desirous is our Law of bringing offenders to Justice, and of preserving the roads free from being infested with these vermin. For the better effecting of this, besides those means prescribed by the customs of our ancestors, of later times rewards have been given to such as hazarded their own persons in bringing offenders to justice, and of these, as far as they are settled by Acts of*

*Parliament and thereby rendered certain and perpetual, I shall speak here; though not of those given by proclamation, because they being only for a stated time, people must hereafter have been misled by our account, when that time is expired.*

*Highwaymen becoming, some time after the Revolution, exceedingly bold and troublesome, by an Act made in the reign of William and Mary, a reward of forty pounds is given for apprehending any one in England or Wales, and prosecuting him so as he be convicted; which forty pounds is to be paid by the sheriff on a certificate of the judge or justices before whom such a felon was convicted. And in case a person shall be killed in endeavouring to apprehend or making pursuit after such robbers, the said forty pounds shall be paid to the executors or administrators of such persons upon the like certificate. Moreover, every person who shall take, apprehend, or convict such a person, shall have as a reward the horse, furniture, arms, money or other goods of such robber as shall be taken with him, the right or title of his Majesty's bodies politic or corporate, lords of manors, or persons lending or letting the same to such robber notwithstanding; excepting only the right of those from whom such horses, furniture, arms, money, or goods were before feloniously taken.*

*A like reward of forty pounds was, by another Act in the same reign, given to such as shall apprehend any person convicted of any capital crime relating to the coin of this land.*

*By an Act also made in the reign of the late King William, persons who apprehend and prosecute to conviction any who feloniously steal goods to the value of five shillings, out of any house, shop, warehouse, coach-house or stable, or shall assist, hire or command any person to commit such offence; then such person so taking as aforesaid, shall have a certificate gratis from the Judge or Justices, expressing the parish or place where such felony was committed; which certificate shall be capable of being once assigned over, and shall exempt its proprietor or assignee from all parish and ward offices, in the parish or ward wherein the felony was committed.*

*By an Act made in the fifth year of the late Queen, persons apprehending one guilty of burglary, or of feloniously breaking into a house in the day-time, and prosecuting to conviction, shall receive over and above the certificate before mentioned, the sum of forty pounds, as in the case of apprehending an Highwayman.*

*By an Act passed in the sixth year of the late King, whoever shall discover, apprehend, or prosecute to conviction without benefit of clergy, any person for taking money or other reward, directly or indirectly, to help persons to their stolen goods (such persons not having apprehended the felon who stole the same, and brought him to trial, and given evidence against him) shall be entitled to a reward of forty pounds for every offender so convicted, and shall have the like certificate, and like payment without fee, as persons may be entitled to for apprehending highwaymen.*

*The next point after offenders are once apprehended, is to carry them before a proper magistrate, viz., a Justice of the Peace, and this leads us to say something of the nature and authority of that office. My Lord Chancellor, or Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, the Lord High Steward of England, the Lord Marshal, and the Lord High Constable, each of the Justices of the King's Bench, and as some say, the Lord High Treasurer of England, have, as incidental to their offices, a general authority to keep the peace throughout the realm, and to award process for their surety thereof, and to take recognizances for it. The Master of the Rolls has also a like power, either incident to his office, or at least by prescription. As to the ordinary constructors or Justices of the Peace, they are constituted by the King's Commission, which is at present granted on the same form as was settled by the Judges in the 33rd Year of Queen Elizabeth, by which they are appointed and assigned every one of them jointly and separately to keep the King's peace in such a county, and cause to be kept all statutes made for the good of the peace and the quiet government of the Kingdom, as well within liberties, as without, and to punish all those who shall offend against the said statutes, and to cause all those to come before them, or any of them, who threaten any people as to the burning their houses, in order to compel them to be kept in prison until they shall find it. As to the other powers committed to these justices, it would be too long for me to explain them, and therefore after this general Act, I shall go on to take notice of the manner in which the person accused is treated, when brought before them.*

*First the Justice of Peace examines as carefully as he can into the nature of the offence, and the weight there is of evidence to persuade him of the just ground there is for accusing the person before him; and after he has thoroughly considered this, if the thing appear frivolous or ill-grounded, he may discharge the person, or if he think the circumstances strong enough to require it, he may take the bail of the party accused, or if the nature of the crime be more heinous, and the proof direct and clear, he is bound by an instrument under his hand and seal called a Mittimus, to commit the offender to safe custody until he is discharged according to Law. In carrying to prison for any crime whatsoever, if the party so carried escape himself, or if he be rescued by others, he and they are guilty of a very high misdemeanor, and in some cases, those who assist in making the rescue may be guilty of felony or high treason. But if a prisoner be once committed to gaol for felony, and afterwards break that prison and escape, such breach of prison is felony, by the Statute De Frangentibus Prisonam, and shall be tried for the same as in other cases of felony, and suffer on conviction. My readers will find mention made of a case of this nature in respect to one Roger Johnson, who some years ago was tried for breaking the prison of Newgate, while he remained a prisoner there under a charge of felony, and making his escape; but so tender is the English law that when there appeared a probability that one Fisher (not then taken) broke down the wall of the prison and that Johnson took advantage of that hole and made*



*his escape, he was found not guilty, for want of due proof that he actually did break that hole through which he escaped.*

*The prisoner being in safe custody, a bill is next to be preferred to the grand jury of the county, in which the nature of the crime is properly set forth, and after hearing the evidence brought by the prosecutor to support the charge, they return the bill to the Court, marked Billa Vera or Ignoramus. In the first case the prisoner is required to be tried by the petit jury of twelve, and to abide their verdict; in case of the latter, he is to be discharged and freed from that prosecution. But the grand jury must find or not find the bill entire, for a Billa Vera to one part and an Ignoramus to another renders the whole proceeding void and is of the same use to the prisoner as if they had returned an Ignoramus upon the whole.*

*Many without knowing the Law have taken occasion to be very free with its precedents, and to treat them as things written in barbarous Latin, in which an unreasonable, if not ridiculous nicety is sometimes required. But when this comes to be thoroughly examined, we shall find that their proceedings are exactly conformable to reason, for if care and circumspection be necessary in deeds and writings relating to civil affairs, ought it not a fortiori to be more so where the life, liberty, reputation and everything that is dear and valuable to the subject is at stake? Therefore, since there are technical words in all sciences, surely the Law is not to be blamed for preserving certain words to which they have affixed particular and determined meanings for the expressing of such crimes as are made more or less culpable by the Legislature. Thus Murdravit is absolutely necessary in an indictment charging the prisoner with a murder; Caepit is the term made use of in indictments of larceny. Mayhemavit expresses the fact charged in an indictment of maim; Felonice is absolutely necessary in all indictments of felony of what kind soever; Burglariter is the Latin word made use of to express that breaking which from particular circumstances our Law has called burglary, and appointed certain punishment for those who are guilty thereof. Proditorie expresses the Act in indictments of treason, and even if these are not Latin words, justified by the usage of Roman authors, the certainty which they give to those charges in which they are used, and which could not be so well expressed by circumlocutions, is a full answer to that objection, since the proceedings before a Court aim not at elegance, but at Justice. But let us now go on to the next step taken to bring the offenders to Judgment.*

*The bill having been found by the grand jury, the prisoner is brought into the Court where he is to be tried, and set to the bar in the presence of the judges who are to try him. Then he is usually commanded to hold up his hand, but this being only a ceremony to make the person known to the court it may be omitted, or the person indicted saying I am here, will answer the same end. Then the proper officer reads the indictment which has been found against him, in English, and when he hath so done, he demands of the prisoner whether he be guilty or not guilty of the fact alleged against him, to which the prisoner answers as he thinks fit, and this answer is styled his plea. That tenderness which the English Law on all occasions expresses towards those who are to be brought to answer for crimes alleged against them, requires that at his arraignment, the prisoner be totally free from any pain or duress which may disturb his thought and hinder his liberty of pleading as he thinks fit, and for this reason, even in cases of high treason, irons are taken off during the time the prisoner is at the bar, where he stands without any marks of contumely whatsoever.*

*But in case the prisoner absolutely refuses to answer, or in an impertinent manner delay or trifle with the court, then he is deemed a mute; but if he speaks not at all, nor gives any sign by which the Court shall be satisfied that he is able to speak, then an inquest of officers, that is of twelve persons who happen to be by, are to enquire whether his standing mute arises from his contempt of the Court, or be really an infirmity under which he labours from the hands of God. If it be found the latter, then the Court, as counsel for the prisoner, shall hear the evidence with relation to the fact, and proceed therein as if the prisoner had pleaded not guilty; but if, on the contrary, the Court or the inquest shall be satisfied that the prisoner remains a mute only from obstinacy, then in some cases judgment shall be awarded against him as if he had pleaded or were found guilty, and in others he shall be remitted to his penance, that is to suffer what the Law calls Peine forte et dure, which is pressing, of which the readers will find an account in the subsequent life of Burnworth, alias Frazier; and therefore I shall not treat further of it here.*

*If, from conviction of his own guilt and a consciousness that it may be fully proved against him, the prisoner plead guilty to the indictment, it is considered as the highest species of conviction, and as soon as it is entered on record the Court proceeds to judgment without further proceedings on the indictments. But if the prisoner plead not guilty, and put himself for trial upon his country, then a jury of twelve men are to pass upon the defendant, and upon their verdict he is either to be acquitted or convicted.*

*And with respect to this jury, the English Law appears again more equitable than perhaps any other in the world, for in this case as the jury comes severally to the Book to be sworn, to try impartially between the King and the prisoner of the bar, according to the evidence that is given upon the indictment, the prisoner is even then at liberty to except against, or as the law term it, to challenge, twenty of the jury peremptorily, and as many more as he thinks fit on showing just cause. So also, if the prisoner be an alien, the jury are to be half aliens and half English. So tender is our constitution, not only of the lives of its natural born subjects, but, also of those who put themselves under its protection, that it has taken every precaution which the wit of man could devise to prevent prejudice, partiality, or corruption from mingling in any degree with the sentences pronounced upon offenders, or in the proceedings upon which they are founded.*

*Last of all we are to speak of the evidence or testimony which is to be given for or against the prisoner at the time of his trial. And first with respect to the evidence offered for the Crown; if it shall appear that the person swearing shall gain any great and evident advantage by the event of the trial in which he swears, he shall not be admitted as a good witness against the prisoner. Thus in the case of Rhodes, tried some years ago for forging letters of attorney for transferring South Sea Stock belonging to one Mr. Heysham, the prosecutor, Mr. Heysham, was not admitted to swear himself against the prisoner because in case of conviction six thousand pounds stock must have replaced to his account. But to this, though a general rule, there are some exceptions on which the compass of this discourse will not permit us to dwell. It is also a rule that a husband or wife cannot be admitted to testify against the prisoner, but to this also there are some exceptions, as in the Lord Audley's case,<sup>[57]</sup> where he was charged with holding his lady until his servant committed a rape upon her by his command. Also in marriages contracted by force against the form of the Statute; in that case it is provided that the woman, though a wife, may be admitted as evidence, as also in some other cases which we have not room to mention.*

*Persons convicted of perjury, forgery, etc., are not to be admitted as legal witnesses, but that the record of their contrition must be produced at the time the objection is made, for the Court will take no notice of hearsay and common fame in such respect. An infidel, also, that is one who believes neither the Old nor New Testament, cannot be a witness, and some other disabilities there are which being uncommon, we shall not dwell upon here Yet it is necessary to take notice that whatever is offered as proof against the defendant, shall be heard openly before him, that he may have an opportunity of falsifying it, if he be able; and as in all cases, except high treason, no council is permitted to the prisoner except in matters of law, because every man is supposed to be capable of defending himself as to matters of fact, yet the Court is always council for the prisoner and never fails of instructing and informing him of whatever may conduce to his benefit or advantage; and if any difficult points of Law arise, council are assigned him, and are permitted to argue in his behalf with the same freedom that those do who are appointed by the Crown.*

*From this succinct account of the method in use in England, of doing justice in criminal cases, I flatter myself my readers will very clearly see how valuable those privileges are which we enjoy as Englishmen; how equitable the proceedings of our Courts of Justice; and how well constructed every part of our constitution is for the preservation of the lives and liberties of its subjects. If there remained room for us to compare the judicious proceedings in use here with those slight, rigorous and summary methods which are practised in other countries, the value of these blessings which we enjoy would be considerably enhanced. But as this Preface already exceeds its intended length, we must refer this to a more proper opportunity, and conclude with putting our readers in mind that by the careful perusal of this and the Preface to the First Volume, they will have competent notion of the Crown Law, the reasons on which it is founded, the method in which it is prosecuted, and the judgments on criminals which are inflicted thereby; matters highly useful in themselves, as well as absolutely necessary to be known, in order to a proper understanding of the following pages.*

[\[57\]](#)

This was Mervyn, Lord Audley, 2nd Earl of Castlehaven, a man of loathsome profligacy, who was tried by his peers on charges of unnatural offences, and executed, in 1631.

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## **The Life of WILLIAM SPERRY, Footpad and Highwayman**

There is not anything more extraordinary in the circumstances of those who from a life of rapine and plunder come to its natural catastrophe, a violent and ignominious death, than that some of them from a life of piety and religion, have on a sudden fallen into so opposite a behaviour, and without any stumbles in the road of virtue take, as it were, a leap from the precipice at once.

This malefactor, William Sperry, was born of parents in very low circumstances, who afforded him and his brother scarce any education, until having reached the age of fourteen years, he and his younger brother before mentioned, were both decoyed by one of the agents for the plantations, to consent to their being transported to America, where they were sold for about seven years.<sup>[58]</sup> After the expiration of the term, William Sperry went to live at Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania, one of the best plantations the English have in America, which receives its name from William Penn, the famous Quaker who first planted it. Here, being chiefly instigated thereto by the great piety and unaffected purity of morals in which the inhabitants of that colony excel the greater part of the world, Sperry began with the utmost industry to endeavour at retrieving his reading; and the master with whom he lived favouring his inclinations, was at great pains and some expense to have him taught writing. Yet he did not swerve in his religion, nor fall into Quakerism, the predominant sect here, but went constantly to the Church belonging to the religion by Law established in England, read several good books, and addicted himself with much zeal to the service of God. Removing from the house of his kind master to that of another planter, he abated nothing in his zeal for devotion, but went constantly from his master's house to church at West Chester, which was near five miles from his home.

Happening, not long after, to have the advantage of going in a trading vessel to several ports in America, he addicted himself with great pleasure to this new life. But his happiness therein, like all other species of human bliss, very shortly faded, for one morning just as the day began to dawn, the vessel in which he sailed was clapped on board, and after a very short struggle taken

by Low, the famous pirate.<sup>[59]</sup> Sperry, being a brisk young lad, Low would very fain have taken him into his crew, but the lad having still virtuous principles remaining, earnestly entreated that he might be excused. On the score of his having discovered to Low a mutinous conspiracy of his crew, the generosity of that pirate was so great that, finding no offer he could make made any impression, he caused him to be set safe on shore in the night, on one of the Leeward Islands.

Notwithstanding that Sperry did not at that time comply with the instigations of the pirate, yet his mind was so much poisoned by the sight of what passed on board, that from that time he had an itching towards plunder and the desire of getting money at an easier rate than by the sweat of his brow. While these thoughts were floating in his head, he was entertained on board one of his Majesty's men-of-war, and while he continued in the Service, saw a pirate vessel taken; and the men being tried before a Court of Admiralty in New England, every one of them was executed except five, who manifestly appeared to have been forced into the pirates' service. One would have thought this would have totally eradicated all liking for that sort of practice, but it seems it did not. For as soon as Sperry came home into England and had married a wife, by which his inclinations were chained, though he had no ability to support her, and falling into very great necessities, he either tempted others or associated himself with certain loose and abandoned young men, for as he himself constantly declared, he was not led into evil practices by the persuasions of any. However it were, the deeds he committed were many, and he became the pest of most of the roads out to the little villages about London, particularly towards Hampstead, Islington and Marylebone, of some of which as our papers serve we shall inform you.

Sperry and four more of his associates hearing that gaming was very public at Hampstead,<sup>[60]</sup> and that considerable sums were won and lost there every night, resolved to share part of the winnings, let them light where they would. In order to this, they planted themselves in a dry ditch on one side of the foot-road just as evening came on, intending when it was darker to venture into the coach road. They had hardly been at their posts a quarter of an hour before two officers came by. Some were for attacking them, but Sperry was of a contrary opinion. In the meanwhile they heard one of the gentlemen say to the other, *There's D— M—, the Gamester, behind us, he has won at least sixty guineas to-night.* Sperry and his crew had no further dispute whether they should rob the gentlemen in red or no, but resolved to wait the coming of so rich a prize.

It was but a few minutes before M— appeared in sight. They immediately stepped into the path, two before him, and two behind, and watching him to the corner of a hedge, the two who were behind him caught him by the shoulders, turned him round, and hurrying him about ten yards, pushed him into a dry ditch. This they had no sooner done, but they all four leaped down upon him and began to examine his pockets, M— thought to have talked them out of a stricter search by pretending he had lost a great deal of money at play, and had but fifty shillings about him, which with a silver watch and a crystal ring he deemed very ready to deliver; and it very probably would have been accepted if they had not had better intelligence, but one of the oldest of the gang, perceiving after turning out all his pockets that they could discover nothing of value, began to exert the style of a highwayman upon an examination, and addressed the gamester in these terms.

*Nobody but such a rogue as you would have given gentlemen of our faculty so much trouble. Sir, we have received advice by good hands from Belsize that you won sixty guineas to-day at play. Produce them immediately, or we shall take it for granted you have swallowed them; and in such a case, Sir, I have an instrument ready to give us an immediate account of the contents of your stomach.*

M—, in a dreadful fright, put his hand under his arm, and from thence produced a green purse with a fifty pound bank-note and eighteen guineas. This they had no sooner taken than, tying him fast to a hedge stake, they ran across the fields in search of another booty. They spun out the time, being a moonlight night, until past eleven, there being so much company on the road that they found it impossible to attack without danger.

As they were returning home, they heard the noise of a coach driving very hard, and upon turning about saw it was that of Sir W— B—, himself on the box, two ladies of pleasure in the coach, and his servants a great way behind. One of them seized the horse on one side, and another on the other, but Sir W— drove so very hard that the pull of the horses brought them both to the ground, and he at the same time encouraging them with his voice and the smack of his whip. So he drove safe off without any hurt, though they fired two pistols after him.

About three weeks after this they were passing down Drury Lane, and observing a gentleman going with one of the fine ladies of the Hundreds into a tavern thereabouts, one of the gang who knew him, and that he had married a lady with a great fortune to whom his father was guardian, and that they lived altogether in a great house near Lincoln's Inn Fields, immediately thought on a project. They slipped into an alehouse, where he wrote an epistle to the old gentleman, informing him that they had a warrant to apprehend a lewd woman who was with child by his son, but that she had made her escape, and was now actually with him at a certain tavern in Drury Lane, wherefore being apprehensive of disturbance, and being unwilling to disgrace his family, rather than take rougher methods, they had informed him, in order that by his interposition the affair might be made up.

As soon as they had written this letter, they dispatched one of their number to carry it and deliver it, as if by mistake, to the young gentleman's wife. This had the desired effect, for in less than half an hour came the father, the wife, and another of her trustees, who happened to be

paying a visit there when the letter came. They no sooner entered the tavern but hearing the voice of the gentleman they asked for, without ceremony they opened the door, and finding a woman there, all was believed, and there followed a mighty uproar. Two of the rogues who were best dressed, had slipped into the next room and called for half a pint. As if by accident they came out at the noise, and under pretence of enquiring the occasion, took the opportunity of picking the gentleman's pockets of twenty-five guineas, one gold watch, and two silver snuff-boxes, which it is to be presumed were never missed until the hurry of the affair was over.

The last robbery Sperry committed was upon one Thomas Golding, not far from Bromley, who not having any money about him, Sperry endeavoured to make it up by taking all his clothes. Being apprehended for this, at the next sessions at the Old Bailey he was convicted for this offence, and having no friends, could not entertain the least hopes of pardon. From the time that he was convicted, and, indeed, from that of his commitment, he behaved like a person on the brink of another world, ingenuously confessing all his guilt, and acknowledging readily the justice of that sentence by which he was doomed to death. His behaviour was perfectly uniform, and as he never put on an air of contempt towards death, so, at its nearest approach he did not seem exceedingly terrified therewith, but with great calmness of mind prepared for his dissolution.

On the day of his execution his countenance seemed rather more cheerful than ordinarily, and he left this world with all exterior signs of true penitence and contrition, on Monday, the 24th of May, 1725, at Tyburn, being then about twenty-three years of age.

[58]

There was great competition to secure white labour in the American plantations. Infamous touts circulated amongst the poor, and any who were starving or wished for personal reasons to emigrate engaged themselves with a ship-master or an office-keeper to allow themselves to be sold for a term of years in return for their passage money. On arrival at their destination these poor wretches were sent to the plantations and lived as slaves until the term for which they had contracted had expired. In Virginia and Maryland, where most of them went, they were driven to work on the tobacco fields with the negroes, and were worse treated than the blacks, as being only leasehold property whereas the negroes were freehold.

[59]

Captain Edward Low was one of the bloodied of the pirates. He served under Lowther until 1722, when he smarted on his own account. After many atrocities he was taken by the French and hanged, some time in 1724. A full account of him is given in my edition of Johnson's *History of the Pirates*, issued in the same series as the present volume.

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Belsize House was opened as a place of amusement, about 1720, by a certain Howell, who called himself the Welsh Ambassador. At first it was a fashionable resort, but it soon became the haunt of gamblers and harpies of both sexes.

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### **The Life of ROBERT HARPHAM, a Coiner**

In my former volume I have taken occasion, in the life of Barbara Spencer, to mention the laws against coining as they stand at present in this kingdom. I shall not, therefore, detain my readers here with the unnecessary introduction, but proceed to inform them that a multitude of false guineas being talked of—the natural consequence of a few being detected—great pains were taken by the officers belonging to the Mint for detecting those by whom such frauds had been committed.

It was not long before information was had of one Robert Harpham and Thomas Broom, who were suspected of being the persons by whom such false guineas had been made. Upon these suspicions search warrants were granted, and a large engine of iron was discovered at Harpham's house, with other tools supposed to be made use of for that purpose. On this, the mob immediately gave out that a cart-load of guineas had been carried from thence, because those instruments were so cumbersome as to be fetched in that manner; though the truth, indeed, was that no great number of false guineas had been coined, though the instruments undoubtedly were fitted and made use of for that purpose. Harpham, who well knew what evidence might be produced against him, never flattered himself with hopes after he came to Newgate, but as he believed he should die, so he prepared himself for it as well as he could.

At his trial the evidence against him was very full and direct. Mr. Pinket deposed flatly that the instruments produced in Court, and which were sworn to be taken from the prisoner's house, could not serve for any other purpose than that of coining. These instruments were an iron press of very great weight, a cutting instrument for forming blanks, an edging tool for indenting, with two dies for guineas and two dies for half-guineas. To strengthen this, William Fornham deposed in relation to the prisoners' possession, and Mr. Gornbey swore directly to his striking a half-guinea in his presence. Mr. Oakley and Mr. Tardley deposing further, that they flatted very considerable quantities of a mixed metal for the prisoner, made up of brass, copper, etc., sometimes to the quantity of 30 or 40 pound weight at a time.

The defence he made was very weak and trifling, and after a very short consideration the jury brought him in guilty of the indictment, and he, never entertaining any hopes of pardon, bent all his endeavours in making his peace with God. Some persons in the prison had been very civil to him, and one of them presuming thereon, asked him wherein the great secret of his art of coining lay? Mr. Harpham thanked him for the kindnesses he had received of him, but said that he should make a very bad return for the time afforded him by the law of repentance, if he should leave behind him anything of that kind which might farther detriment his country. Some instances were also made to him that he should discover certain persons of that same profession with himself, who were likely to carry on the same frauds long after his decease. Mr. Harpham, notwithstanding the answer he had made to the other gentleman, refused to comply with this request; for he said that the instruments seized would effectually prevent that, and he would not take away their lives and ruin their families, when he was sure they were incapacitated from coining anything for the future. However, that he might discharge his conscience as far as he could, he wrote several pathetic letters to the persons concerned; earnestly exhorting them for the sake of themselves and their families to leave off this wicked employment, and not hazard their lives and their salvation in any further attempt of that sort.

Having thus disengaged himself from all worldly concerns, he dedicated the last moments of his life entirely to the service of God; and having, received the Sacrament the day before his execution, he was conveyed the next noon to Tyburn in a sledge, where he was not a little disturbed, even in the agonies of death, by the tumult and insults the mob offered to Jonathan Wild, which he complained much of and seemed very uneasy at. He suffered on the same day with the last mentioned malefactor, appealing to be about two- or three-and-forty years of age.

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### **The Life of the famous JONATHAN WILD, Thief-Taker**

As no person in this collection ever made so much noise as the person we are now speaking of, so never any man, perhaps, in any condition of life whatever had so many romantic stories fathered upon him in his life, or so many fictitious legendary accounts published of him after his death. It may seem a low kind of affectation to say that the memoirs we are now giving of Jonathan Wild are founded on certainty and fact; and that though they are so founded, they are yet more extraordinary than any of those fabulous relations pushed into the world to get a penny, at the time of his death, when it was a proper season for vending such forgeries, the public looking with so much attention on his catastrophe, and greedily catching up whatever pretended to the giving an account of his actions. But to go on with the history in its proper order.

Jonathan Wild<sup>[61]</sup> was the son of persons in a mean and low state of life, yet for all that I have ever heard of them, both honest and industrious. Their family consisted of three sons and two daughters, whom their father and mother maintained and educated in the best manner they could from their joint labours, he as carpenter, and she by selling fruit in Wolverhampton market, in Staffordshire, which in future ages may perhaps become famous as the birth place of the celebrated Mr. Jonathan Wild. He was the eldest of the sons, and received as good an education as his father's circumstances would allow him, being bred at the free-school to read and write, to both of which having attained to a tolerable degree, he was put out an apprentice to a buckle-maker in Birmingham.

He served his time with much fidelity, and came up to town in the service of a gentleman of the long robe, about the year 1704, or perhaps a little later. But not liking his service, or his master being not altogether so well pleased with him, he quitted it and retired to his old employment in the country, where he continued to work diligently for some time. But at last growing sick of labour, and still entertaining a desire to taste the pleasures of London, up hither he came a second time, and worked journey-work at the trade to which he was bred. But this not producing money enough to support those expenses Jonathan's love of pleasure threw him into, he got pretty deeply in debt; and some of his creditors not being endued with altogether as much patience as his circumstances required, he was suddenly arrested, and thrown into Wood-street Compter.

Having no friends to do anything for him, and having very little money in his pocket when this misfortune happened, he lived very hardly there, scarce getting bread enough to support him from the charity allowed to prisoners, and from what little services he could render to prisoners of the better sort in the gaol. However, as no man wanted address less than Jonathan, so nobody could have employed it more properly than he did upon this occasion; he thereby got so much into the favour of the keepers, that they quickly permitted him the liberty of the gate, as they call it, and he thereby got some little matter for going on errands. This set him above the very pinch of want, and that was all; but his fidelity and industry in these mean employments procured him such esteem amongst those in power there, that they soon took him into their ministry, and appointed him an under-keeper to those disorderly persons who were brought in every night and are called, in their cant, "rats."

Jonathan now came into a comfortable subsistence, having learnt how to get money of such people by putting them into the road of getting liberty for themselves. But there, says my author, he met with a lady who was confined on the score of such practices very often, and who went by the name of Mary Milliner; and who soon taught him how to gain much greater sums than in this way of life, by methods which he until then never heard of, and will I am confident, to this day carry the charms of novelty to most of my readers. Of these the first she put upon him was going

on what they call the "twang," which is thus managed: the man who is the confederate goes out with some noted woman of the town, and if she fall into any broil, he is to be at a proper distance, ready to come into her assistance, and by making a sham quarrel, give her an opportunity of getting off, perhaps after she has dived for a watch or a purse of guineas, and was in danger of being caught in the very act. This proved a very successful employment to Mr. Wild for a time. Moll and he, therefore, resolved to set up together, and for that purpose took lodgings and lived as man and wife, notwithstanding Jonathan then had a wife and a son at Wolverhampton and the fair lady was married to a waterman in town.

By the help of this woman Jonathan grew acquainted with all the notorious gangs of loose persons within the bills of mortality, and was also perfectly versed in the manner by which they carried on their schemes. He knew where and how their enterprises were to be gone upon, and after what manner they disposed of their ill-got goods, when they came into their possession. Having always an intriguing head Wild set up for a director amongst them, and soon became so useful to them that though he never went out upon any of their lays, yet he got as much or more by their crimes as if he had been a partner with them, which upon one pretence or other he always declined.

He had long ago got rid of that debt for which he had been imprisoned in the Compter, and having by his own thought projected a new manner of life, he began in a very little time to grow weary of Mrs. Milliner, who had been his first instructor. What probably contributed thereto was the danger to which he saw himself exposed by continuing a bully in her service; however, they parted without falling out, and as he had occasion to make use of her pretty often in his new way of business, so she proved very faithful and industrious to him in it, though she still went on in her old way.

'Tis now time, that both this and the remaining part of the discourse may be intelligible, to explain the methods by which thieves became the better for thieving where they did not steal ready money; and of this we will speak in the clearest and most concise manner that we can.

It must be observed that anciently when a thief had got his booty he had done all that a man in his profession could do, and there were multitudes of people ready to help them off with whatever effects he had got, without any more to do. But this method being totally destroyed by an Act passed in the reign of King William, by which it was made felony for any person to buy goods stolen, knowing them to be so, and some examples having been made on this Act, there were few or no receivers to be met with. Those that still carried on the trade took exorbitant sums for their own profit, leaving those who had run the hazard of their necks in obtaining them, the least share of the plunder. This (as an ingenious author says) had like to have brought the thieving trade to naught; but Jonathan quickly thought of a method to put things again in order, and give new life to the practices of the several branches of the ancient art and mystery called stealing. The method he took was this.

As soon as any considerable robbery was committed, and Jonathan received intelligence by whom, he immediately went to the thieves, and instead of offering to buy the whole or any part of the plunder, he only enquired how the thing was done, where the persons lived who were injured, and what the booty consisted in that was taken away. Then pretending to chide them for their wickedness in doing such actions, and exhorting them to live honestly for the future, he gave it them as his advice to lodge what they had taken in a proper place which he appointed them, and then promised he would take some measures for their security by getting the people to give them somewhat to have them restored them again. Having thus wheedled those who had committed a robbery into a compliance with his measures, his next business was to divide the goods into several parcels, and cause them to be sent to different places, always avoiding taking them into his own hands.

Things being in this position, Jonathan, or Mrs. Milliner went to the persons who were robbed, and after condoling the misfortune, observed that they had an acquaintance with a broker to whom certain goods were brought, some of which they suspected to be stolen, and hearing that the person to whom they thus applied had been robbed they said they thought it the duty of one honest body to another to inform them thereof, and to enquire what goods they were they lost, in order to discover whether those they spoke of were the same or no. People who had such losses are always ready, after the first fit of passion is over, to hearken to anything that has a tendency towards recovering their goods. Jonathan or his mistress therefore, who could either of them play the hypocrite nicely, had no great difficulty in making people listen to such terms; in a day or two, therefore, they were sure to come again with intelligence that having called upon their friend and looked over the goods, they had found part of the goods there; and provided nobody was brought into trouble, and the broker had something in consideration of his care, they might be had again. He generally told the people, when they came on this errand, that he had heard of another parcel at such a place, and that if they would stay a little, he would go and see whether they were such as they described theirs to be which they had lost.

This practice of Jonathan's, if well considered, carries in it a great deal of policy; for first it seemed to be an honest and good-natured act to prevail on evil persons to restore the goods which they had stole; and it must be acknowledged to be a great benefit to those who were robbed thus to have their goods again upon a reasonable premium, Jonathan or his mistress all the while taking apparently nothing, their advantages arising from what they took out of the gratuity left with the broker, and out of what they had bargained with the thief to be allowed of the money which they had procured him. Such people finding this advantage in it, the rewards

were very near as large as the price now given by receivers (since receiving became too dangerous), and they reaped a certain security also by the bargain.

With respect to Jonathan, the contrivance placed him in safety, not only from all the laws then in being, but perhaps would have secured him as securely from those that are made now, if covetousness had not prevailed with him to take bolder steps than these; for in a short time he began to give himself out for a person who made it his business to procure stolen goods to their right owners. When he first did this he acted with so much art and cunning that he acquired a very great reputation as an honest man, not only from those who dealt with him to procure what they had lost, but even from those people of higher station, who observing the industry with which he prosecuted certain malefactors, took him for a friend of Justice, and as such afforded him countenance and encouragement.

Certain it is that he brought more villains to the gallows than perhaps any man ever did, and consequently by diminishing their number, made it much more safe for persons to travel or even to reside with security in their own houses. And so sensible was Jonathan of the necessity there was for him to act in this manner, that he constantly hung up two or three of his clients at least in a twelvemonth, that he might keep up that character to which he had attained; and so indefatigable was he in the pursuit of those he endeavoured to apprehend, that it never happened in all his course of acting, that so much as one single person escaped him. Nor need this appear so great a wonder, if we consider that the exact acquaintance he had with their gangs and the haunts they used put it out of their power almost to hide themselves so as to avoid his searches.

When this practice of Jonathan's became noted, and the people resorted continually to his house in order to hear of the goods which they had lost, it produced not only much discourse, but some enquiries into his behaviour. Jonathan foresaw this, and in order to evade any ill consequence that might follow upon it, upon such occasions put on an air of gravity, and complained of the evil disposition of the times, which would not permit a man to serve his neighbours and his country without censure. *For do I not,* quoth Jonathan, *do the greatest good, when I persuade these wicked people who have deprived them of their properties, to restore them again for a reasonable consideration. And are not the villains whom I have so industriously brought to suffer that punishment which the Law, for the sake of its honest subjects, thinks fit to inflict upon them—in this respect, I say, does not their death show how much use I am to the country? Why, then,* added Jonathan, *should people asperse me, or endeavour to take away my bread?*

This kind of discourse served, as my readers must know, to keep Wild safe in his employment for many years, while not a step he took, but trod on felony, nor a farthing did he obtain but what deserved the gallows. Two great things there were which contributed to his preservation, and they were these. The great readiness the Government always shows in detecting persons guilty of capital offences; in which case we know 'tis common to offer not only pardon, but rewards to persons guilty, provided they make discoveries; and this Jonathan was so sensible of that he did not only screen himself behind the lenity of the Supreme Power, but made use of it also as a sort of authority, and behaved himself with a very presuming air. And taking upon him the character of a sort of minister of Justice, this assumed character of his, however ill-founded, proved of great advantage to him in the course of his life. The other point, which, as I have said, contributed to keep him from any prosecutions on the score of these illegal and unwarrantable actions, was the great willingness of people who had been robbed to recover their goods, and who, provided for a small matter they could regain things for a considerable worth, were so far from taking pains to bring the offenders to justice that they thought the premium a cheap price to get off.

Thus by the rigour of the magistrate, and the lenity of the subject, Jonathan claimed constant employment, and according as wicked persons behaved, they were either trussed up to satisfy the just vengeance of the one, or protected and encouraged, that by bringing the goods they stole he might be enabled to satisfy the demands of the other. And thus we see the policy of a mean and scandalous thief-taker, conducted with as much prudence, caution, and necessary courage, as the measures taken by even the greatest persons upon earth; nor perhaps is there, in all history, an instance of a man who thus openly dallied with the laws, and played with capital punishment.

As I am persuaded my readers will take a pleasure in the relation of Jonathan's maxims of policy, I shall be a little more particular in relation to them than otherwise I should have been, considering that in this work I do not propose to treat of the actions of a single person, but to consider the villainies committed throughout the space of a dozen years, such especially as have reached to public notice by bringing the authors of them to the gallows. But Mr. Wild being a man of such eminence as to value himself in his life-time on his superiority to meaner rogues; so I am willing to distinguish him now he is dead, by showing a greater complaisance in recording his history than that of any other hero in this way whatsoever.

Nor, to speak properly, was Jonathan ever an operator, as they call it, that is a practicer in any one branch of thieving. No, his method was to acquire money at an easier rate, and if any title can be devised suitable to his great performance, it must be that of Director General of the united forces of highwaymen, housebreakers, footpads, pickpockets, and private thieves. Now, according to my promise, for the maxims by which he supported himself in this dangerous capacity.

In the first place, he continually exhorted the plunderers that belonged to his several gangs, to let him know punctually what goods they at any time took, by which means he had it in his power to give, for the most part, a direct answer to those who came to make their enquiries after they

had lost their effects, either by their own carelessness, or the dexterity of the thief. If they complied faithfully with his instructions, he was a certain protector on all occasions, and sometimes had interest enough to procure them liberty when apprehended, either in the committing a robbery, or upon the information of one of the gang. In such a case Jonathan's usual pretence was that such a person (who was the man he intended to save) was capable of making a larger and more effectual information, for which purpose Jonathan would sometimes supply him with memorandums of his own, and thereby establish so well the credit of his discovery, as scarce to fail of producing its effect.

But if his thieves threatened to become independent, and despise his rules, or endeavour for the sake of profit to vend the goods they got some other way without making application to Jonathan; or if they threw out any threatening speeches against their companions; or grumbled at the compositions he made for them, in such cases as these Wild took the first opportunity of talking to them in a new style, telling them that he was well assured they did very ill acts and plundered poor honest people, to indulge themselves in their debaucheries; that they would do well to think of amending before the Justice of their country fell upon them; and that after such warning they must not expect any assistance from him, in case they should fall under any misfortune. The next thing that followed after this fine harangue was that they were put into the information of some of Jonathan's creatures; or the first fresh fact they committed and Jonathan was applied to for the recovery of the goods, he immediately set out to apprehend them, and laboured so indefatigably therein that they never escaped him. Thus he not only procured the reward for himself, but also gained an opportunity of pretending that he not only restored goods to the right owners, but also apprehended the thief as often as it was in his power. As to instances, I shall mention them in a proper place.

I shall now go on to another observation, viz., that in those steps of his business which was most hazardous, Jonathan made the people themselves take the first steps by publishing advertisements of things lost, directing them to be brought to Mr. Wild, who was empowered to receive them and pay such a reward as the person that lost them thought fit to offer; and in this capacity Jonathan appeared no otherwise than as a person on whose honour these sort of people could rely; by which, his assistance became necessary for retrieving whatever had been pilfered.

After he had gone on in this trade for about ten years with success, he began to lay aside much of his former caution, and gave way to the natural vanity of his temper; taking a larger house in Old Bailey than that in which he formerly lived; giving the woman who he called his wife, abundance of fine things; keeping open office for restoring stolen goods; appointing abundance of under-officers to receive goods, carry messages to those who stole them, bring him exact intelligence of the several gangs and the places of their resort, and in fine, for such other purposes as this, their supreme governor, directed. His fame at last came to that height that persons of the highest quality would condescend to make use of his abilities, when at an installation, public entry, or some other great solemnity they had the misfortune of losing watches, jewels, or other things, whether of great real or imaginary value.

But as his methods of treating those who applied to him for his assistance has been much misrepresented, I shall next give an exact and impartial account thereof, that the fabulous history of Jonathan Wild may not be imposed upon posterity.

In the first place, then, when a person was introduced to Mr. Wild's office, it was first hinted to him that a crown must be deposited by way of fee for his advice; when this was complied with a large book was brought out; then the loser was examined with much formality, as to the time, place, and manner that the goods became missing; and then the person was dismissed with a promise of careful enquiries being made, and of hearing more concerning them in a day or two. When this was adjusted, the person took his leave, with great hopes of being acquainted shortly with the fruits of Mr. Wild's industry, and highly satisfied with the methodical treatment he had met with.

But at the bottom this was all grimace. Wild had not the least occasion for these queries, except to amuse the persons he asked, for he knew beforehand all the circumstances of the robbery much better than they did. Nay, perhaps, he had the very goods in the house when the folks came first to enquire for them; though for reasons not hard to guess he made use of all this formality before he proceeded to return them. When, therefore, according to his appointment, the enquirer came the second time, Jonathan took care to amuse him by a new scene. He was told that Mr. Wild had indeed made enquiries, but was very sorry to communicate the result of them; the thief, truly, who was a bold impudent fellow, rejected with scorn the offer which pursuant to the loser's instructions had been made him, insisted that he could sell the goods at a double price, and in short would not hear a word of restitution unless upon better terms. *But notwithstanding all this, says Jonathan, if I can but come to the speech of him, I don't doubt bringing him to reason.*

At length, after one or two more attendances, Mr. Wild gave the definite answer, that provided no questions were asked and so much money was given to the porter who brought them, the loser might have his things returned at such an hour precisely. This was transacted with all outward appearances of friendship and honest intention on his side, and with great seeming frankness and generosity; but when the client came to the last article, viz., what Mr. Wild expected for his trouble, then an air of coldness was put on, and he answered with equal pride and indifference, that what he did was purely from a principle of doing good. As to a gratuity for the trouble he had taken, he left it totally to yourself; you might do it in what you thought fit. Even when money was presented to him he received it with the same negligent grace, always putting you in mind that it



was your own act, that you did it merely out of your generosity, and that it was no way the result of his request, that he took it as a favour, not as a reward.

By this dexterity in his management he fenced himself against the rigour of the law, in the midst of these notorious transgressions of it, for what could be imputed to Mr. Wild? He neither saw the thief who took away your goods, nor received them after they were taken; the method he pursued in order to procure you your things again was neither dishonest or illegal, if you will believe his account on it, and no other than his account could be gotten. According to him it was performed after this manner: after having enquired amongst such loose people as he acknowledged he had acquaintance with, and hearing that such a robbery was committed at such a time, and such and such goods were taken, he thereupon had caused it to be intimated to the thief that if he had any regard for his own safety he would cause such and such goods to be carried to such a place; in consideration of which, he might reasonably hope such a reward, naming a certain sum. If it excited the thief to return the goods, it did not thereby fix any guilt or blame upon Jonathan; and by this description, I fancy my readers will have a pretty clear idea of the man's capacity, as well as of his villainy.

Had Mr. Wild continued satisfied with this way of dealing in all human probability he might have gone to his grave in peace, without any apprehensions of punishment but what he was to meet within a world to come. But he was greedy, and instead of keeping constant to this safe method, came at last to take the goods into his own custody, giving those that stole them what he thought proper, and then making such a bargain with the loser as he was able to bring him up to, sending the porter himself, and taking without ceremony whatever money had been given him. But as this happened only in the two last years of his life, it is fit I should give you some instances of his behaviour before, and these not from the hearsay of the town, but within the compass of my own knowledge.

A gentleman near Covent Garden who dealt in silks had bespoke a piece of extraordinary rich damask, on purpose for the birthday suit of a certain duke; and the lace-man having brought such trimming as was proper for it, the mercer had made the whole up in a parcel, tied it at each end with blue ribbon, sealed with great exactness, and placed on one end of the counter, in expectation of his Grace's servant, who he knew was directed to call for it in the afternoon. Accordingly the fellow came, but when the mercer went to deliver him the goods, the piece had gone, and no account could possibly be had of it. As the master had been all day in the shop, so there was no possibility of charging anything either upon the carelessness or dishonesty of servants. After an hour's fretting, therefore, seeing no other remedy, he even determined to go and communicate his loss to Mr. Wild, in hopes of receiving some benefit by his assistance, the loss consisting not so much in the value of the things as in the disappointment it would be to the nobleman not to have them on the birthday.

Upon this consideration a hackney-coach was immediately called, and away he was ordered to drive directly to Jonathan's house in the Old Bailey. As soon as he came into the room, and had acquainted Mr. Wild with his business, the usual deposit of a crown being made, and the common questions of the how, when, and where, having been asked, the mercer being very impatient, said with some kind of heat, *Mr. Wild, the loss I have sustained, though the intrinsic value of the goods be very little, lies more in disobliging my customer. Tell me, therefore, in a few words, if it be in your power to serve me. If it is, I have thirty guineas here ready to lay down, but if you expect that I should dance attendance for a week or two, I assure you I shall not be willing to part with above half the money.* Good sir, replied Mr. Wild, *have a little more consideration. I am no thief, sir, nor no receiver of stolen goods, so that if you don't think fit to give me time to enquire, you must e'en take what measures you please.*

When the mercer found he was like to be left without any hopes, he began to talk in a milder strain, and with abundance of intreaties fell to persuading Jonathan to think of some method to serve him, and that immediately. Wild stepped out a minute or two, as if to the necessary house; as soon as he came back he told the gentleman, it was not in his power to serve him in such a hurry, if at all; however, in a day or two he might be able to give him some answer. The mercer insisted that a day or two would lessen the value of the goods one half to him, and Jonathan insisted, as peremptorily, that it was not in his power to do anything sooner.

At last a servant came in a hurry, and told Mr. Wild there was a gentleman below desired to speak with him. Jonathan bowed and begged the gentleman's pardon, told him he would wait on him in one minute, and without staying for a reply withdrew, and clapped the door after him. In about five minutes he returned with a very smiling countenance, and turning to the gentleman, said, *I protest sir, you are the luckiest man I ever knew. I spoke to one of my people just now, to go to a house where I know some lifters resort, and directed him to talk of the robbery that had been committed in your house, and to say that the gentleman had been with me and offered thirty guineas, provided the things might be had again, but declared, if he did not receive them in a very short space, he would give as great a reward for the discovery of the thief, whom he would prosecute with the utmost severity. This story has had its effect, and if you go directly home, I fancy you'll hear more news of it yourself than I am able to tell you. But pray, sir, remember one thing; that the thirty guineas was your own offer. You are at free liberty to give them, or let them alone; do which you please, 'tis nothing to me; but take notice, sir, that I have done all for you in my power, without the least expectation of gratuity.*

Away went the mercer, confounded in his mind, and wondering where this affair would end. But as he walked up Southampton Street a fellow overtook him, patted him on the shoulder, and

delivered him the bundle unopened, telling him the price was twenty guineas. The mercer paid it him directly, and returning to Jonathan in half an hour's time, readily expressed abundance of thanks to Mr. Wild for his assistance, and begged him to accept of the ten guineas he had saved him, for his pains. Jonathan told him that he had saved him nothing, but supposed that the people thought twenty demand enough, considering that they were now pretty safe from prosecution. The mercer still pressed the ten guineas upon Jonathan, who after taking them out of his hand returned him five of them, and assured him that was more than enough, adding: *'Tis satisfaction enough, sir, to an honest man that he is able to procure people their goods again.*

This, you will say, was a remarkable instance of his moderation. I will join to it as extraordinary an account of his justice, equity, or what else you will please to call it. It happened thus.

A lady whose husband was out of the kingdom, and had sent over to her draughts for her assistance to the amount of between fifteen hundred and two thousand pounds, lost the pocket-book in which they were contained, between Bucklersbury and Magpie alehouse in Leadenhall Street, where the merchant lived upon whom they were drawn. She however, went to the gentleman, and he advised her to go directly to Mr. Jonathan Wild. Accordingly to Jonathan she came, deposited the crown, and answered the questions she asked him. Jonathan then told her that in an hour or two's time, possibly, some of his people might hear who it was that had picked her pocket. The lady was vehement in her desires to have it again, and for that purpose went so far at last as to offer an hundred guineas. Upon that Wild made answer, *Though they are of much greater value to you, madam, yet they cannot be worth anything like it to them; therefore keep your own counsel, say nothing in the hearing of my people, and I'll give you the best, directions I am able for the recovery of your notes. In the meanwhile, if you will go to any tavern near, and endeavour to eat a bit of dinner, I will bring you an answer before the cloth is taken away.* She said she was unacquainted with any house thereabouts, upon which Mr. Wild named the Baptist Head.<sup>[62]</sup> The lady would not be satisfied unless Mr. Wild promised to eat with her; he at last complied, and she ordered a fowl and sausages at the house he had appointed.

She waited there about three quarters of an hour, when Mr. Wild came over and told her he had heard news of her book, desiring her to tell out ten guineas upon the table in case she should have an occasion for them. As the cook came up to acquaint her that the fowl was ready, Jonathan begged she would see whether there was any woman waiting at his door.

The lady, without minding the mystery, did as he desired her, and perceiving a woman in a scarlet riding-hood walk twice or thrice by Mr. Wild's house, her curiosity prompted her to go near her. But recollecting she had left the gold upon the table upstairs, she went and snatched it up without saying a word to Jonathan, and then running down again went towards the woman in the red hood, who was still walking before his door. It seems she had guessed right, for no sooner did she approach towards her but the woman came directly up to her, and presenting her pocket book, desired she would open it and see that all was safe. The lady did so, and answering it was alright, the woman in the red riding-hood said, *Here's another little note for you, madam;* upon which she gave her a little billet, on the outside of which was written ten guineas. The lady delivered her the money immediately, adding also a piece for herself, and returning with a great deal of joy to Mr. Wild, told him she had got her book, and would now eat her dinner heartily. When the things were taken away, she thought it was time to go to the merchant.

Thinking it would be necessary to make Mr. Wild a handsome present, she put her hand in her pocket, and with great surprise found her green purse gone, in which was the remainder of fifty guineas she had borrowed of the merchant in the morning. Upon this she looked very much confused, but did not speak a word. Jonathan perceived it, asked if she was not well. *I am tolerably in health, sir,* answered she, *but I am amazed that the woman took but ten guineas for the book, and at the same time picked my pocket of thirty-nine.*

Mr. Wild hereupon appeared in as great a confusion as the lady, and said he hoped she was not in earnest, but if it were so, begged her not to disturb herself, she should not lose one farthing. Upon which Jonathan begging her to sit still, stepped over to his own house and gave, as may be supposed, necessary directions, for in less than half an hour a little Jew (called Abraham) that Wild kept, bolted into the room, and told him the woman was taken, and on the point of going to the Compter. *You shall see, Madam,* said Jonathan, turning to the lady, *what exemplary punishment I'll make of this infamous woman.* Then turning himself to the Jew, *Abraham,* says he, *was the green purse of money taken on her? Yes sir,* replied his agent. *O la!* then said the lady, *I'll take the purse with all my heart; I would not prosecute the poor wretch for the world. Would not you so, Madam,* replied Wild. *Well, then, we'll see what's to be done.* Upon which he first whispered his emissary, and then dispatched him.

He was no sooner gone than Jonathan told the lady that she would be too late at the merchant's unless they took coach; which thereupon they did, and stopped over against the Compter gate by the Stocks Market.<sup>[63]</sup> She wondered at all this, but by the time they have been in a tavern a very little space, back comes Jonathan's emissary with the green purse and the gold in it. *She says, sir,* said the fellow to Wild *she has only broke a guinea of the money for garnish and wine, and here's all the rest of it. Very well,* says Jonathan, *give it to the lady. Will you please to tell it, madam?* The lady accordingly did, and found there were forty-nine. *Bless me!* says she. *I think the woman's bewitched, she has sent me ten guineas more than I should have had. No, Madam,* replied Wild, *she has sent you back again the ten guineas which she received for the book; I never suffer any such practices in my way. I obliged her, therefore, to give up the money she had taken as well as that she had stole. And therefore I hope, whatever you may think of her, that you*

*will not have a worse opinion of your humble servant for this accident.*

The lady was so much confounded and confuted at these unaccountable incidents, that she scarce knew what she did; at last recollecting herself, *Well, Mr. Wild, says she; I think the least I can do is to oblige you to accept of these ten guineas. No,* replied he, *nor of ten farthings. I scorn all actions of such a sort as much as any man of quality in the kingdom. All the reward I desire, Madam, is that you will acknowledge I have acted like an honest man, and a man of honour.* He had scarce pronounced these words, before he rose up, made her a bow, and went immediately down stairs.

The reader may be assured there is not the least mixture of fiction in this story, and yet perhaps there was not a more remarkable one which happened in the whole course of Jonathan's life. I shall add but one more relation of this sort, and then go on with the series of my history. This which I am now going to relate happened within a few doors of the place where I lived, and was transacted in this manner.

There came a little boy with vials in a basket to sell to a surgeon who was my very intimate acquaintance. It was in the winter, and the weather cold, when one day after he had sold the bottles that were wanted, the boy complained he was almost chilled to death with cold, and almost starved for want of victuals. The surgeon's maid, in compassion to the child, who was not above nine or ten years old, took him into the kitchen, and gave him a porringer of milk and bread, with a lump or two of sugar in it. The boy ate a little of it, then said he had enough, gave her a thousand blessings and thanks, and marched off with a silver spoon, and a pair of forceps of the same mettle, which lay in the shop as he passed through. The instrument was first missed, and the search after it occasioned their missing the spoon; and yet nobody suspected anything of the boy, though they had all seen him in the kitchen.

The gentleman of the house, however, having some knowledge of Jonathan Wild, and not living far from the Old Bailey, went immediately to him for his advice. Jonathan called for a bottle of white wine and ordered it to be mulled; the gentleman knowing the custom of his house, laid down the crown, and was going on to tell him the manner in which the things were missed, but Mr. Wild soon cut him short by saying, *Sir, step into the next room a moment; here's a lady coming hither. You may depend upon my doing anything that is in my power, and presently we'll talk the thing over at leisure.* The gentleman went into the room where he was directed, and saw, with no little wonder, his forceps and silver spoon lying upon the table. He had hardly taken them up to look at them before Jonathan entered. *So, sir,* said he, *I suppose you have no further occasion for my assistance. Yes, indeed, I have,* said the surgeon, *there are a great many servants in our family, and some of them will certainly be blamed for this transaction; so that I am under a necessity of begging another favour, which is, that you will let me know how they were stolen? I believe the thief is not far off,* quoth Jonathan, *and if you'll give me your word he shall come to no harm, I'll produce him immediately.*

The gentleman readily condescended to this proposition, and Mr. Wild stepping out for a minute or two, brought in the young vial merchant in his hand. *Here, sir,* says Wild, *do you know this hopeful youth? Yes,* answered the surgeon, *but I could never have dreamt that a creature so little as he, could have had so much wickedness in him. However, as I have given you my word, and as I have my things again, I will not only pass by his robbing me, but if he will bring me bottles again, shall make use of him as I used to do. I believe you may,* added Jonathan, *when he ventures into your house again.*

But it seems he was therein mistaken, for in less than a week afterwards the boy had the impudence to come and offer his vials again, upon which the gentleman not only bought of him as usual, but ordered two quarts of milk to be set on the fire, put into it two ounces of glister sugar, crumbled it with a couple of penny loaves, and obliged this nimble-fingered youth to eat it every drop up before he went out of the kitchen door, and then without farther correction hurried him about his business.

This was the channel in which Jonathan's business usually ran, but to support his credit with the magistrates, he was forced to add thief-catching to it, and every sessions or two, strung up some of the youths of his own bringing-up to the gallows. But this, however, did not serve his turn; an honourable person on the Bench took notice of his manner of acting, which being become at last very notorious, an Act of Parliament was passed, levelled directly against such practices, whereby persons who took money for the recovery of stolen goods, and did actually recover such goods without apprehending the felon, should be deemed guilty in the same degree of felony with those who committed the fact in taking such goods as were returned. And after this became law, the same honourable person sent to him to warn him of going on any longer at his old rate, for that it was now become a capital crime, and if he was apprehended for it, he could expect no mercy.

Jonathan received the reproof with abundance of thankfulness and submission, but what was strange, never altered the manner of his behaviour in the least; but on the contrary, did it more openly and publicly than ever. Indeed, to compensate for this, he seemed to double his diligence in apprehending thieves, and brought a vast number of the most notorious amongst them to the gallows, even though he himself had bred them up in the art of thieving, and given them both instructions and encouragement to take that road which was ruinous enough in itself, and by him made fatal.

Of these none were so open and apparent a case as that of Blake, *alias* Blueskin. This fellow had

from a child been under the tuition of Jonathan, who paid for the curing his wounds, whilst he was in the Compter, allowed him three and sixpence a week for his subsistence, and afforded his help to get him out of there at last. Yet as soon after this he abandoned him to his own conduct in such matters, and in a short space caused him to be apprehended for breaking open the house of Mr. Kneebone, which brought him to the gallows. When the fellow came to be tried Jonathan, indeed, vouchsafed to speak to him, and assured him that his body should be handsomely interred in a good coffin at his own expense. This was strange comfort, and such as by no means suited Blueskin: he insisted peremptorily upon a transportation pardon, which he said he was sure Jonathan had interest enough to procure him. But Wild assured him that he had not, and that it was in vain for him to flatter himself with such hopes, but that he had better dispose himself to thinking of another life; in order to which, good books and such like helps should not be wanting.

All this put Blueskin at last into such a passion that though this discourse happened upon the leads at the Old Bailey; in the presence of the Court then sitting, Blake could not forbear taking a revenge for what he took to be an insult on him. And therefore, without ado, he clapped one hand under Jonathan's chin, and with the other, taking a sharp knife out of his pocket, cut him a large gash across the throat, which everybody at the time it was done judged mortal. Jonathan was carried off, all covered with blood, and though at that time he professed the greatest resentment for such usage, affirming that he had done all that lay in his power for the man who had so cruelly designed against his life; yet when he afterwards came to be under sentence of death, he regretted prodigiously the escape he had made then from death, often wishing that the knife of Blake had put an end to his life, rather than left him to linger out his days till so ignominious a fate befell him.

But it was not only Blake who had entertained notions of putting him to death. He had disobliged almost the whole group of villains with whom he had concern, and there were numbers of them who had taken it into their heads to deprive him of life. His escapes in the apprehending such persons were sometimes very narrow; he received wounds in almost every part of his body, his skull was twice fractured, and his whole constitution so broken by these accidents and the great fatigue he went through, that when he fell under the misfortunes which brought him to his death, he was scarce able to stand upright, and was never in a condition to go to chapel.

But we have broke a little into the thread of our history, and must therefore go back in order to trace the causes which brought on Jonathan's last adventures, and finally his violent death. This we shall now relate in the clearest and concisest manner that the thing will allow; being well furnished for that purpose, having to personal experience added the best intelligence that could be procured, and that, too, from persons the most deserving of credit.

The practices of this criminal in the manner we have before mentioned continued long after the Act of Parliament; and in so notorious a manner, at last, that the magistrates in London and Middlesex thought themselves obliged by the duty of their office to take notice of him. This occasioned a warrant to be granted against him by a worshipful alderman of the City, upon which Mr. Wild being apprehended somewhere near Wood Street, he was carried into the Rose Spousing-house. There I myself saw him sitting in the kitchen at the fire, waiting the leisure of the magistrate who was to examine him.

In the meantime the crowd was very great, and, with his usual hypocrisy, Jonathan harangued them to this purpose. *I wonder, good people, what it is you would see? I am a poor honest man, who have done all I could do to serve people when they have had the misfortune to lose their goods by the villainy of thieves. I have contributed more than any man living to bringing the most daring and notorious malefactors to justice. Yet now by the malice of my enemies, you see I am in custody, and am going before a magistrate who I hope will do me justice. Why should you insult me, therefore? I don't know that I ever injured any of you? Let me intreat you, therefore, as you see me lame in body, and afflicted in mind, not to make me more uneasy than I can bear. If I have offended against the law it will punish me, but it gives you no right to use me ill, unheard, and unconvicted.*

By this time the people of the house and the Compter officers had pretty well cleared the place, upon which he began to compose himself, and desired them to get a coach to the door, for he was unable to walk. About an hour after, he was carried before a Justice and examined, and I think was thereupon immediately committed to Newgate. He lay there a considerable time before he was tried; at last he was convicted capitally upon the following fact, which appeared on the evidence, exactly in the same light in which I shall state it.

He was indicted on the afore-mentioned Statute, for receiving money for the restoring stolen goods, without apprehending the persons by whom they were stolen. In order to support this charge, the prosecutrix, Catherine Stephens,<sup>[64]</sup> deposed as follows:

On the 22nd of January, I had two persons come in to my shop under pretence of buying some lace. They were so difficult that I had none below would please them, so leaving my daughter in the shop, I stepped upstairs and brought down another box. We could not agree about the price, and so they went away together. In about half an hour I missed a tin box of lace that I valued at £50. The same night and the next I went to Jonathan Wild's house; but meeting with him at home, I advertised the lace that I had lost with a reward of fifteen guineas, and no questions asked. But hearing nothing of it, I went to Jonathan's house again,

and then met with him at home. He desired me to give him a description of the persons that I suspected, which I did, as near as I could; and then he told me, that he would make enquiry, and bid me call again in two or three days. I did so, and then he said that he had heard something of my lace, and expected to know more of the matter in a very little time.

I came to him again on that day he was apprehended (I think it was the 15th of February). I told him that though I had advertised but fifteen guineas reward, yet I would give twenty or twenty-five guineas, rather than not have my goods. *Don't be in such a hurry, says Jonathan, I don't know but I may help you to it for less, and if I can I will; the persons that have it are gone out of town. I shall set them to quarrelling about it, and then I shall get it the cheaper.* On the 10th of March he sent me word that if I could come to him in Newgate, and bring ten guineas in my pocket, he would help me to the lace. I went, he desired me to call a porter, but I not knowing where to find one, he sent a person who brought one that appeared to be a ticket-porter. The prisoner gave me a letter which he said was sent him as a direction where to go for the lace; but I could not read, and so I delivered it to the porter. Then he desired me to give the porter the ten guineas, or else (he said) the persons who had the lace would not deliver it. I gave the porter the money; he returned, and brought me a box that was sealed up, but not the same that was lost. I opened it and found all my lace but one piece.

*Now, Mr. Wild, says I, what must you have for your trouble? Not a farthing, says he, not a farthing for me. I don't do these things for worldly interest, but only for the good of poor people that have met with misfortunes. As for the piece of lace that is missing, I hope to get it for you ere long, and I don't know but that I may help you not only to your money again, but to the thief too. And if I can, much good may it do you; and as you are a good woman and a widow, and a Christian, I desire nothing of you but your prayers, and for these I shall be thankful. I have a great many enemies, and God knows what may be the consequence of this imprisonment.*

The fact suggested in the indictment was undoubtedly fully proved by this disposition, and though that fact happened in Newgate, and after his confinement, yet it still continued as much and as great a crime as if it had been done before; the Law therefore condemned him upon it. But even if he had escaped this, there were other facts of a like nature, which inevitably would have destroyed him; for the last years of his life, instead of growing more prudent, he undoubtedly became less so, for the blunders committed in this fact, were very little like the behaviour of Jonathan in the first years in which he carried on this practice, when nobody behaved with greater caution, as nobody ever had so much reason to be cautious. And though he had all along great enemies, yet he had conducted his affairs so that the Law could not possibly lay hold of him, nor his excuses be easily detected, even in respect of honesty.

When he was brought up to the bar to receive sentence, he appeared to be very much dejected, and when the usual question was proposed to him: *What have you to say why judgment of death should not pass upon you?* he spoke with a very feeble voice in the following terms.

*My Lord, I hope even in the sad condition in which I stand, I may pretend to some little merit in respect to the service I have done my country, in delivering it from some of the greatest pests with which it was ever troubled. My Lord, I have brought many bold and daring malefactors to just punishment, even at the hazard of my own life, my body being covered with scars I received in these undertakings. I presume, my Lord, to say I have done merit, because at the time the things were done, they were esteemed meritorious by the government; and therefore I hope, my Lord, some compassion may be shown on the score of those services. I submit myself wholly to his Majesty's mercy, and humbly beg a favourable report of my case.*

When Sir William Thomson<sup>[65]</sup> (now one of the barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer), as Recorder of London, pronounced sentence of death, he spoke particularly to Wild, put him in mind of those cautions he had had against going on in those practices rendered capital by Law, made on purpose for preventing that infamous trade of becoming broker for felony, and standing in the middle between the felon and the person injured, in order to receive a premium for redress. And when he had properly stated the nature and aggravations of his crime, he exhorted him to make a better use of that small portion of time, which the tenderness of the law of England allowed sinners for repentance, and desired he would remember this admonition though he had slighted others. As to the report he told him, he might depend on Justice, and ought not to hope for any more.

Under conviction, no man who appeared upon other occasions to have so much courage, ever showed so little. He had constantly declined ever coming to chapel, under pretence of lameness and indisposition; when clergymen took the pains to visit him and instruct him in those duties which it became a dying man to practice, though he heard them without interruption, yet he heard them coldly. Instead of desiring to be instructed on that head, he was continually suggesting scruples and doubts about a future state, asking impertinent questions as to the state of souls departed, and putting frequent cases of the reasonableness and lawfulness of suicide, where an ignominious death was inevitable, and the thing was perpetrated only to avoid shame. He was more especially swayed to such notions he pretended, from the examples of the famous heroes of antiquity, who to avoid dishonourable treatment, had given themselves a speedy death.

As such discourses were what took up most of the time between his sentence and death, so that occasioned some very useful lectures upon this head from the charitable divines who visited him; but though they would have been of great use in all such cases for the future, yet being pronounced by word of mouth only, they are now totally lost. One letter indeed was written to him by a learned person on this head, of which a copy has been preserved, and it is with great pleasure that I give it to my readers, it runs thus:

A letter from the Reverend Dr. — to Mr. Wild in Newgate.

I am very sorry that after a life so spent as yours is notoriously known to have been, you should yet, instead of repenting of your former offences, continue to swell their number even with greater. I pray God that it be not the greatest of all sins, affecting doubts as to a future state, and whether you shall ever be brought to answer for your actions in this life, before a tribunal in that which is to come.

The heathens, it must be owned, could have no certainty as to the immortality of the soul, because they had no immediate revelation; for though the reasons which incline us to the belief of those two points of future existence and future tribulation be as strong as any of the motives are to other points in natural religion, yet as none return from that land of darkness, or escape from the shadow of death to bring news of what passeth in those regions whither all men go, so without a direct revelation from the Almighty no positive knowledge could be had of life in the world to come, which is therefore properly said to be derived to us through Christ Jesus, who in plain terms, and with that authority which confounded his enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, taught the doctrine of a final judgment, and by affording us the means of grace, raised in us at the same time the hopes of glory.

The arguments, therefore, which might appear sufficient unto the heathens, to justify killing themselves to avoid what they thought greater evils, if they had any force then must have totally lost it now. Indeed, the far greater number of instances which history has transmitted us, show that self-murder, even then, proceeded from the same causes as at present, viz., rage, despair, and disappointment. Wise men in all ages despised it as a mean and despicable flight from evils the soul wanted courage and strength to bear. This has not only been said by philosophers, but even by poets, too; which shows that it appeared a notion, not only rational, but heroic. There are none so timorous, says Martial, but extremity of want may force upon a voluntary death; those few alone are to be accounted brave who can support a life of evil and the pressing load of misery, without having recourse to a dagger.

But if there were no more in it than the dispute of which was the most gallant act of the two, to suffer, or die, it would not deserve so much consideration. The matter with you is of far greater importance, it is not how, or in what manner you ought to die in this world, but how you are to expect mercy and happiness in that which is to come. This is your last stake, and all that now can deserve your regard. Even hope is lost as to present life, and if you make use of your reason, it must direct you to turn all your wishes and endeavours towards attaining happiness in a future state. What, then, remains to be examined in respect of this question is whether persons who slay themselves can hope for pardon or happiness in the sentence of that Judge from whom there is no appeal, and whose sentence, as it surpasses all understanding, so is it executed immediately.

If we judge only from reason, it seems that we have no right over a life which we receive not from ourselves, or from our parents, but from the immediate gift of Him who is the Lord thereof, and the Fountain of Being.

To take away our own life, then, is contradicting as far as we are able the Laws of Providence, and that disposition which His wisdom has been pleased to direct. It is as though we pretended to have more knowledge or more power than he; and as to that pretence which is usually made use of, that Life is meant as a blessing, and that therefore when it becomes an evil, we may if we think fit resign it, it is indeed but a mere sophistry. We acknowledge God to be infinite in all perfections, and consequently in wisdom and power; from the latter we receive our existence in this Life, and as to the measure it depends wholly on the former; so that if we from the shallow dictates of our reason contemptuously shorten that term which is appointed us by the Almighty, we thereby contradict all His laws, throw up all right to His promises, and by the very last act we are capable of, put ourselves out of His protection.

This I say is the prospect of the fruits of suicide, looked on with the eye only of natural religion; and the opinion of Christians is unanimous in this respect, that persons who wilfully deprive themselves of life here, involve themselves also in death everlasting. As to your particular case, in which you say 'tis only making choice of one death rather than another, there are also the strongest reasons against it, The Law intends your death, not only for the punishment of your crimes, but as an example to deter others. The Law of God which hath commanded that the magistrates should not bear the sword in vain, hath given

power to denounce this sentence against you; but that authority which you would assume, defeats both the law of the land in its intention, and is opposite also unto the Law of God. Add unto all this, the example of our blessed Saviour, who submitted to be hung upon a tree, tho' He had only need of praying to His Father to have sent Him thousands of Angels; yet chose He the death of a thief, that the Will of God, and the sentence even of an unrighteous judge might be satisfied.

Let, then, the testimony of your own reason, your reverence towards God, and the hopes which you ought to have in Jesus Christ, determine you to await with patience the hour of your dissolution, dispose you to fill up the short interval which yet remains with sincere repentance, and enable you to support your sufferings with such a Christian spirit of resignation, as may purchase for you an eternal weight of glory. In the which you shall always be assisted with my Prayers to God.

Who am, etc.

Jonathan at last pretended to be overcome with the reasons which had been offered to him on the subject of self-murder. But it plainly appeared that in this he was a hypocrite; for the day before his execution, notwithstanding the keepers had the strictest eye on him imaginable, somebody conveyed to him a bottle of liquid laudanum, of which having taken a very large quantity, he hoped it would forestall his dying at the gallows. But as he had not been sparing in the dose, so the largeness of it made a speedy effect, which was perceived by his fellow-prisoners seeing he could not open his eyes at the time that prayers were said to them as usual in the condemned hold. Whereupon they walked him about, which first made him sweat exceedingly, and he was then very sick. At last he vomited, and they continuing still to lead him, he threw the greatest part of the laudanum off from his stomach. Notwithstanding that, he continued very drowsy, stupid and unable to do anything but gasp out his breath until it was stopped by the halter.

He went to execution in a cart, and instead of expressing any kind of pity or compassion for him, the people continued to throw stones and dirt all the way along, reviling and cursing him to die last, and plainly showed by their behaviour how much the blackness and notoriety of his crimes had made him abhorred, and how little tenderness the enemies of mankind meet with, when overtaken by the hand of Justice.

When he arrived at Tyburn, having by that gathered a little strength (nature recovering from the convulsions in which the laudanum had thrown him), the executioner told him he might take what time he pleased to prepare his death. He therefore sat down in the cart for some small time, during which the people were so uneasy that they called out incessantly to the executioner to dispatch him, and at last threatened to tear him to pieces if he did not tie him up immediately. Such a furious spirit was hardly ever discovered in the populace upon such an occasion. They generally look on blood with tenderness, and behold even the stroke of Justice with tears; but so far were they from it in this case that had a reprieve really come, 'tis highly questionable whether the prisoner could ever have been brought back with safety, it being far more likely that as they wounded him dangerously in the head in his passage to Tyburn, they would have knocked him on the head outright, if any had attempted to have brought him back.

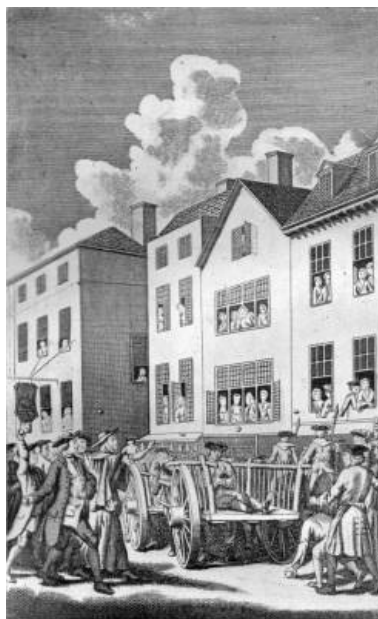
Before I part with Mr. Wild, 'tis requisite that I inform you in regard to his wives, or those who were called his wives, concerning whom so much noise has been made. His first was a poor honest woman who contented herself to live at Wolverhampton, with the son she had by him, without ever putting him to any trouble, or endeavouring to come up to Town to take upon her the style and title of Madam Wild, which the last wife he lived with did with the greatest affection. The next whom he thought fit to dignify with the name of his consort, was the aforementioned Mrs. Milliner, with whom he continued in very great intimacy after they lived separately, and by her means carried on the first of his trade in detecting stolen goods. The third one was Betty Man, a woman of the town in her younger days, but so suddenly struck with horror by a Romish priest that she turned Papist; and as she appeared in her heart exceedingly devout and thoroughly penitent for all her sins, it is to be hoped such penitence might merit forgiveness, however erroneous the principle might be of that Church in the communion of which she died. Wild ever retained such an impression of the sanctity of this woman after her decease, and so great veneration for her, that he ordered his body to be buried next hers in Pancras Churchyard, which his friends saw accordingly performed, about two o'clock in the morning after his execution. [\[66\]](#)

The next of Mr. Wild's sultana's was Sarah Perrin, *alias* Graystone, who survived him; then there was Judith Nunn, by whom he had a daughter, who at the time of his decease might be about ten years old, both mother and daughter being then living. The sixth and last was no less celebrated as Mrs. or Madam Wild, than he was remarkable by the style of Wild the Thief-catcher, or, by way of irony, of Benefit Jonathan. Before her first marriage this remarkable damsel was known by the name of Mary Brown, afterwards by that of Mrs. Dean, being wife to Skull Dean who was executed about the year 1716 or 1717 for housebreaking. Some malicious people have reported that Jonathan was accessory to hanging him merely for the sake of the reward, and the opportunity of taking his relict, who, whatever regard she might have for her first husband, is currently reported to have been so much affected with the misfortunes that happened to the latter, that she twice attempted to make away with herself, after she had the news of his being under sentence of death. However, by this his last lady, he left no children, and but two by his three other wives were living at the time of his decease.

As to the person of the man, it was homely to the greatest degree. There was something remarkably villainous in his face, which nature had imprinted in stronger terms than perhaps she ever did upon any other; however, he was strong and active, a fellow of prodigious boldness and resolution, which made the pusillanimity shown at his death more remarkable. In his life-time he was not at all shy in owning his profession, but on the contrary bragged of it upon all occasions; into which perhaps he was led by that ridiculous respect which was paid him, and the meanness of spirit some persons of distinction were guilty of in talking to him freely.

Common report has swelled the number of malefactors executed through his means to no less than one hundred and twenty; certain it is that they were very numerous in reality as in his own reckoning. The most remarkable of them were these: White, Thurland, and Dunn, executed for the murder of Mrs. Knap, and robbing Thomas Micketwait, Esq.; James Lincoln and Robert Wilkinson, for robbing and murdering Peter Martin, the Chelsea Pensioner (but it must be noted that they denied the murder even with their last breath); James Shaw, convicted by Jonathan, for the murder of Mr. Pots, though he had been apprehended by others; Humphrey Angier, who died for robbing Mr. Lewin, the City Marshal; John Levee and Matthew Flood, for robbing the Honourable Mr. Young and Colonel Cope, of a watch and other things of value; Richard Oakey, for robbing of Mr. Betts, in Fig Lane; John Shepherd and Joseph Blake, for breaking the house of Mr. Kneebone; with many others, some of which, such as John Malony and Val Carrick, were of an older date.

It has been said that there was a considerable sum of money due to him for his share in the apprehension of several felonies at the very time of his death, which happened, as I have told you, at Tyburn, on Monday, the 24th day of May, 1725; he being then about forty-two years of age.



JONATHAN WILD PELTED BY THE MOB ON HIS WAY TO TYBURN  
(From the *Newgate Calendar*)

[61]

A few additional particulars concerning Wild may be of interest. Soon after he came to London he opened a brothel in the infamous Lewkenor's Lane, in partnership with Mary Milliner; after a time they quitted it to take an alehouse in Cock Alley, Cripplegate. He then drifted into business as a receiver and instigator of thefts, organizing regular gangs which operated in every branch of the thieving trade. On account of the number of criminals he brought to justice (as a result of their disloyalty to himself) the authorities winked at and tolerated his proceedings; and in January, 1724, he had the impudence to petition for the freedom of the City, as some recognition for the good services he had rendered in this direction. A few months later, however, his reputation became sadly blown upon, and in January, 1725, he was implicated in an affair with one of his minions, a sailor named Johnson, who had been arrested and had appealed to Wild for help. A riot was engineered, in which Johnson made his escape, but information was laid against the thief-taker, himself, who, after lying in hiding for three weeks, was arrested and committed to Newgate, which he only left to attend his trial and to take his last ride to Tyburn.

[62]

A well-known tavern in Old Bailey.

[63]

This was the Poultry Compter.

[64]



Her name was really Statham.

[65]

See page [418](#).

[66]

Soon after burial his body was disinterred and the head and body separated. Wild's skull and the skeleton of his trunk were exhibited publicly as late as 1860.

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### **The Life of JOHN LITTLE, a Housebreaker and Thief**

The papers which I have in relation to this malefactor speak nothing with regard to his parents and education. The first thing that I with concerning him is his being at sea, where he was at the time my Lord Torrington, then Sir George Byng, went up the Mediterranean, as also in my Lord Cobham's expedition to Vigo; and in these expeditions he got such a knack of plundering that he could never bring himself afterwards to thinking it was a sin to plunder anybody. This wicked principle he did not fail to put in practice by stealing everything he could lay his hands on, when he afterwards went into Sweden in a merchant-ship. Indeed, there is too common a case for men who have been inured to robbing and maltreating an enemy, now and then to receive the same talents at home, and make free with the subjects of their own Sovereign as they did with those of the enemy. Weak minds sometimes do not really so well apprehend the difference, but thieves under little apprehension of sin, provided they can escape the gallows; others of better understanding acquire such an appetite to rapine that they are not afterwards able to lay it aside; so that I cannot help observing that it would be more prudent for officers to encourage their men to do their duty against the enemy from generous motives of serving their country and vindicating its rights, rather than proposing the hopes of gain, and the reward arising from destroying those unhappy wretches who fall under their power. But enough of this, and perhaps too much here; let us return again to him of whom we are now speaking.

When he came home into England, he fell into bad company, particularly of John Bewle, *alias* Hanley, and one Belcher, who it is to be supposed inclined him by idle discourse first to look upon robbing as a very entertaining employment, in which they met with abundance of pleasure, and might, with a little care, avoid all the danger. This was language very likely to work upon Little's disposition, who had a great inclination to all sorts of debauchery, and no sort of religious principles to check him. Over above all this he was unhappily married to a woman of the same ways of living, one who got her bread by walking the streets and picking of pockets. Therefore, instead of persuading her husband to quit such company as she saw him inclined to follow, on the contrary she encouraged, prompted and offered her assistance in the expedition she knew they were going about.

Thus Little's road to destruction lay open for him to rush into without any let or the least check upon his vicious inclinations.

He and his wicked companions became very busy in the practice of their employment. They disturbed most of the roads near London, and were particularly good customers to Sadler's Wells, Belsize,<sup>[67]</sup> and the rest of the little places of junketting and entertainment which are most frequented in the neighbourhood of this Metropolis. Their method upon such occasions was to observe who was drunkest, and to watch such persons when they came out, suffering them to walk a little before them till they came to a proper place; then jostling them and picking a quarrel with them, they fell to fighting, and in conclusion picked their pockets, snatched their hats and wigs, or took any other methods that were the most likely to obtain something wherewith to support their riots in which they spent every night.

At last, finding their incomings not so large as they expected, they took next to housebreaking, in which they had found somewhat better luck. But their expenses continuing still too large for even their numerous booties to supply them, they were continually pushed upon hazarding their lives, and hardly had any respite from the crimes they committed, which, as they grew numerous, made them the more known and consequently increased their danger, those who make it their business to apprehend such people having had intelligence of most of them, which is generally the first step in the road to Hyde Park Corner.<sup>[68]</sup>

It is remarkable that the observation which most of all shocks thieves, and convinces them at once both of the certainty and justice of a Providence is this, that the money which they amass by such unrighteous dealings never thrives with them; that though they thief continually, they are, notwithstanding that, always in want, pressed on every side with fears and dangers, and never at liberty from the uneasy apprehensions of having incurred the displeasure of God, as well as run themselves into the punishments inflicted by the law. To these general terrors there was added, to Little, the distracting fears of a discovery from the rash and impetuous tempers of his associates, who were continually defrauding one another in their shares of the booty, and then quarrelling, fighting, threatening, and what not, till Little sometimes at the expense of his own allotment, reconciled and put them in humour.

Nor were his fatal conjectures on this head without cause; for Bewle, though as Little always declared he had drawn him into such practices, put him into an information he made for the sake

of procuring a pardon. A few days after, Little was taken into custody, and at the next sessions indicted for breaking open the house of one Mr. Deer, and taking from thence several parcels of goods expressed in the indictment. Upon this trial the prosecutor swore to the loss of his goods and Bewle, who had been a confederate in the robbery, gave testimony as to the manner in which they were taken. As he was conscious of his guilt, Little made a very poor defence, pretending that he was utterly unacquainted with this Bewle, hoping that if he could persuade the jury to that, the prosecutor's evidence (as it did not affect him personally) might not convict him. But his hope was vain, for Bewle confirmed what he said by so many circumstances that the jury gave credit to his testimony, and thereupon found the prisoners guilty. Little, though he entertained scarce any hopes of success, moved the Court earnestly to grant transportation; but as they gave him no encouragement upon the motion, so it must be acknowledged that he did not amuse himself with any vain expectations.

During the time he remained under conviction, he behaved with great marks of penitence, assisted constantly at the public devotions in the chapel, and often prayed fervently in the place where he was confined; he made no scruple of owning the falsehood of what he had asserted upon his trial, and acknowledging the justice of that sentence which doomed him to death. He seemed to be under a very great concern lest his wife, who was addicted to such practices, should follow him to the same place; in order to prevent which, as far as it lay in his power, he wrote to her in the most pressing terms he was able, intreating her to take notice of that melancholy condition in which he then lay, miserable through the wants under which he suffered, and still more miserable from the apprehensions of a shameful death, and the fear of being plunged also into everlasting torment. Having finished this letter, he began to withdraw his thoughts as much as possible from this world, and to fix them wholly where they ought to have been placed throughout his life; praying to God for His assistance, and endeavouring to render himself worthy of it by a sincere repentance. In fine, as he had been enormously wicked through the course of his life, so he was extraordinarily penitent throughout the course of his misfortunes, deeply affected from the apprehensions of temporal punishment, but apparently more afflicted with the sense of his sins, and the fear of that punishment which the justice of Almighty God might inflict upon him. Therefore, to the day of his execution, he employed every moment in crying for mercy, and with wonderful piety and resignation submitted to that death which the law had appointed for his offences; on the 13th of September, 1725, at Tyburn. As to his own age, that I am not able to say anything of, it not being mentioned in the papers before me.

[67]

See note, page [243](#).

[68]

That is, Tyburn tree.

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### **The Life of JOHN PRICE, a Housebreaker and Thief**<sup>[69]</sup>

Amongst the ordinary kind of people in England, debauchery is so common, and the true principles of honesty and a just life so little understood, that we need not be surprised at the numerous sessions we see so often held in a year at the Old Bailey, and the multitudes which in consequence of them are yearly executed at Tyburn. Fraud, which is only robbery within the limits of the Law, is at this time of day (especially amongst the common people) thought a sign of wit, and esteemed as fair a branch of their calling as their labours. Mechanics of all sorts practise it without showing any great concern to hide it, especially from their own family, in which, on the contrary, they encourage and admire it. Instead of being reprov'd for their first essays in dishonesty, their children are called smart boys, and their tricks related to neighbours and visitors as proofs of their genius and spirit. Yet when the lads proceed in the same way, after being grown up a little, nothing too harsh, or too severe can be inflicted upon them in the opinion of these parents, as if cheating at chuck, and filching of marbles were not as real crimes in children of eight years old, as stealing of handkerchiefs and picking of pockets, in boys of thirteen or fourteen. But with the vulgar, 'tis the punishment annexed to it, and not the crime, that is dreaded; and the commandments against stealing and murder would be as readily broke as those against swearing and Sabbath-breaking, if the civil power had not set up a gallows at the end of them.

John Price, of whom we are now to speak, has very little preserved concerning him in the memoirs that lie before me; all that I am able to say of him is that by employment he was a sailor. In the course of his voyages he had addicted himself to gratifying such inclinations as he had towards drink or women, without the least concern as to the consequences, here or hereafter; he said, indeed, that falling sick at Oporto, in Portugal, and becoming very weak and almost incapable of moving himself, the fear of death gave him apprehensions of what the Justice of God might inflict on him through the number and heinousness of his sins. This at last made so great an impression on his mind that he put up a solemn vow to God of thorough repentance and amendment, if it should please Him to raise him once more from the bed of sickness, and restore him again to his former health. But when he had recovered, his late good intentions were forgotten, and the evil examples he had before his eyes of his companions, who, according to the custom of Portugal, addicted themselves to all sorts of lewdness and debauchery, prevailed. He returned like the dog to the vomit, and his last state was worse than his first.

On his return into England he had still a desire towards the same sensual enjoyments, was ever coveting debauches of drink, accompanied with the conversation of lewd women; but caring little for labour, and finding no honest employment to support these expenses into which his lusts obliged him to run, he therefore abandoned all thoughts of honesty, and took to thieving as the proper method of supporting him in his pleasures. When this resolution was once taken, it was no difficult thing to find companions to engage with him, houses to receive him, and women to caress him. On the contrary, it seemed difficult for him to choose out of the number offered, and as soon as he had made the choice, he and his associates fell immediately into the practice of that miserable trade they had chosen.

How long they continued to practice it before they fell into the hands of Justice, I am not able to say, but from several circumstances it seems probable that there was no long time intervening; for Price, in company with Sparks and James Cliff, attempted the house of the Duke of Leeds, and thrusting up the sash-window James Cliff was put into the parlour and handed out some things to Price and Sparks. But it seems they were seen by Mr. Best, and upon their being apprehended, Cliff confessed the whole affair, owned that it was concerted between them, and that himself handed out the things to his companions, Price and Sparks.

At the ensuing sessions, Price was tried for that offence, and upon the evidence of Mr. Best, the confession of James Cliff, and Benjamin Bealin deposing that he himself, at the time of his being apprehended, acknowledged that he had been in company with Cliff and Sparks, the jury found him guilty, as they did Cliff also, upon his own confession. Under sentence he seemed to have a just sense of his preceding wicked life, and was under no small apprehensions concerning his repentance, since it was forced and not voluntary. However, the Ordinary having satisfied his scruples of this sort, as far as he was able, recommended it to him without oppressing his conscience with curious fears and unnecessary scruples, to apply himself to prayer and other duties of a dying man. To this he seemed inclinable enough, but complained that James Cliff, who was in the condemned hold, prevented both him and the rest of the criminals from their duty, by extravagant speeches, wild and profane expressions, raving after the woman he had conversed with, and abusing everybody who came near him, which partly arose from the temper of that unhappy person, and was also owing to indisposition of body, as all the while he lay in the hole he was labouring under a high fever. Another great misfortune to Price, in the condition in which he was, consisted in his incapacity to supply the want of ministers through his incapacity of reading; however, he endeavoured to make up for it as well as he could by attending constantly at chapel, and not only behaving gravely at prayers, but listening attentively at sermon, by which means he constantly brought away a great part, and sometimes lost very little out of his memory of what he heard there.

In a word, all the criminals who were at this time under sentence (excepting Cliff) seemed perfectly disposed to make a just use of that time which the peculiar clemency of the English Law affords to malefactors, that they may make their peace with God, and by their sufferings under the hands of men, prevent eternal condemnation. They expressed, also, a great satisfaction that their crimes were of an ordinary kind and occasioned no staring and whispering when they came to chapel, a thing they were very much afraid of, inasmuch as it would have hindered their devotions, and discomposed the frame of their minds.

At the same time with Price, there lay under condemnation one Woolridge, who was convicted for entering the house of Elizabeth Fell, in the night time, with a felonious intent to take away the goods of Daniel Brooks; but it seems he was apprehended before he could so much as open the chest he had designed to rob. The thieves in Newgate usually take upon them to be very learned in the Law, especially in respect to what relates to evidence, and they had persuaded this unhappy man that no evidence which could be produced against him would affect his life. There is no doubt, but his conviction came therefore upon him with greater surprise, and certain it is that such practices are of the utmost ill consequence to those unhappy malefactors. However, when he found that death was inevitable, by degrees he began to reconcile himself thereto; and as he happened to be the only one amongst the criminals who could read, so with great diligence he applied himself to supply that deficiency in his fellow-prisoners. Even after he was seized with sickness, which brought him exceedingly low, he ceased not to strive against the weakness of the body, that he might do good to his fellow-convicts.

In a word, no temptation to drink, nor the desire of pleasing those who vend it<sup>[70]</sup>, circumstances which too often induce others in that condition to be guilty of strange enormities, ever had force enough to obtrude on them more than was necessary to support life, and to keep up such a supply of spirits as enabled them to perform their duties; from whence it happened that the approach of death did not affect them with any extraordinary fear, but both suffered with resignation on the same day with the former criminals at Tyburn.

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See page [230](#).

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The gaolers and others in prisons had an interest in furnishing prisoners with liquor and not only looked askance at those who refused but made it highly uncomfortable for all who avoided debauchery.

## The Life of FOSTER SNOW, a Murderer

There cannot be anything more dangerous in our conduct through human life, than a too ready compliance with any inclination of the mind, whether it be lustful or of an irascible nature. Either transports us on the least check into wicked extravagancies, which are fatal in their consequences, and suddenly overwhelm us with both shame and ruin. There is hardly a page in any of these volumes, but carries in it examples which are so many strong proofs of the veracity of this observation. But with respect to the criminal we are now speaking of, he is a yet more extraordinary case than any of the rest; and therefore I shall in the course of my relation, make such remarks as to me seem more likely to render his misfortunes, and my account of them, useful to my readers.

Foster Snow was the son of very honest and reputable parents, who gave him an education suitable to their station in life, and which was also the same they intended to breed him up to, viz., that of a gardener, in which capacity, or as a butler, he served abundance of persons of quality, with an untainted reputation. About fourteen years before the time of his death, he married and set up an alehouse, wherein his conduct was such that he gained the esteem and respect of his neighbours, being a man who was without any great vices, except only passions, in which he too much indulged himself. Whenever he was in drink, he would launch out into unaccountable extravagancies both in words and actions. However, it is likely that this proceeded in a great measure from family uneasiness, which undoubtedly had for a long time discomposed him before committing that murder for which he died. Though, when sober, he might have wisdom enough to conceal his resentment, yet when the fumes of wine had clouded his reason, he (as it is no uncommon case) gave vent to his passion, and treated with undistinguished surliness all who came in his way.

Now, as to the source of these domestic discontents, it is apparent from the papers I have that they were partly occasioned by family mismanagement, and partly from the haughty and impudent carriage of the unfortunate person who fell by his hands; for it seems the woman who Snow married had a daughter by a former husband. This daughter she brought home to live with the deceased Mr. Snow, who was so far from being angry therewith, or treating her with the coldness which is usual to fathers-in-law, that, on the contrary, he gave her the sole direction of his house, put everything into her hands, and was so fond of the young daughter she had, that greater tenderness could not have been shown to the child if she had been his own.

It seems the deceased Mr. Rawlins had found a way to ingratiate himself with both the mother and the daughter, but especially the latter, so that although his circumstances were not extraordinary, they gave him very extensive credit; and as he had a family of children, they sometimes suffered them to get little matters about their house; and thereby so effectually entailed them upon them, that at last they were never out of it.

Mr. Snow, it seems, took umbrage at this, and spared not to tell Mr. Rawlins flatly, that he did not desire he should come thither, which was frequently answered by the other in opprobrious and under-valuing terms, which gave Mr. Snow uneasiness enough, considering that the man at the same time owed him money; and this carriage on both sides having continued for a pretty while, and broken out in several instances, it at last made Mr. Snow so uneasy that he could not forbear expressing his resentment to his wife and family. But it had little effect, they went on still at the same rate; Mr. Rawlins was frequently at the house, his children received no less assistance there than before, and in short, everything went on in such a manner that poor Mr. Snow had enough to aggravate the suspicions which he entertained.

At last it unfortunately happened that he, having got a little more liquor in his head than ordinary, when Mr. Rawlins came into the house, he asked him for money, and upbraided him with his treatment in very harsh terms, to which the other making no less gross replies, it kindled such a resentment in this unfortunate man that, after several threats which sufficiently expressed the rancour of his disposition, he snatched up a case knife, and pursuing the unfortunate Mr. Rawlins, gave him therewith a mortal wound, of which he instantly died. For this fact he was apprehended and committed to Newgate.

At the next sessions he was indicted, first for the murder of Thomas Rawlins, by giving him with a knife a mortal wound of the breadth of an inch, and of the depth of seven inches, whereby he immediately expired; he was a second time indicted on the Statute of Stabbing<sup>[71]</sup>; and a third time also on the coroner's inquest, for the same offence. Upon each of the which indictments the evidence was so dear that the jury, notwithstanding some witnesses which he called to his reputation, and which indeed deposed that he was a very civil and honest, and peaceable neighbour, found him guilty on them all, and he thereupon received sentence of death.

In passing this sentence, the then deputy-recorder, Mr. Faby, took particular notice of the heinousness of the crime of murder, and expatiated on the equity of the Divine Law, whereby it was required that he who had shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed; and from thence took occasion to warn the prisoner from being misled into any delusive hopes of pardon, since the nature of his offence was such as he could not reasonably expect it from the Royal breast, which had ever been cautious of extending mercy to those who had denied it unto their fellow-subjects.

Under sentence of death this unhappy man behaved himself very devoutly, and with many signs of true penitence. He was, from the first, very desirous to acquaint himself with the true nature

of that crime which he had committed, and finding it at once repugnant to religion, and contrary to even the dictates of human nature, he began to loath himself and his own cruelty, crying out frequently when alone. *Oh! Murder! Murder! it is the guilt of that great sin which distracts my soul.* When at chapel he attended with great devotion to the duties of prayer and service there; but whenever the Commandments came to be repeated, at the words, *Thou shalt do no murder,* he would tremble, turn pale, shed tears, and with a violent agitation of spirit pray to God to pardon him that great offence.

To say truth never any man seemed to have a truer sense or a more quick feeling of his crimes, than this unhappy man testified during his confinement. His heart was so far from being hardened, as is too commonly the case with those wretches who fall into the same condition, that he, on the contrary, afflicted himself continually and without ceasing, as fearing that all his penitence would be but too little in the sight of God, for destroying His creature and taking away a life which he could not restore. Amidst these apprehensions, covered with terrors and sinking under the weight of his afflictions, he received spiritual assistance of the Ordinary and other ministers, with much meekness, and it is to be hoped with great benefit; since they encouraged him to rely on the Mercy of God, and not by an unseasonable diffidence to add the throwing away his own soul by despair, to the taking away the life of another in his wrath.

What added to the heavy load of his sorrows, was the unkindness of his wife, who neither visited him in his misfortunes, and administered but indifferently to his wants. It seems the quarrels they had, had so embittered them towards one another that very little of that friendship was to be seen in either, which makes the marriage bond easy and the yoke of matrimony light. His complaints with respect to her occasioned some enquiries as to whether he were not jealous of her person; such suspicions being generally the cause of married people's greatest dislikes. What he spoke on this head was exceedingly modest, far from that rancour which might have been expected from a man whom the world insinuated had brought himself to death by a too violent resentment of what related to her conduit; though no such thing appeared from what he declared to those who attended him. He said he was indeed uneasy at the too large credit she gave to the deceased, but that it was her purse only that he entertained suspicions of, and that as he was a dying man, he had no ill thought of her in any other way. But with regard to his daughter, he expressed a very great dislike to her behaviour, and said her conduct had been such as forced her husband to leave her; and that though he had treated her with the greatest kindness and affection, yet such was the untowardness of her disposition that he had received but very sorry returns. However, to the last he expressed great uneasiness lest after his decease his little granddaughter-in-law might suffer in her education, of which he had intended to take the greatest care; his dislike to the mother being far enough from giving him any aversion to the child. It seems from the time he had taken it home he had placed his affections strongly upon it, and did not withdraw them even to the hour of his departure.

As death grew near, he was afflicted with a violent disease, which reduced him so low that he was incapable of coming to the chapel; and when it abated a little it yet left his head so weak that he seemed to be somewhat distracted, crying out in chapel the Sunday before he died, like one grievously disturbed in mind, and expressing the greatest agonies under the apprehension of his own guilt, and the strict justice of Him to whom he was shortly to answer. However, he forgave with all outward appearance of sincerity, all who had been in any degree accessory to his death.

Being carried in a mourning coach to the place of execution, he appeared somewhat more composed than he had been for some time before. He told the people that, except the crime for which he died, he had never been guilty of anything which might bring him within the fear of meeting with such a death. And in this disposition of mind he suffered at Tyburn, on the 3rd day of November, 1725, being about fifty-five years of age. Immediately after his death a paper was published under the title of his case, full of circumstances tending to extenuate his guilt but such as in no way appeared upon his trial.

The Court of Old Bailey at the next sessions taking this paper into their consideration, were of opinion that it reflected highly on the justice of those who tried him, and therefore ordered the printer to attend them to answer for this offence. Accordingly he attended the next day, and being told that the Court was highly displeased with his publishing a thing of that nature, in order to misrepresent the justice of their proceedings, and that they were ready to punish him for his contempt in the aforesaid publication of such a libel; Mr. Leech thought fit to prevent it by making his most humble submission, and asking pardon of the Court for his offence, assuring them that it proceeded only from inadvertency, and promising never to print anything of the like sort again. Whereupon the Court were graciously pleased to dismiss him only with a reprimand, and to admonish others of the same profession, that they should be cautious for the future of doing anything which might reflect in any degree upon the proceedings had before them.

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See note, page [218](#).

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### **The Life of JOHN WHALEBONE, *alias* WELBONE, a Thief, etc.**

This malefactor was born in the midst of the City of London, in the Parish of St. Dionis Back Church. His parents were persons in but mean circumstances, who however strained them to the uttermost to give this their son a tolerable education. They were especially careful to instruct him

in the principles of religion, and were therefore under an excessive concern when they found that neglecting all other business, he endeavoured only to qualify himself for the sea. However, finding this inclination so strong that way, they got him on board a man-of-war, and procured such a recommendation to the captain that he was treated with great civility during the voyage, and if he had had any inclinations to have done well, he might in all probability have been much encouraged. But after several voyages to sea, he took it as strongly in his head to go no more as he had before to go, whether his parents would or no.

He then cried old clothes about the streets; but not finding any great encouragement in that employment, he was easily drawn in by some wicked people of his acquaintance, to take what they called the shortest method of getting money, which was in plain English to go a-thieving. He had very ill-luck in his new occupation, for in six weeks' time, after his first setting out on the information of one of his companions, he was apprehended, tried, convicted, and ordered for transportation.

It was his fortune to be delivered to a planter in South Carolina, who employed him to labour in his plantations, afforded him good meat and drink, and treated him rather better than our farmers treat their servants here. Which leads me to say something concerning the usage such people met with, when carried as the Law directs to our plantations, in order to rectify certain gross mistakes; as if Englishmen abroad had totally lost all humanity, and treated their fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen as slaves, or as brutes.

The Colonies on the Continent of America are those which now take off the greatest part of those who are transported for felony from Britain, most of the Island Colonies having long ago refused to receive them. The countries into which they now go, trading chiefly in such kind of commodities as are produced in England (unless it be tobacco), the employment, therefore, of persons thus sent over, is either in attending husbandry, or in the culture of the plant which we have before mentioned. They are thereby exposed to no more hardships than they would have been obliged to have undergone at home, in order to have got an honest livelihood, so that unless their being obliged to work for their living is to pass for great hardship, I do not conceive where else it can lie, since the Law, rather than shed the blood of persons for small offences, or where they appear not to have gone on for a length of time in them, by its lenity changes the punishment of death into sending them amongst their own countrymen at a distance from their ill-disposed companions, who might probably seduce them to commit the same offences again. It directs also, that this banishment shall be for such a length of time as may be suitable to the guilt of the crime, and render it impracticable for them on their return to meet with their old gangs and acquaintance, making by this means a happy mixture both of justice and clemency, dealing mildly with them for the offence already committed and endeavouring to put it ever out of their own power by fresh offences, to draw a heavier judgment upon themselves.

But to return to this Whalebone. The kind usage of his master, the easiness of the life which he lived, and the certainty of death if he attempted to return home, could not all of them prevail upon him to lay aside the thoughts of coming back again to London, and there giving himself up to those sensual delights which he had formerly enjoyed. Opportunities are seldom wanting where men incline to make use of them; especially to one who had been bred as he was to the sea. So that in a year and a half after his being settled there, he took such ways of recommending himself to a certain captain as induced him to bring him home, and set him safe on shore near Harwich. He travelled on foot up to London, and was in town but a very few days before being accidentally taken notice of by a person who knew him, he caused him to be apprehended, and at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, he was convicted of such illegal return, and ordered for execution.

At first he pretended that he thought it no crime for a man to return to his own country, and therefore did not think himself bound to repent of that. Whatever arguments the Ordinary made use of to persuade him to sense of his guilt I know not. But because this is an error into which such people are very apt to fall; and as there want not some of the vulgar who take it for a great hardship, also making it one of those topics upon which they take occasion to harangue against the severity of a Law that they do not understand, I think it will not, therefore, be improper to explain it.

Transportation is a punishment whereby the British law commutes for offences which would otherwise be capital, and therefore a contract is plainly presumed between every felon transported and the Court by whose authority he is ordered for transportation, that the said felon shall remain for such term of years as the Law directs, without returning into any of the King's European dominions; and the Court plainly acquaints the felon that if, in breach of his agreement, he shall so return, that in such case the contract shall be deemed void, and the capital punishment shall again take place. To say, then, that a person who enters into an agreement like this, and is perfectly acquainted with its conditions, knowing that no less than his life must be forfeited by the breach of them, and yet wilfully breaks them, to say that such a person as this is guilty of no offence, must in the opinion of every person of common understanding be the greatest absurdity that can be asserted; and to call that severity which only is the Law's taking its forfeit, is a very great impropriety, and proceeds from a foolish and unreasonable compassion. This I think so plain that nothing but prepossession or stupidity can hinder people from comprehending it.

As to Whalebone, when death approached, he laid aside all these excuses and applied himself to what was much more material, the making a proper use of that little time which yet remained for

repentance. He acknowledged all the crimes which he had committed in the former part of his life, and the justice of his sentence by which he had been condemned to transportation; and having warned the people at his execution to avoid of all things being led into ill company, he suffered with much seeming penitence, together with the afore-mentioned malefactors, at Tyburn, being then about thirty-eight years of age.

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### **The Life of JAMES LITTLE, a Footpad and Highwayman**

James Little was a person descended from parents very honest and industrious, though of small fortune. They bred him up with all the care they were able, and when he came to a fit age put him out to an honest employment. But in his youth having taken peculiar fancy to his father's profession of a painter, he thereto attained in so great a degree as to be able to earn twelve or fifteen shillings in a week, when he thought fit to work hard. But that was very seldom, and he soon contracted such a hatred to working at all that associating with some wild young fellows, he kept himself continually drunk and mad, not caring what he did for money, so long as he supplied himself with enough to procure himself liquor.

Amongst the rest of those debauched persons with whom he conversed there was especially one Sandford, with whom he was peculiarly intimate. This fellow was a soldier, of a rude, loose disposition, who took a particular delight in making persons whom he conversed with as bad as himself. Having one Sunday, therefore, got Little into his company and drank him to such a pitch that he had scarce any sense, he next began to open to him a new method of living, as he called it, which was neither more than less than going on the highway. Little was so far gone in his cups that he did not so much as know what he was saying; at last Sandford rose up, and told him it was a good time now to go out upon their attempts. Upon this Little got up, too, and went out with him. They had not gone far before the soldier drew out a pair of pistols, and robbed two or three persons, while Little stood by, so very drunk that he was both unable to have hurt the persons, or to have defended himself, he said.

He robbed no more with the soldier, who was soon after taken up and hanged at the same time with Jonathan Wild, yet the sad fate of his companion had very little effect upon this unhappy lad. He fell afterwards into an acquaintance with some of John Shepherd's mistresses, and they continually dinning in his ears what great exploits that famous robber had committed, they unfortunately prevailed upon him to go again into the same way. But it was just as fatal to him as it had been to his companion; for Little having robbed one Lionel Mills in the open fields, put him in fear, and taken from him a handkerchief, three keys and sixteen shillings in money, not contented with this he pulled the turnover off from his neck hastily, and thereby nearly strangled him. For this offence the man pursued him with unwearied diligence, and he being taken up thereupon was quickly after charged with another robbery committed on one Mr. Evans, in the same month, who lost a cane, three keys, and twenty pounds in money. On these two offences he was severally convicted at the next sessions at the Old Bailey; and having no friends, could therefore entertain little expectation of pardon; especially considering how short a time it was since he received mercy before; being under sentence at the same time with the soldier before-mentioned and Jonathan Wild, and discharged then upon his making certain discoveries.

He pretended to much penitence and sorrow, but it did not appear in his behaviour, having been guilty of many levities when brought up to chapel, to which perhaps the crowds of strangers, who from an unaccountable humour desire to be present on these melancholy occasions, did not a little contribute; for at other times, it must be owned, he did not behave himself in any such manner, but seemed rather grave and willing to be instructed, of which he had indeed sufficient want, knowing very little, but of debauchery and vice. However, he reconciled himself by degrees to the thoughts of death, and behaved with tranquility enough during that small space that was left him to prepare for it. At the place of execution, he looked less astonished though he spoke much less to the people than the rest, and died seemingly composed, at the same time with the other malefactors Snow, and Whalebone, being at the time of his execution in his seventeenth year.

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### **The Life of JOHN HAMP, Footpad and Highwayman**

This unhappy person, John Hamp, was born of both honest and reputable parents in the parish of St. Giles-without-Cripplegate. They took abundance of pains in his education, and the lad seemed in his juvenile years to deserve it; he was a boy of abundance of spirit, and his friends at his own request put him out apprentice to a man whose trade it was to lath houses. He did not stay out his time with him, but being one evening with some drunken companions at an alehouse near the Iron Gate by the Tower, three of them sailors on board a man-of-war (there being at that time a great want of men, a squadron being fitted out for the Baltic), these sailors, therefore, observing all the company very drunk, put into their head to make an agreement for their going altogether this voyage to the North. Drink wrought powerfully in their favour, and in less than two hours time, Hamp and two other of his companions fell in with the sailors' motion, and talked of nothing but braving the Czar, and seeing the rarities of Copenhagen. The fourth man of Hamp's company stood out a little, but half an hour's rhodomantade and another bowl of punch brought him to a sailor, upon which one of the seamen stepped out, and gave notice to his lieutenant, who was drinking not far off, of the great service he had performed, the lieutenant was mightily pleased with Jack Tar's diligence, promised to pay the reckoning, and give each of them a guinea besides.

A quarter of an hour after, the Lieutenant came in. The fellows were all so very drunk that he was forced to send for more hands belonging to the ship, who carried them to the long-boat, and there laying them down and covering them with men's coats, carried them on board that night.

There is no doubt that Hamp was very surprised when he found the situation he was in next morning, but as there was no remedy, he acquiesced without making any words, and so began the voyage cheerfully. Everybody knows that there was no fighting in these Baltic expeditions, so that all the hardships they had to combat with were those of the sea and the weather, which was indeed bad enough to people of an English constitution, who were very unfit to bear the extremity of cold.

While they lay before Copenhagen, an accident happened to one of Hamp's great acquaintance, which much affected him at that time, and it would have certainly have been happy for him if he had retained a just sense of it always. There was one Scrimgeour, a very merry debonair fellow, who used to make not only the men, but sometimes the officers merry on board the ship. He was particularly remarkable for being always full of money, of which he was no niggard, but ready to do anybody a service, and consequently was very far from being ill-beloved. This man being one day on shore and going to purchase some fresh provisions to make merry with amongst his companions, somebody took notice of a dollar that was in his hand, and Scrimgeour wanting change, the man readily offered to give smaller money. Scrimgeour thereupon gave him the dollar, and having afterwards bargained for what he wanted, was just going on board when a Danish officer with a file of men, came to apprehend him for a coiner. The fellow, conscious of his guilt, and suspicious of their intent, seeing the man amongst them who had changed the dollar, took to his heels, and springing into the boat, the men rowed him on board immediately, where as soon as he was got, Scrimgeour fancied himself out of all danger.

But in this he was terribly mistaken, for early the next morning three Danish commissaries came on board the admiral, and acquainted him that a seaman on board his fleet had counterfeited their coin to a very considerable value, and was yesterday detected in putting off a dollar; that thereupon an officer had been ordered to seize him, but that he had made his escape by jumping into the long-boat of such a ship, on board of which they were informed he was; they therefore desired he might be given up in order to be punished. The admiral declined that, but assured them that, upon due proof, he would punish him with the greatest severity on board; and having in the meanwhile dispatched a lieutenant and twenty men on board Scrimgeour's ship, with the Dane who detected him in putting off false money, he was secured immediately. Upon searching his trunk they found there near a hundred false dollars, so excellently made that none of the ship's crew could have distinguished them from the true.

He was immediately carried on board the admiral, who ordered him to be confined. Soon after a court-martial condemned him to be whipped from ship to ship, which was performed in the view of the Danish commissaries, with so much rigour that instead of expressing any notion of the Englishmen showing favour to their countryman upon any such occasion, they interposed to mitigate the fellow's sufferings, and humbly besought the admiral to omit lashing him on board three of the last ships. But in this request they were civilly refused, and the sentence which had been pronounced against him was executed upon him with the utmost severity; and it happening that Hamp was one of the persons who rowed him from ship to ship, it filled him with so much terror that he was scarce able to perform his duty; the wretch, himself, being made such a terrible spectacle of misery that not only Hamp, but all the rest who saw him after his last lashing, were shocked at the sight. And though it was shrewdly suspected that some others had been concerned with him, yet this example had such an effect that there were no more instances of any false money uttered from that time.

It was near five years after Hamp went first to sea that he began to think of returning home and working at his trade again; and after this thought had once got into his head, as is usual with such fellows, he was never easy until he had accomplished it. An opportunity offered soon after, the ship he belonged to being recalled and paid off. John had, however, very little to receive, the great delight he took in drinking made him so constant a customer to a certain officer in the ship that all was near spent by the time he came home. That, however, would have been no great misfortune had he stuck close to his employment and avoided those excesses of which he been formerly guilty. But alas! this was by no means in his power; he drank rather harder after his return than he had done before, and if he might be credited at that time when the Law allows what is said to pass for evidence, viz., in the agony of death, it was this love of drink that brought him, without any other crime, to his shameful end. The manner of which, I shall next fully relate.

Hamp, passing one night very drunk through the street, a woman, as is usual enough for common street-walkers to do, took him by the sleeve, and after some immodest discourse, asked him if he would not go into her mother's and take a pot with her. To this motion Hamp readily agreed, and had not been long in the house before he fell fast asleep in the company of James Bird (who was hanged with him), the woman who brought him into the house, and an old woman, whom she called her mother. By and by certain persons came who apprehended him and James Bird for being in a disorderly house; and having carried them to the watch house, they were there both charged with robbing and beating, in a most cruel and barbarous manner, a poor old woman near Rag Fair. [\[721\]](#)

At the next Old Bailey sessions they were both tried for the fact, and the woman's evidence being positive against them, they were likewise convicted. Hamp behaved himself with great serenity while under sentence, declaring always that he had not the least knowledge of Bird until the time



they were taken up; that in all his life time he had never acquired a halfpenny in a dishonest manner, and that although he had so much abandoned himself to drinking and other debaucheries, yet he constantly worked hard at his employment, in order to get money to support them. As to the robbery, he knew no more of it than the child unborn, that he readily believed all that the woman swore to be true, except her mistake in the persons; and that as to Bird, he could not take upon himself to say that he was concerned in it.

A divine of eminency in the Church, being so charitable as to visit him, spoke to him very particularly on this head; he told him that a jury of his countrymen on their oaths had unanimously found him guilty; that the Law upon such a conviction had appointed him to death, and that there appeared not the least hopes of his being anyways able to prevent it; that the denying of his guilt therefore, could not possibly be of any use to him here, but might probably ruin him for ever hereafter; that he would act wisely in this unfortunate situation into which his vices had brought him, if he would make an ample acknowledgment of the crime he had committed, and own the justice of Providence in bringing him to condemnation, instead of leaving the world in the assertion of a falsehood, and rushing into the presence of Almighty God with a lie in his mouth.

This exhortation was made publicly, and Hamp after having heard it with great attention, answered it in the following terms. *I am very sensible, sir, of your goodness in affording me this visit and am no less obliged to you for your pressing instances to induce me confession. But as I know the matter of fact, so I am sure, you would not press me to own it if it be not true; I aver that the charge against me is utterly false in every particular. I freely acknowledge that I have led a most dissolute life, and abandoned myself in working all kind of wickedness; but should I so satisfy some persons' importunities as to own also the justice of my present sentence, as arising from the truth of the fact, I should thereby become guilty of the very crime you warn me of, and go out of the world, indeed, in the very act of telling an untruth. Besides, of what use would it be to me, who have not the least hopes of pardon, to persist in a lie, merely for the sake of deceiving others, who may take my miserable death as a piece of news, and at the same time cheat myself in what is my last and greatest concern? I beg, therefore, to be troubled no more on this head, but to be left to make my peace with God for those sins which I have really committed, without being pressed to offend Him yet more, by taking upon me that which I really know nothing of.*

The Ordinary of Newgate hereupon went into the hold to examine Bird, who lay there in a sick and lamentable condition. He confirmed all that Hamp had said, declared he never saw him in his life before the night in which they were taken up, acknowledged himself to be a great sinner, and an old offender, that he had been often taken up before for thefts; but as to the present case, he peremptorily insisted on his innocence, and that he knew nothing of it.

At the place of execution, Hamp appeared very composed and with a cheerfulness that is seldom seen in the countenances of persons when they come to the tree, and are on the very verge of death. He spoke for a few moments to the people saying that he been a grievous sinner, much addicted to women, and much more to drinking; that for these crimes, he thought the Justice of God righteous in bringing him to a shameful death; but as to assaulting the woman in Rag Fair, he again protested his innocence, and declared he never committed any robbery whatsoever, desired the prayers of the people in his last moments, and then applied himself to some short private devotions. He resigned himself with much calmness to his fate, on Wednesday, the 22nd of December, 1725, at Tyburn, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. Bird confirmed, as well as the craziness of his distempered head would give him leave, the truth of what Hamp had said.

[72]

This was in Rosemary Lane, Wellclose Square, Whitechapel—"a place near the Tower of London where old clothes and frippery are sold"—according to Pope.

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### **The Lives of JOHN AUSTIN, a Footpad, JOHN FOSTER, a Housebreaker, and RICHARD SCURRIER, a Shoplifter**

Amongst the number of those extraordinary events which may be remarked in the course of these melancholy memoirs of those who have fallen martyrs to sin, and victims to justice, there is scarce anything more remarkable than the finding a man who hath led an honest and reputable life, till he hath attained the summit of life, and then, without abandoning himself to any notorious vices that may be supposed to lead him into rapine and stealth in order to support him, to take himself on a sudden to robbing on the highway, and to finish a painful and industrious life by a violent and shameful death. Yet this is exactly the case before us.

The criminal of whom we are first to speak, viz., John Austin, was the son of very honest people, having not only been bred up in good principles, but seeming also to retain them. He was put out young to a gardener, in which employment being brought up, he became afterwards a master for himself, and lived, as all his neighbours report it, with as fair character as any man thereabout. On a sudden he was taken up for assaulting and knocking down a man in Stepney Fields, with a short, round, heavy club, and taking from him his coat, in the beginning of November, 1725, about seven o'clock in the morning. The evidence being very clear and direct, the jury, notwithstanding the persons he called to his character, found him guilty. He received sentence of death accordingly, and after a report had been made to his Majesty he was ordered for execution.

During the space he lay under conviction, he at first denied, then endeavoured to extenuate his crime, by saying he did indeed knock the man down, but that the man struck him first with an iron rod he had in his hand; and in this story for some time he firmly persisted. But when death made a nearer approach he acknowledged the falsity of these pretences, and owned the robbery in the manner in which he had been charged therewith. Being asked how a man in his circumstances, being under no necessities, but on the contrary, in a way very likely to do well, came to be guilty of so unaccountable an act as the knocking down a poor man and taking away his coat, he said that though he was in a fair way of living, and had a very careful and industrious wife, yet for some time past, he had been disturbed in his mind, and that the morning he committed the robbery he took the club out of his own house, being an instrument made use of by his wife in the trade of a silk-throwster, and from a sudden impulse of mind attacked the man in the manner which had been sworn against him.

He appeared to be a person of no vicious principles, had been guilty of very few enormous crimes, except drinking to excess sometimes, and that but seldom. The sin which most troubled him was (his ordinary practice) as a gardener, in spending the Lord's day mostly in hard work, viz., in packing up things for Monday's market. He was very penitent for the offence which he had committed; he attended the service of chapel daily, prayed constantly and fervently in the place of his confinement, and suffered death with much serenity and resolution; averring with his last breath, that it was the first and last act which he had ever committed, being at the time of death about thirty-seven years old.

The second of these malefactors, John Foster, was the son of a very poor man, who yet did his utmost to give his son all the education that was in his power; and finding he was resolved to do nothing else, sent him with a very honest gentleman to sea. He continued there about seven years, and as he met with no remarkable accidents in the voyages he made himself, my readers may perhaps not be displeased if I mention a very singular one which befell his master. His ship having the misfortune to fall into the hands of the French, they plundered it of everything that was in the least degree valuable, and then left him, with thirty-five men, to the mercy of the waves. In this distressed condition, he with much difficulty made the shore of Newfoundland, and had nothing to subsist on but biscuit and a little water. Knowing it was no purpose to ask those who were settled there for provisions without money or effects, he landed himself and eighteen men, and carried off a dozen sheep and eight pigs. They were scarce returned on board, before it sprung up a brisk gale, which driving them from their anchors, obliged them to be put to sea. It blew hard all that day and the next night; the morning following the wind abated and they discovered a little vessel before them which, by crowding all the sails she was able, endeavoured to bear away. The captain thereupon gave her chase, and coming at last up with her, perceived she was French, upon which he gave her a broadside, and the master knowing it was impossible to defend her, immediately struck. They found in her a large quantity of provisions and in the master's cabin a bag with seven hundred pistoles. No sooner had the English taken out the booty, but they gave the captain and his crew liberty to sail where they pleased, leaving them sufficient provisions for a subsistence, themselves standing in again for Newfoundland, where the captain paid the person who was owner of the sheep and hogs he had taken as much as he demanded, making him also a handsome present besides; thereby giving Foster a remarkable example of integrity and justice, if he had had grace enough to have followed it.

When the ship came home, and its crew were paid off, Foster betook himself to loose company, loved drinking and idling about, especially with ill women. At last he was drawn in by some of his companions to assist in breaking open the house of Captain Tolson, and stealing thence linen and other things to a very great value. For this offence being apprehended, some promises were made him in case of discoveries, which, as he said, he made accordingly, and therefore thought it a great hardship that they were not performed. But the gentleman, whoever he was, that made him those promises, took no further notice of him, so that Foster being tried thereupon, the evidence was very dear against him, and the jury, after a very short consideration, found him guilty.

Under sentence he behaved with very great sorrow for his offence; he wept whenever any exhortations were made to him, confessed himself one of the greatest of sinners, and with many heavy expressions of grief, seemed to doubt whether even from the mercy of God he could expect forgiveness. Those whose duty it was to instruct him how to prepare himself for death, did all they could to convince him that the greatest danger of not being forgiven arose from such doubtings, and persuaded him to allay the fears of death by a settled faith and hope in Jesus Christ. When he had a while reflected on the promises made in Scripture on the nature of repentance itself, and the relation there is between creatures and their Creator, he became at last better satisfied, and bore the approach of death with tolerable cheerfulness.

When the day of execution came, he received the Sacrament, as is usual for persons in his condition. He declared, then, that he heartily forgave him who had injured him, and particularly the person who, by giving him hopes of life, had endangered his eternal safety. He submitted cheerfully to the decrees of Providence and the Law of the land; being at the time he suffered about thirty-seven years of age.

Richard Scurrier was the son of a blacksmith of the same name, at Kingston-upon-Thames. He followed for a time his father's business, but growing totally weary of working honestly for his bread, he left his relations, and without any just motive or expectation came up to London. He here betook himself to driving a hackney-coach, which, as he himself acknowledged, was the first inlet into all his misfortunes, for thereby he got into loose and extravagant company, living in a

continued series of vice, unenlightened by the grace of God, or any intervals of a virtuous practice.

Such a road of wickedness soon induced him to take illegal methods for money to support it. The papers which I have in my hands concerning him, do not say whether the fact he committed was done at the persuasion of others, or merely out of his own wicked inclinations; nay, I cannot be so much as positive whether he had any associates or no; but in the beginning of his thievish practices, he committed *petit* larceny, which was immediately discovered. He thereupon was apprehended and committed to Newgate. At the next sessions he was tried, and the fact being plain, he was convicted; but being very young, the Court, through its usual tenderness, determined to soften his punishment into a private whipping. But before that was done, he joined with some other desperate fellows, forced the outward door of the prison as the keeper was going in and escaped.

He was no sooner at liberty but he fell to his old trade, and was just as unlucky as he was before; for taking it into his head to rub off with a firkin of butter, which he saw standing in a cheesemonger's shop, he was again taken in the fact, and in the space of a few weeks recommitted to his old lodging. At first he apprehended the crime to be so trivial that he was not in the least afraid of death, and therefore his amazement was the greater when he was capitally convicted. During the first day after sentence had been pronounced, the extremity of grief and fear made him behave like one distracted; as he came a little to himself, and was instructed by those who charitably visited him, he owned the justice of his sentence, which had been passed upon him, and the notorious wickedness of his misspent life. He behaved with great decency at chapel, and as well as a mean capacity and a small education would give him leave, prayed in the place of his confinement.

As there is little remarkable in this malefactor's life, permit me to add an observation or two concerning the nature of crimes punished with death in England, and the reasonableness of any project which would answer the same end as death, viz., securing the public from any of their future rapines, without sending the poor wretches to the gallows, and pushing them headlong into the other world for every little offence. The galleys in other nations serve for this purpose and the punishment seems very well suited to the crime; for his life is preserved, and he, notwithstanding, effectually deprived of all means of doing further mischief. We have no galleys, it is true, in the service of the crown of Britain, but there are many other laborious works to which they might be put so as to be useful to their country. As to transportation, though it may at first sight seem intended for their purpose, yet if we look into it with ever so little attention, we shall see that it does not at all answer the end; for we find by experience that in a year's time, many of them are here again, and are ten times more dangerous rogues than they were before; and in the plantations they generally behave themselves so ill that many of them have refused to receive them, and have even laid penalties on the captains who shall land them within the bounds of their jurisdiction. It were certainly therefore, more advantageous to the public that they worked hard here, than either forced upon the planters abroad, or left in a capacity to return to their villainies at home, where the punishment being capital, serves only to make them less merciful and more resolute. This I propose only, and pretend not to dictate.

But it is now time we return to the last mentioned criminal, Richard Scurrier, and inform ye that at the time he suffered, he was scarce eighteen years of age, dying with the malefactors Hamp, Bird, Austin and Foster, before-mentioned, on the 22nd of December, 1725, at Tyburn.

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### **The Life of FRANCIS BAILEY, a notorious Highwayman**

That bad company and an habitual course of indulging vicious inclinations, though of a nature not punishable by human laws, should at last lead men to the commission of such crimes as from the injury done to society require capital sufferings to be inflicted, is a thing we so often meet with, that its frequency alone is sufficient to instruct men of the danger there is in becoming acquainted, much more of conversing familiarly, with wicked and debauched persons.

This criminal, Francis Bailey, was one of the number of those examples from whence this observation arises. He was born of parents of the lowest degree, in Worcestershire, who were either incapable of giving him any education, or took so little care about it that at the time he went out into the world he could neither read or write. However, they bound him apprentice to a baker, and his master took so much care of him that he was in a fair way of doing well if he would have been industrious; but instead of that he quitted his employment to fall into that sink of vice and laziness, the entering into a regiment as a common soldier. However, it were, he behaved himself in this state so well that he became a corporal and serjeant, which last, though a preferment of small value, is seldom given to persons of no education. But it seems Bailey had address enough to get that passed by, and lived with a good reputation in the army near twenty years. During this space, with whatever cover of honesty he appeared abroad, yet he failed not to make up whatever deficiencies the irregular course of life might occasion, by robbing upon the highway, though he had the good luck never to be apprehended, or indeed suspected till the fact which brought him to his end.

His first attempt in this kind happened thus. The regiment in which he served was quartered at a great road town; Bailey having no employment for the greatest part of his time, and being incapable of diverting himself by reading or innocent conversation, knew not therefore how to employ his hours. It happened one evening, that among his idle companions there was one who

had been formerly intimate with a famous highwayman. This fellow entertained the company with the relation of abundance of adventures which had befallen the robber on the road, till he had saved about seven hundred pounds, wherewith he retired (as this man said) to Jamaica, and lived there in great splendour, having set up a tavern, and by his facetious conversation, acquired more custom thereto than any other public house had in the Island.

As Bailey listened with great attention to this story, so it ran in his head that night that this was the easiest method of obtaining money, and that with prudence there was no great danger of being detected. Money at that time ran low, and he resolved the next day to make the experiment. Accordingly he procured a horse and arms in the evening and at dusk sallied out, with an intent of stopping the first passenger he should meet. A country clergyman happened to be the man. No sooner had Bailey approached him with the usual salutation of *Stand and Deliver*, but putting his hand in his pocket, and taking out some silver, he, in a great fright, and as it were trembling, put it into Bailey's hat, who thereupon carelessly let go the reins of his horse, and went to put the money up in his own pocket. The parson upon seeing that, clapped spurs to his horse, and thrust his right elbow with all his force under Bailey's left breast, and gave him such a blow as made him tumble backwards off his horse, the parson riding off as hard as he could with a good watch and near forty pounds in gold in his purse.

So ill a setting out might have marred a highwayman of less courage than him of whom we are speaking; but Frank was not to be frightened either from danger or wickedness, when he once got it into his head. So that as soon as he came a little to himself, and had caught his horse, he resolved, by looking more carefully after the next prize, to make up what he fancied he had lost by the parson. With this intent he rode on about a mile, when he met with a waggon, in which were three or four young wenches, who had been at service in London and were going to several places in the country to see their relations. Bailey, notwithstanding there were three men belonging to the waggon, stopped it, and rifled it of seven pounds, and then very contentedly retired to his quarters.

Flushed with this success, he never wanted money but he took this method of supplying himself, managing, after the affair of the parson, with so much caution that though he robbed on the greatest road, he was never so much as once in danger of a pursuit. Perhaps he owed his security to the newer taking any partner in the commission of his villainies to which he was once inclined, though diverted from it by an accident which to a less obstinate person might have proved a sufficient warning to have quitted such exploits for good and all.

Bailey being one day at an alehouse, not far from Moorfields, fell into the conversation of an Irishman, of a very gay alert temper perfectly suited to the humour of our knight of the road. They talked together with mutual satisfaction for about two hours, and then the Stranger whispered Bailey that if he would step to such a tavern, he would give part of a bottle and fowl. Thither, accordingly, he walked; his companion came in soon after; to supper they went and parted about twelve in high good humour, appointing to meet the next evening but one. Bailey, the day after, was upon the Barnet Road, following his usual occupation, when looking by chance over the hedge, he perceived the person he parted with the night before, slop a chariot with two ladies in it, and as soon as he had robbed them, ride down a cross lane. Bailey, hereupon, after taking nine guineas from a nobleman's steward, whom he met about a quarter of an hour after, returned to his lodgings at a little blind brandy-shop in Piccadilly, resolving the next day to make a proposal to his new acquaintance of joining their forces. With this view he staid at home all day, and went very punctually in the evening to the place of their appointment; but to his great mortification the other never came, and Bailey, after waiting some hours, went away.

As he was going home, he happened to step into an alehouse in Fore Street, where recollecting that the house in which he had first seen this person, was not far off, it came into his head that if he went thither, he might possibly hear some news of him. Accordingly he goes to the place, where he had hardly called for a mug of drink and a pipe of tobacco, but the woman saluted him with, *O lack, sir! Don't you remember a gentleman in red you spoke to here the other day? Yes,* replied Bailey, *does he live hereabouts? I don't know,* says the woman, *where he lives, but he was brought to a surgeon's hard by, about three hours ago, terribly wounded. My husband is just going to see him.*

Though Bailey could not but perceive that there might be danger in his going thither, yet his curiosity was so strong that he could not forbear. As soon as he entered the room the wounded man, who was just dressed, beckoned to him, and desired to speak with him. He went near enough not to have anything overheard, when the man in a low voice, told him that he was mortally wounded in riding off after robbing a gentleman's coach, and advised him to be cautious of himself, *For,* says the dying man, *I knew you to be a brother of the road as soon as I saw you; and if ever you trust any man with that secret, you may even prepare yourself for the hands of justice.* In half an hour he fell into fainting fits, and then became speechless, and died in the evening, to the no little concern of his new acquaintance Bailey.

Some months after this, Frank was apprehended for breaking open a house in Piccadilly and stealing pewter, table-linen, and other household stuff to a very considerable value. He was convicted at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey for this crime, upon the oath of a woman who had no very good character; though he acknowledged abundance of crimes of which there was no proof against him, yet he absolutely denied that for which he was condemned, and persisted in that denial to his death, notwithstanding that the Ordinary and other ministers represented to him how great a folly, as well as sin, it was for him to go out of the world with a lie in his mouth.

He said, indeed, he had been guilty of a multitude of heinous sins and offences for which God did with great justice bring him unto that ignominious end. Yet he persisted in his declaration of innocence as to housebreaking, in which he affirmed he had never been at all concerned; and with the strongest assertions to this purpose, he suffered death at Tyburn, the fourteenth of March, 1725, being then about thirty-nine years old, in company with Jones, Barton, Gates and Swift, of whose behaviour under sentence we shall have occasion to speak by and by.

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### **The Life of JOHN BARTON, a Robber, Highwayman and Housebreaker**

Education is often thought a trouble by persons in their junior years, who heartily repent of their neglect of it in the more advanced seasons of their lives. This person, John Barton, who is to be the subject of our discourse, was born at London, of parents capable enough of affording him tolerable education, which they were also willing to bestow upon him, if he had been just enough to have applied himself while at school. But he, instead of that, raked about with boys of his own age, without the least consideration of the expense his parents were at, idled away his time, and forgot what little he learned almost as soon as he had acquired it.

It is a long time before parents perceive that in their children which is evident to everyone else; however, Barton's father soon saw no good was to be done with him at school; upon which he took him away, and placed him apprentice with a butcher. There he continued for some time, behaving to the well-liking of his master; yet even then he was so much out of humour with work that he associated himself with some idle young fellows who afterwards drew him into those illegal acts which proved fatal to his reputation and his life. However, he did make a shift to pass through the time of his apprenticeship with a tolerable character, and was afterwards, through the kindness of his friends, set up as a butcher; in which business he succeeded so well as to acquire money enough thereby to have kept his family very well, if he could have been contented with the fruits of his honest labour. But his old companions, who by this time were become perfectly versed in those felonious arts by which money is seemingly so easy to be attained, were continually soliciting him to take their method of life, assuring him that there was not half so much danger as was generally apprehended, and that if he had but resolution enough to behave gallantly, he need not fear any adventure whatsoever.

Barton was a fellow rather of too much than too little courage. He wanted no encouragements of this sort to egg him to such proceedings; the hopes of living idly and in the enjoyment of such lewd pleasures as he had addicted himself to, were sufficient to carry him into an affair of this sort. He therefore soon yielded to their suggestions, and went into such measures as they had before followed, especially housebreaking, which was the particular branch of villainy to which he had addicted himself. At this he became a very dextrous fellow, and thereby much in favour with his wicked associates, amongst whom to be impious argues a great spirit, and to be ingenious in mischief is the highest character to which persons in their miserable state can ever attain.

Amongst the rest of Barton's acquaintance there was one Yorkshire Bob, who was reckoned the most adroit housebreaker in town. This fellow one day invited Barton to his house, which at that time was not far from Red Lion Fields, and proposed to him two or three schemes by which some houses in the neighbourhood might be broke open. Barton thought all the attempts too hazardous to be made, but Bob, to convince him of the possibility with which such things might be done, undertook to rob without assistance a widow lady's house of some plate, which stood in the butler's room at noon-day.

Accordingly thither he went dressed in the habit of a footman belonging to a family which were well acquainted there; the servants conversed with him very freely, as my Lady Such-a-one's new man, while he entertained them with abundance of merry stories, until dinner was upon the table. Then taking advantage of that clutter in which they were, he slyly lighted a fire-ball at the fire-side, clapped it into a closet on the side of the stairs in which the foul clothes were kept, and then perceiving the smoke, cried out with the utmost vehemence, *Fire, fire*. This naturally drew everybody downstairs, and created such a confusion that he found little or no difficulty in laying hold of the silver plate which he aimed at. He carried it away publicly, while the smoke confounded all the spectators, and until the next morning nobody had the least suspicion of him; but upon sending to the lady for the plate which her new servant carried away the night before, and she denying that she had any servant in the house that had not lived with her a twelvemonth, they then discovered the cheat, though at a time too late to mend it.

Barton, however, did not like his master's method entirely, choosing rather to strike out a new one of his own, which he fancied might as little mischief him as that audacious impudence of the other did in his several adventures. For which reason, he was very cautious of associating with this fellow who was very dextrous in his art, but was more ready in undertaking dangerous exploits than any of the crew at that time about town. John's way was by a certain knack of shifting the shutters, whereby he opened a speedy entrance for himself; and as he knew in how great danger his life was from each of these attempts, so he never made them but upon shops or houses where so large a booty might be expected as might prevent his being under necessity of thieving again in a week or two's time. Yet when he had in this manner got money, he was so ready to throw it away on women and at play, that in a short space his pocket was at as low an ebb as ever. When his cash was quite gone, he associated himself sometimes with a crew of footpads, and in that method got sufficient plunder to subsist until something offered in his own

way, to which he would willingly have kept.

At last, hearing of a goldsmith's not far from where he lodged, who had a very considerable stock of fine snuff-boxes, gold chains, rings, etc., he fancied he had now an opportunity of getting provision for his extravagancies for at least a twelvemonth. The thoughts of this encouraged him so far that he immediately went about it, and succeeded to his wish, obtaining two gold chains, five gold necklaces, seventy-two silver spoons, and a numberless cargo of little things of value.

Yet this did not satisfy him. He ventured a few days afterwards having a proper opportunity, on the house and shop of one Mrs. Higgs, from whence he took an hundred pair of stockings, and other things to a large value. But as is common with such persons, his imprudence betrayed him in the disposing of them, and by the diligence of a constable employed for that purpose, he was caught and committed to Newgate. At the next sessions he was convicted for these facts, and as he had no friends, so it was not in any degree probable that he should escape execution; and therefore it is highly possible he might be the projector of that resistance which he and the rest under sentence with him made in the condemned hold, and which we shall give an exact account under the next life.

The peculiar humour of Barton was to appear equally gay and cheerful, though in these sad circumstances, as he had ever done in the most dissolute part of his foregoing life. In consequence of which foolish notion he smiled on a person's telling him his name was included in the death-warrant, and at chapel behaved in a manner very unbecoming one who was so soon to answer at the Bar of the Almighty for a life led in open defiance both of the laws of God and man. Yet that surprise which people naturally express at behaviour of such a kind on such an occasion seemed in the eyes of this poor wretch so high a testimony in favour of his gallantry, that he could not be prevailed on, either by the advice of the ministers, or the entreaties of his relations, to abate anything of that levity which he put on when he attended at Divine Service. Though he saw it disturbed some of his fellow sufferers at first, who were inclined to apply themselves strictly to their duties, so fatal is evil communication, even in the latest moments of our life, that his ludicrous carriage corrupted the rest, and instead of reproving him as they had formerly done, they now seemed careful only of imitating his example; and in this disposition he continued, even to the last minute of his life, which ended at Tyburn, on the 14th of March, 1725, he being then hardly twenty-three years of age.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM SWIFT, a Thief, etc.**

Amongst the multitude of other reasons which ought to incline men to an honest life, there is one very strong motive which hitherto has not, I think, been touched upon at all, and that is the danger a man runs from being known to be of ill-life and fame, of having himself accused from his character, only of crimes which he, though guiltless of, in such a case might find it difficult to get his innocence either proved or credited if any unlucky circumstance should give the least weight to the accusation.

The criminal whose life exercises our present care was a fellow of this case. He was born of but mean parents, had little or no education, and when he grew strong enough to labour, would apply himself to no way of getting his bread but by driving a wheelbarrow with fruit about the streets. This led him to the knowledge of abundance of wicked, disorderly people, whose manners agreeing best with his own, he spent most of his time in sotting with them at their haunts, when by bawling about the streets, he had got just as much as would suffice to sot with. There is no doubt, but that he now and then shared with them in what amongst such folks, at least, pass for trivial offences, but that he engaged in the great exploits of the road did not appear to any other case than that for which he died, viz., taking four table cloths, eight napkins, two shirts and other things, from Mary Cassell. The woman swore positively to him upon his trial, and his course of life being such as I have represented it, nobody appeared to his reputation so as to bring the thing in to the least suspense with the jury; whereupon he was convicted and received sentence of death.

The concern Swift was under when he found not the least hopes of life remaining, he having no friends who were capable (had they been willing) to have solicited a pardon or reprieve, shocked him so much that he scarce appeared to have his senses; however, he persisted obstinately in denying that he had the least hand in the robbery which was sworn against him. And as he made no scruple of acknowledging a multitude of other crimes, his denial of this gained some belief, more especially when Barton confessed that himself with two or three others were the persons who committed the robbery on the woman who swore against this criminal. It must be acknowledged that there was no appearance of any sinister motive, at least in Barton, to take upon himself a crime of which otherwise he would never have been accused; and the behaviour of Swift was at first of such a nature that it is not easy to conceive why, when all hopes of safety were lost, and he was full of acknowledgment as to the justice of his sentence for the many other evil deeds he had done, he should yet obdurately persist in denying this, if there had been no truth at all in his allegations.

As this fellow had neither natural courage, nor had acquired any religious principles from his education, there is no wonder to be made that he behaved himself so poorly in the last moments of his life; in which terror, confusion, and self-condemnation wrought so strongly as to make the ignominy of the halter the least dreadful part of his execution.



A CONDEMNED MAN DRAWN ON A SLEDGE TO TYBURN  
(From the *Newgate Calendar*)

The day on which the three last-mentioned persons, together with Yates or Gates, *alias* Vulcan, a deer-stealer, and Benjamin Jones (for house breaking) were to have been executed, these miserable persons framed to themselves the most absurd project of preserving their lives that could possibly have entered into the heads of men; for getting, by some means or other, an iron crow into the hold, they therewith dug out a prodigious quantity of rubbish and some stones, which it is hardly credible could have been removed with so small assistance as they had. With these they blocked up the door of the condemned hold so effectually that there was no possibility of getting it open by any force whatsoever on the outside. The keepers endeavoured to make them sensible of the folly of their undertaking, in hopes they would thereby be induced to prevent any firing upon them; which was all that those who had the custody of them were now capable of doing, to bring them to submission. The Ordinary also joined in dissuading them from thus misspending the last moments of their lives, which were through the mercy of the Law extended to them for a better purpose. But they were inexorable, and as they knew their surrender would bring them immediately to a shameful death, so they declared positively they were determined to kill or to be killed in the position in which they were.

Sir Jeremiah Murden, one of the sheriffs for the time being, was so good as to go down upon this occasion to Newgate. The keepers had opened a sort of trap-door in the room over the hold, and from thence discharged several pistols loaded with small shot, but to no purpose, the criminals retiring to the farther end of the room, continuing there safe and out of reach; though Barton and Yates received each of them a slight wound in crowding backwards. Sir Jeremy went himself to this place, and talked to them for a considerable space, and one of the fellows insisting to see his gold chain, that they might be sure they were treating with the sheriffs themselves, his condescension was so great as to put down part of it through the hole, upon which they consulted together, and at last agreed to surrender. Whereupon they began immediately to remove the stones, and as soon as the door was at liberty, one of the keepers entered. Just as he was within it, Barton snapped a steel tobacco-box in his face, the noise of which resembling a pistol, made him start back, upon which Barton said, *D——n you, you was afraid.*

When they were brought out, Sir Jeremy ordered the Ordinary to be sent for, and prayers to be said in the chapel, where he attended himself. But whether the hurry of this affair, or that stench which is natural to so filthy a place as the condemned hold, affected the sheriff's constitution, is hard to say, but upon his return home, he was seized with a violent fever, which in a very short space took away his life.

But to return to Swift. When they came to Tyburn, and the minister had performed his last office towards them, this criminal made a shift in a faint tone to cry out, *Good People, I die as innocent of the crime for which I suffer, as the child unborn;* which Barton, with a loud voice, confirmed saying, *I am the man who robbed the person for which this man dies; he was not concerned with me, but one Capell and another were companions with me therein.* Swift, at the time of his execution, was about twenty-seven years of age, or a little over.

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**The lives of EDWARD BURNWORTH, *alias* FRAZIER, WILLIAM BLEWIT, THOMAS BERRY, EMANUEL DICKENSON, WILLIAM MARJORAM, JOHN HIGGS, etc., Robbers, Footpads, Housebreakers and Murderers**

As society intends the preservation of every man's person and property from the injuries which might be offered unto him from others, so those who in contempt of its laws go on to injure the one, and either by force or fraud to take away the other are, in the greatest proprieties of speech, enemies of mankind; and as such are reasonably rooted out, and destroyed by every government

under heaven. In some parts of Europe, certain outlaws, *Banditti*, or whatever other appellation you'll please to bestow on them, have endeavoured to preserve themselves by force from the punishments which should have been executed upon them by justice, and finding mankind, from a spirit of self preservation, were become their enemies, they exerted themselves the utmost they were capable of in order to render their bodies so formidable as still to carry on their ravages with impunity, and in open defiance of the laws made against them. But an attempt of this sort was scarce ever heard of in Britain, even in the most early times, when, as in all other governments the hands of the Law wanted strength most; so that from the days of Robin Hood and Little John to those of the criminals of whom we are now writing, there was never any scheme formed for an open resistance of Justice, and carrying on a direct war against the lives and properties of mankind.

Edward Burnworth, *alias* Frazier, was the extraordinary person who framed this project for bringing rapine into method, and bounding even the practice of licentiousness with some kind of order. It may seem reasonable therefore, to begin his life preferable to the rest, and in so doing we must inform our readers that his father was by trade a painter, though so low in his circumstances as to be able to afford his son but a very mean education. However, he gave him as much as would have been sufficient for him in that trade to which he bound him apprentice, viz., to a buckle-maker in Grub Street, where for some time Edward lived honestly and much in favour with his master. But his father dying and his unhappy mother being reduced thereby into very narrow circumstances, restraint grew uneasy to him, and the weight of a parent's authority being now lost with him, he began to associate himself with those loose incorrigible vagrants, who frequent the ring at Moorfields, and from idleness and debauchery, go on in a very swift progression to robbery and picking of pockets.

Edward was a young fellow, active in his person and enterprising in his genius; he soon distinguished himself in cudgel playing, and such other Moorfields exercises as qualify a man first for the road and then for the gallows. The mob who frequented this place, where one Frazier kept the ring, were so highly pleased with Burnworth's performances that they thought nothing could express their applause so much as conferring on him the title of Young Frazier. This agreeing with the ferocity of his disposition, made him so vain thereof, that, quitting his own name, he chose to go by this, and accordingly was so called by all his companions.

Burnworth's grand associates were these, William Blewit, Emanuel Dickenson, Thomas Berry, John Levee, William Marjoram, John Higgs, John Wilson, John Mason, Thomas Mekins, William Gillingham, John Barton, William Swift, and some others that it is not material here to mention. At first he and his associates contented themselves with picking pockets, and such other exercises in the lowest class of thieving, in which however they went on very assiduously for a considerable space, and did more mischief that way than any gang which had been before them for twenty years. They rose afterwards to exploits of a more hazardous nature, viz., snatching women's pockets, swords, hats, etc.

The usual places for their carrying on such infamous practices were about the Royal Exchange, Cheapside, St. Paul's Churchyard, Fleet Street, the Strand and Charing Cross. Here they stuck a good while, nor is it probable they would ever have risen higher if Burnworth, their captain, had not been detected in an affair of this kind, and committed thereupon to Bridewell, from whence, on some apprehension of the keepers, he was removed to New Prison, where he had not continued long before he projected an escape, which he afterwards put into execution.

During this imprisonment, instead of reflecting on the sorrows which his evil course of life had brought upon him, he meditated only how to engage his companions in attempts of a higher nature than they had hitherto been concerned in; and remembering how large a circle he had of wicked associates, he began to entertain notions of putting them in such a posture as might prevent their falling easily into the hands of justice, which many of them within a month or two last past had done—though as they were sent thither on trivial offences, they quickly got discharged again.

Full of such projects, and having once more regained his freedom, he took much pains to find out Barton, Marjoram, Berry, Blewit and Dickenson, in whose company he remained continually, never venturing abroad in the day-time unless with his associates in the fields, where they walked with strange boldness, considering warrants were out against the greatest part of the gang. In the night time Burnworth strolled about in such little bawdy-houses as he had formerly frequented, and where he yet fancied he might be safe.

One evening having wandered from the rest, he was so bold as to go to a house in the Old Bailey, where he heard the servants and successors of the famous Jonathan Wild were in close pursuit of him, and that one of them was in the inner room by himself. Burnworth loaded his pistol under the table, and having primed it, goes with it ready cocked into the room where Jonathan's foreman was, with a quartern of brandy and a glass before him. *Hark ye, says Edward, you fellow, who have served your time to a thief-taker; what business might you have with me or my company? Do you think to gain a hundred or two by swearing our lives away? If you do you are much mistaken; but that I may be some judge of your talent that way, I must hear you curse a little, on a very particular occasion.* Upon which, filling a large glass of brandy, and putting a little gunpowder into it, he clapped it into the fellow's hands, and then presenting his pistol to his breast, obliged him to wish most horrid mischiefs upon himself, if ever he attempted to follow him or his companions any more. No sooner had he done this, but Frazier knocking him down, quitted the room, and went to acquaint his companions with his notable adventure, which, as it



undoubtedly frightened the new thief-taker, so it highly exalted his reputation for undaunted bravery amongst the rest of the gang, a thing not only agreeable to Burnworth's vanity, but useful also to his design, which was to advance himself to a sort of absolute authority amongst them from whence he might be capable of making them subservient to him in such enterprises as he designed. His associates were not cunning enough to penetrate his views, but without knowing it suffered them to take effect; so that instead of robbing as they used to do (as accident directed them, or they received intelligence of any booty) they now submitted themselves to his guidance, and did nothing but as he directed or commanded them.

The morning before the murder of Thomas Ball, Burnworth, and Barton, whom we have before mentioned, pitched upon the house of an old Justice of the Peace of Clerkenwell, to whom they had a particular pique for having formerly committed Burnworth, and proposed it to their companions to break it open that night, or rather the next morning (for it was about one of the clock). They put their design in execution and executed it successfully, carrying off some things of real value, and a considerable parcel of what they took to be silver plate. With this they went into the fields above Islington, and from thence to Copenhagen House, where they spent the greatest part of the day. On parting the booty Burnworth perceived what they had taken for silver was nothing more than a gilt metal, at which he in a rage would have thrown it away; Barton opposed it, and said they should be able to sell it for something, to which Burnworth replied that it was good for nothing but to discover them, and therefore it should not be preserved at any rate. Upon this they differed, and while they were debating, came Blewit, Berry, Dickenson, Higgs, Wilson, Levee, and Marjoram, who joined the company. Burnworth and Barton agreed to toss up at whose disposal the silver ware should be, they did so, and it fell to Burnworth to dispose of it as he thought fit, upon which he carried it immediately to the New River side, and threw it in there, adding that he was sorry he had not the old Justice himself there, to share the same fate, being really as much out of humour at the thing as if the Justice had imposed upon them in a fair sale of the commodity, so easy a thing is it for men to impose upon themselves.

As it happened they were all present pretty full of money, and so under no necessity of going upon any enterprise directly, wherefore they loitered up and down the fields until towards evening, when they thought they might venture unto town, and pass the time in their usual pleasures of drinking, gaming, and whoring. While they were thus (as the French say) murdering of time, a comrade of theirs came up puffing and blowing as if ready to break his heart. As soon as he reached them, *Lads*, says he, *beware of one thing; the constables have been all about Chick Lane in search of folk of our profession, and if ye venture to the house where we were to have met to-night, 'tis ten to one but we are all taken.*

This intelligence occasioned a deep consultation amongst them, what method they had best take, in order to avoid the danger which threatened them so nearly. Burnworth took this occasion to exhort them to keep together, telling them that as they were armed with three or four pistols apiece, and short daggers under their clothes, a small force would not venture to attack them. This was approved by all the rest, and when they had passed the afternoon in this manner, and had made a solemn oath to stand by one another in case of danger, they resolved, as night grew on, to draw towards town, Barton having at the beginning of these consultations, quitted them and gone home.

As they came through Turnmill Street, they accidentally met the keeper of New Prison, from whom Burnworth had escaped about six weeks before. He desired Edward to step across the way with him, adding that he saw he had no arms, and that he did not intend to do him any prejudice. Burnworth replied that he was no way in fear of him, nor apprehensive of any injury he was able to do him, and so concealing a pistol in his hand, he stepped over to him, his companions waiting for him in the street. But the neighbours having some suspicion of them, and of the methods they followed to get money, began to gather about them; upon which they called to their companion to come away, which he, after making a low bow to the captain of New Prison, did. Finding the people increase they thought it their most advisable method to retire back in a body into the fields. This they did keeping very close together; and in order to deter the people from making any attempts, turned several times and presented their pistols in their faces, swearing they would murder the first man who came near enough for them to touch him. And the people being terrified to see such a gang of obdurate villains, dispersed as they drew near the fields, and left them at liberty to go whither they would.

As soon as they had dispersed their pursuers, they entered into a fresh consultation as to what manner they would dispose of themselves. Burnworth heard what every one proposed, and said at last, that he thought the best thing they could do was to enter with as much privacy as they could, the other quarter of the town, and so go directly to the waterside. They approved his proposal, and accordingly getting down to Blackfriars, crossed directly into Southwark; and retired at last into St. George's Fields, where their last counsel was held to settle the operation of the night. There Burnworth exerted himself in his proper colours, informing them that there was no less danger of their being apprehended there, than about Chick Lane; for that one Thomas Ball (who kept a gin-shop in the Mint, and who was very well acquainted with most of their persons) had taken it into his head to venture upon Jonathan Wild's employment, and was for all that purpose indefatigable in searching out all their haunts, that he might get a good penny to himself apprehending them. He added that but a few nights ago, he narrowly missed being caught by him, being obliged to clap a pistol to his face, and threatened to shoot him dead if he offered to lay his hands on him. *Therefore*, continued Burnworth, *the surest way for us to procure*

*safety, is to go to this rogue's house, and shoot him dead upon the spot. His death will not only secure us from all fears of his treachery, but it will likewise so terrify others that nobody will take up the trade of thief-catching in haste; and if it were not for such people who are acquainted with us and our houses of resort there would hardly one of our profession in a hundred see the inside of Newgate.*

Burnworth had scarce made an end of his bloody proposal, before they all testified their assent to it with great alacrity, Higgs only excepted; who seeming to disapprove thereof, it put the rest into such a passion that they upbraided him in the most opprobrious terms with being a coward and a scoundrel, unworthy of being any longer the companion of such brave fellows as themselves. When Frazier had sworn them all to stick fast by one another, he put himself at their head, and away they went directly to put their designed assassination into execution. Higgs retreated under favour of the night, being apprehensive of himself when their hands were in, since he, not being quite so wicked as the rest, might share the fate of Ball upon the first dislike to him that took them.

As for Burnworth and his party, when they came to Ball's house and enquired of his wife for him, they were informed that he was gone to the next door, a public house, and that she would step and call him, and went accordingly. Burnworth immediately followed her and meeting Ball at the door, took him fast by the collar, and dragged him into his own house, and began to expostulate with him as to the reason why he had attempted to take him, and how ungenerous it was for him to seek to betray his old friends and acquaintances. Ball, apprehending their mischievous intentions, addressed himself to Blewit, and begged of him to be an intercessor for him, and that they would not murder him; but Burnworth with an oath replied, he would put it out of the power of Ball ever to do him any further injury, that he should never get a penny by betraying him, and thereupon immediately shot him.

Having thus done, they all went out of doors again, and that the neighbourhood might suppose the firing of the pistol to have been done without any ill-intention, and only to discharge the same, Blewit fired another in the street over the tops of the houses, saying aloud, they were got safe into town and there was no danger of meeting any rogues there. Ball attempted to get as far as the door, but in vain, for he dropped immediately, and died in a few minutes afterwards.

Having this executed their barbarous design, they went down from Ball's house directly towards the Falcon,<sup>[73]</sup> intending to cross the water back again. By the way they accidentally met with Higgs, who was making to the waterside likewise. Him they fell upon and rated for a pusillanimous cowardly dog (as Burnworth called him) that would desert them in an affair of such consequence, and then questioned whether Higgs himself would not betray them. Burnworth proposed it to the company to shoot their old comrade Higgs, because he had deserted them in their late expedition; which it is believed, in the humour Burnworth was then in, he would have done, had not Marjoram interposed and pleaded for sparing his life. From the Falcon stairs they crossed the water to Trig Stairs<sup>[74]</sup>; and then consulting how to spend the evening, they resolved to go to the Boar's Head Tavern, in Smithfield, as not being at a distance from the waterside, in case any pursuit should be made after them, on account of the murder by them committed. At which place they continued until near ten of the clock, when they separated themselves into parties for that night, viz., one party towards the Royal Exchange, the second to St. Paul's Churchyard, the third to Temple Bar, in pursuit of their old trade of diving.

This murder made them more cautious of appearing in public, and Blewit, Berry and Dickenson soon after set out for Harwich, and went over in a packet boat from thence for Helveot-Sluys. Higgs also being daily in fear of a discovery, shipped himself on board the *Monmouth* man-of-war, at Spithead, where he thought himself safe, and began to be a little at ease; but Justice quickly overtook him, when he thought himself safest from its blow; for his brother who lived in town, having wrote a letter to him, and given it to a ship's mate of his to carry to him at Spithead, this man accidentally fell into company with one Arthur, a watchman belonging to St. Sepulchre's Parish, and pulling the letters by chance out of his pocket, the watchman saw the direction, and recollected that Higgs was a companion of Frazier's. Upon this he sent word to Mr. Delasay, Under-Secretary of State, and being examined as to the circumstances of the thing, proper persons were immediately dispatched to Spithead, who seized and brought him up in custody. Wilson, another of the confederates, withdrew about the same time, and had so much cunning as to preserve himself from being heard of for a considerable time.

Burnworth, in the meanwhile, with some companions of his, continued to carry on their rapacious plunderings in almost all parts of the town; and as they kept pretty well united, and were resolute fellows, they did a vast deal of mischief, and yet were too strong to be apprehended. Amongst the rest of their pranks they were so audacious as to stop the Earl of Scarborough, in Piccadilly, but the chairmen having courage enough to draw their poles and knock one of the robbers down, the earl at the same time coming out of the chair, and putting himself upon his defence, after a smart dispute in which Burnworth shot one of the chairmen in the shoulder and thereby prevented any pursuit, they raised their wounded companion and withdrew in great confusion.

About this time their robberies and villainies having made so much noise as to deserve the notice of the Government, a proclamation was published for the apprehending Burnworth, Blewit, etc., it being justly supposed that none but those who were guilty of these outrages could be the persons concerned in the cruel murder of Ball. A gentleman who by accident had brought one of these papers, came into the alehouse at Whitecross Street, and read it publicly. The discourse of the company turning thereupon, and the impossibility of the persons concerned making their

escape, and the likelihood there was that they would immediately impeach one another. Marjoram, one of the gang, was there, though known to nobody in the room; weighing the thing with himself, he retired immediately from the house into the fields, where loitering about till evening came on, he then stole with the utmost caution into Smithfield, and going to a constable there, surrendered himself in a way of obtaining a pardon, and the reward promised by the proclamation.

That night he was confined in the Wood Street Compter, his Lordship not being at leisure to examine him. The next day, as he was going to his examination, the noise of his surrender being already spread all over the town, many of his companions changed their lodgings and provided for their safety; but Barton thought of another method of securing himself from Marjoram's impeachment, and therefore planting himself in the way as Marjoram was carrying to Goldsmiths' Hall, he popped out upon him at once, though the constable had him by the arm, and presenting a pistol to him, said, *D—n ye, I'll kill you.* Marjoram, at the sound of his voice, ducked his head, and he immediately firing, the ball grazed only on his back, without doing him any hurt. The surprise with which all who were assisting the constable in the execution of his office were all struck upon this occasion gave an opportunity for Barton to retire, after his committing such an insult on public justice, as perhaps was never heard of. However, Marjoram proceeded to his examination, and made a very full discovery of all the transactions in which he had been concerned. Levee being taken that night by his directions in White Cross Street, and after examination committed to Newgate.

Burnworth was now perfectly deprived of his old associates, yet he went on at his old rate, even by himself; for a few nights after, he broke open the shop and house of Mr. Beezely, a great distiller near Clare Market, and took away from thence notes to a great value, with a quantity of plate, which mistaking for white metal he threw away. One Benjamin Jones picked it up and was thereupon hanged, being one of the number under sentence when the Condemned Hold was shut up, and the criminals refused to submit to the keepers. Burnworth was particularly described in the proclamation, and three hundred pounds offered to any who would apprehend him; yet so audacious was he as to come directly to a house in Holborn, where he was known, and laying a loaded pistol down on the table, called for a pint of beer, which he drank and paid for, defying anybody to touch him, though they knew him to be the person mentioned in the proclamation. It would be needless to particularise any other bravadoes of his, which were so numerous that it gave no little uneasiness to the magistrates, who perceived the evil consequences that would show if such things should become frequent; they therefore doubled their diligence in endeavouring to apprehend him, yet all their attempts were to little purpose, and it is possible he might have gone on much longer if he had not betrayed the natural consequence of one rogue's trusting another.

It happened at this time, that one Christopher Leonard was in prison for some such feats as Burnworth had been guilty of, who lodged at the same time with the wife and sister of the fellow. Kit Leonard, knowing in what state he himself was, and supposing nothing could so effectually recommend to him the mercy and favour of the Government as the procuring Frazier to be apprehended, who had so long defied all the measures they had taken for that purpose, he accordingly made the proposal by his wife to persons in authority. And the project being approved they appointed a sufficient force to assist in seizing him, who were placed at an adjoining alehouse, where Kate, the wife of Kit Leonard, was to give them the signal.

About six of the clock in the evening of Shrove Tuesday, Kate Leonard and her sister and Burnworth being all together (it not being late enough for him to go out upon his nightly enterprises) Kate Leonard proposed they should fry some pancakes for supper, which the other two approved of, accordingly her sister set about them. Burnworth took off his surtout coat, in the pocket of the lining whereof he had several pistols. There was a little back door to the house, which Burnworth usually kept upon the latch, in order to make his escape if he should be surprised or discovered to be in that house. Unperceived by Burnworth, and whilst her sister was frying the pancakes, Kate went to the alehouse for a pot of drink, when having given the men who were there waiting for him the signal, she returned, and closed the door after her, but designedly missed the staple. The door being thus upon the jar only, as she gave the drink to Burnworth, the six persons rushed into the room. Burnworth hearing the noise and fearing the surprise, jumped up, thinking to have made his escape at the back door, not knowing it to be bolted; but they were upon him before he could get it open, and holding his hands behind him, one of them tied them, whilst another, to intimidate him, fired a pistol over his head. Having thus secured him, they immediately carried him before a Justice of the Peace, who after a long examination committed him to Newgate.

Notwithstanding his confinement in that place, he was still director of such of his companions as remained at liberty, and communicating to them the suspicions he had of Kate Leonard's betraying him, and the dangers there were of her detecting some of the rest, they were easily induced to treat her as they had done Ball. One of them fired a pistol at her, just as she was entering her own house, but that missing, they made two or three other attempts of the same nature, until the Justice of the Peace placed a guard thereabouts, in order to secure her from being killed, and if possible to seize those who should attempt it, after which they heard no more of these sorts of attacks. In Newgate they confined Burnworth to the Condemned Hold, and took what other necessary precautions they thought proper in order to secure so dangerous a person, and who they were well enough aware meditated nothing but how to escape.

He was in this condition when the malefactors before-mentioned, viz., Barton, Swift, etc., were

under sentence, and it was shrewdly suspected that he put them upon that attempt of breaking out, of which we have given an account before. There were two things which more immediately contributed to the defeating their design; the one was, that though five of them were to die the next day, yet four of them were so drunk that they were not able to work; the other was that they were so negligent in providing candles that two hours after they were locked up they were forced to lie-by for want of light.

As we have already related the particulars of this story, we shall not take up our reader's time in mentioning them again, but go on with the story of Burnworth. Upon suspicion of his being the projector of that enterprise the keepers removed him into the Bilbow Room, and there loaded him with irons, leaving him by himself to lament the miseries of his misspent life in the solitude of his wretched confinement; yet nothing could break the wicked stubbornness of his temper, which, as it had led him to those practices justly punished with so strait a confinement, so it now urged him continually to force his way through all opposition, and thereby regain his liberty, in order to practice more villainies of the same sort, with those in which he had hitherto spent his time.

It is impossible to say how, but by some method or other he had procured saws, files, and other instruments for this purpose; with these he first released himself from his irons, then broke through the wall of the room in which he was lodged, and thereby got into the women's apartment, the window of which was fortified with three tier of iron bars. Upon these he went immediately to work, and in a little time forced one of them; while he was filing the next, one of the women, to ingratiate herself with the keepers, gave notice, whereupon they came immediately and dragged him back to the Condemned Hold and there stapled him down to the ground.

The course of our memoirs leads us now to say something of the rest of his companions, who in a very short space came most of them to be collected to share that punishment which the Law had so justly appointed for their crimes. We will begin, then, with William Blewit, who, next to Frazier, was the chief person in the gang. He was one of St. Giles's breed, his father a porter, and his mother, at the time of his execution selling greens in the same parish. They were both of them unable to give their son education or otherwise provide for him, which occasioned his being put out by the parish to a perfumer of gloves; but his temper from his childhood inclining him to wicked practices, he soon got himself into a gang of young pickpockets, with whom he practised several years with impunity. But being at last apprehended in the very act, he was committed to Newgate, and on plain proof convicted the next sessions, and ordered for transportation. Being shipped on board the vessel with other wretches in the same condition, he was quickly let into the secret of their having provided for an escape by procuring saws, files, and other implements, put up in a little barrel, which they pretended contained gingerbread, and such other little presents which were given them by relations. Blewit immediately foresaw abundance of difficulties in their design, and therefore resolved to make a sure use of it for his own advantage. This he did by communicating all he knew to the captain, who thereupon immediately seized their tools, and thereby prevented the loss of his ship, which otherwise in all probability would have been effected by the conspirators.

In return for this service, Blewit obtained his freedom, which did not serve him for any better purpose than his return to London as soon as he was able. Whether he went again upon his old practices before he was apprehended, we cannot determine, but before he had continued two months in town, somebody seized him, and committed him to Newgate. At the next sessions he was tried and convicted for returning from transportation, but pleading, when he received sentence of death, the service he had done in preventing the attempt of the other malefactors, execution was respited until the return of the captain, and on his report the sentence was changed into a new transportation, and leave given him also to go to what foreign port he would. But he no sooner regained his liberty than he put it to the same use as before, and took up the trade of snatching hats, wigs, etc., until he got into acquaintance with Burnworth and his gang, who taught him other methods of robbing than he had hitherto practised. Like most of the unhappy people of his sort, he had to his other crimes added the marriage of several wives, of which the first was reputed a very honest and modest woman, and it seems had so great a love for him, notwithstanding the wickedness of his behaviour, that upon her visiting him at Newgate, the day before they set out for Kingston, she was oppressed with so violent a grief as to fall down dead in the lodge. Another of his wives married Emanuel Dickenson and survived them both.

His meeting Burnworth that afternoon before Ball's murder was accidental, but the savageness of his temper led him to a quick compliance with that wicked proposition; but after the commission of that fact, he with his companions before mentioned went over in the packet boat to Holland. Guilt is a companion which never suffers rest to enter any bosom where it inhabits; they were so uneasy after their arrival there, lest an application should be made from the Government at home, that they were constantly perusing the English newspapers as they came over to the coffee houses in Rotterdam, that they might gain intelligence of what advertisements, rewards, or other methods had been taken to apprehend the persons concerned in Ball's murder; resolving on the first news of a proclamation, or other interposition of the State on that occasion, immediately to quit the Dominions of the Republic. But as Burnworth had been betrayed by the only persons from whom he could reasonably hope assistance; Higgs seized on board a ship where he fancied himself secure from all searches; so Blewit and his associates, though they daily endeavoured to acquaint themselves with the transactions at London relating to them, fell also into the hands of Justice, when they least expected it. So equal are the decrees of providence, and so inevitable the strokes of Divine vengeance.

The proclamation for apprehending them came no sooner to the hands of Mr. Finch, the British resident at the Hague, but he immediately caused an enquiry to be made, whether any such persons as were therein described had been seen at Rotterdam. Being assured that there had, and that they were lodged at the Hamburg's Arms on the Boom Keys in that City, he sent away a special messenger to enquire the truth thereof; of which he was no sooner satisfied, than he procured an order from the States General for apprehending them anywhere within the Province. By virtue of this order the messenger, with the assistance of the proper officers for that purpose in Holland, apprehended Blewit at the house whither they had been directed; his two companions Dickenson and Berry, had left him and were gone aboard a ship, not caring to remain any longer in Holland. They conducted their prisoner to the Stadt House Prison in Rotterdam, and then went to the Brill, where the ship on board which his companions were, not being cleared out, they surprised them also, and having handcuffed them, sent them under a strong guard to Rotterdam, where they put them in the same place with their old associate Blewit. We shall now therefore take an opportunity of speaking of each of them, and acquainting the reader with those steps by which they arose to that unparalleled pitch of wickedness which rendered them alike the wonder and detestation of all the sober part of mankind.

Emanuel Dickenson was the son of a very worthy person, whose memory I shall be very careful not to stain upon this occasion. The lad was ever wild and ungovernable in his temper, and being left a child at his father's death, himself, his brother, and several sisters were thrown all upon the hands of their mother, who was utterly unable to support them in those extravagancies to which they were inclined. Whereupon they unfortunately addicted themselves to such evil courses as to them seemed likely to provide such a supply of money as might enable them to take such licentious pleasures as were suitable to their vicious inclinations. The natural consequence of which was that they all fell under misfortunes, especially Emanuel of whom we are speaking, who addicted himself to picking of pockets, and such kind of facts for a considerable space. At last, attempting to snatch a gentleman's hat off in the Strand, he was seized with it in his hand, and committed to Newgate, and at the next sessions convicted and ordered for transportation. But his mother applying at Court for a pardon, and setting forth the merit of his father, procured his discharge. The only use he made of this was to associate himself with his old companions, who by degrees led him into greater villainies than any he had till that time been concerned in; and at last falling under the direction of Burnworth, he was with the rest drawn into the murder of Ball. After this he followed Blewit's advice, and not thinking himself safe even in Holland, he and Berry (as has been said) were actually on ship board, in order to their departure.

Thomas Berry was a beggar, if not a thief, from his cradle, descended from parents in the most wretched circumstances, who being incapable of giving him an honest education suffered him on the contrary to idle about the streets, and to get into such gangs of thieves and pickpockets as taught him from his infancy the arts of *diving* (as they in their cant call it). And as he grew in years they still brought him on to a greater proficiency in such evil practices, in which however he did not always meet with impunity; for besides getting into the little prisons about town, and being whipped several times at the houses of correction, he had also been thrice in Newgate, and for the last fact convicted and ordered for transportation. However, by some means or other, he got away from the ship, and returned quickly to his old employment; in which he had not continued long, before falling into the acquaintance of Burnworth, it brought him first to the commission of a cruel murder, and after that with great justice to suffer an ignominious death. Having been thus particular on the circumstances of each malefactor distinctly, let us return to the thread of our story, and observe to what period their wicked designs and lawless courses brought them at the last.

After they were all three secured, and safe confined in Rotterdam, the resident dispatched an account thereof to England; whereupon he received directions for applying to the States-General for leave to send them back. This was readily granted, and six soldiers were ordered to attend them on board, besides the messengers who were sent to fetch them. Captain Samuel Taylor, in the *Delight* sloop, brought them safe to the Nore, where they were met by two other messengers, who assisted in taking charge of them up the river. In the midst of all the miseries they suffered, and the certainty they had of being doomed to suffer much more as soon as they came on shore, yet they behaved themselves with the greatest gaiety imaginable, were full of their jests and showed as much pleasantness as if their circumstances had been the most happy. Observing a press-gang very busy on the water, and that the people in the boat shunned them with great care, they treated them with the most opprobrious language, and impudently dared the lieutenant to come and press them for the service. On their arrival at the Tower, they were put into a boat with the messengers, with three other boats to guard them, each of which was filled with a corporal and a file of musqueteers; and in this order they were brought to Westminster. After being examined before Justice Chalk and Justice Blackerby they were all three put into a coach, and conducted by a party of Foot-guards to Newgate through a continued line of spectators, who by their loud huzzas proclaimed their joy at seeing these egregious villains in the hands of justice; for they, like Jonathan Wild, were so wicked as to lose the compassion of the mob.

On their arrival at Newgate, the keepers expressed a very great satisfaction, and having put on each a pair of the heaviest irons in the gaol, and taken such other precautions as they thought necessary for securing them, they next did them the honour of conducting them upstairs to their old friend Edward Burnworth. Having congratulated them on their safe arrival and they condoled with him on his confinement, they took their places near him, and had the convenience of the same apartment and were shackled in the like manner. They did not appear to show the least sign of contrition or remorse for what they had done; on the contrary they spent their time with

all the indifference imaginable. Great numbers of people had the curiosity to come to Newgate to see them, and Blewit upon all occasions made use of every opportunity to excite their charity, alleging they had been robbed of everything when they were seized. Burnworth, with an air of indifference replied, *D—n this Blewit, because he had got a long wig and ruffled shirt he takes the liberty to talk more than any of us.* Being exhorted to apply the little time they had to live in preparing themselves for another world, Burnworth replied that if they had any inclination to think of a future state, it was impossible in their condition, so many persons as were admitted to come to view them in their present circumstances must needs divert any good thoughts. But their minds were totally taken up with consulting the most likely means to make their escape and extricate themselves from the bolts and shackles with which they were clogged and encumbered; and indeed all their actions showed their thoughts were bent only on enlargement, and that they were altogether unmindful of death, or at least careless of the future consequence thereof.

On Wednesday, the 30th of March, 1726, Burnworth, Blewit, Berry Dickenson, Levee, and Higgs, were all put into a waggon, handcuffed and chained, and carried to Kingston under a guard of the Duke of Bolton's horse. At their coming out of Newgate they were very merry, charging the guard to take care that no misfortune happened to them, and called upon the numerous crowd of spectators, both at their getting into the waggon, and afterwards as they passed along the road, to show their respect they bore them by halloaing, and to pay them the compliments due to gentlemen of their profession, and called for several bottles of wine that they might drink to their good journey. As they passed along the road they endeavoured to show themselves very merry and pleasant by their facetious discourse to the spectators, and frequently threw money amongst the people who followed them, diverting themselves with seeing the others strive for it. And particularly Blewit, having thrown out some halfpence amongst the mob, a little boy who was present picked up one of them, and calling out to Blewit, told him, that as sure as he (the said Blewit) would be condemned at Kingston, so sure would he have his name engraved thereon; whereupon Blewit took a shilling out of his pocket and gave it to the boy, telling him there was something towards defraying the charge of engraving and bid him be as good as his word, which he promised he would.

On the 31st of March, the assizes were opened, together with the commission of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery for the county of Surrey, before the Right Hon. the Lord Chief Justice Raymond, and Mr. Justice Denton; and the grand jury having found indictments against the prisoners, they were severally arraigned thereupon, when five of them pleaded not guilty. Burnworth absolutely refused to plead at all; upon which, after being advised by the judge not to force the Court upon that rigour which they were unwilling at any time to practice, and he still continuing obstinate, his thumbs (as is usual in such cases) were tied and strained with pack thread. This having no effect upon him, the sentence of the press, or as it is sailed in Law, of the *Peine Fort et Dure*, was read to him in these words: *You shall go to the place from whence you came, and there being stripped naked and laid flat upon your back on the floor, with a napkin about your middle to hide your privy members, and a cloth on your face, then the press is to be laid upon you, with as much weight as, or rather more than you can bear. You are to have three morsels of barley-bread in twenty-four hours; a draught of water from the next puddle near the gaol, but not running water. The second day two morsels and the same water, with an increase of weight, and so to the third day until you expire.*

This sentence thus passed upon him, and he still continuing contumacious, he was carried down to the stock-house, and the press laid upon him, which he bore for the space of one hour and three minutes, under the weight of three hundred, three quarters, and two pounds [424 lb.]. Whilst he continued under the press, he endeavoured to beat out his brains against the floor, during which time the High Sheriff himself was present, and frequently exhorted him to plead to the indictment. This at last he consented to do; and being brought up to the Court, after a trial which lasted from eight in the morning until one in the afternoon, on the first day of April, they were all six found guilty of the indictment, and being remanded back to the stock-house, were all chained and stapled down to the floor.

Whilst they were under conviction, the terrors of death did not make any impression upon them; they diverted themselves with repeating jests and stories of various natures, particularly of the manner of their escapes before out of the hands of justice, and the robberies and offences they had committed. And it being proposed, for the satisfaction of the world, for them to leave the particulars of the several robberies by them committed, Burnworth replied that were he to write all the robberies by him committed, a hundred sheets of paper, write as close as could be, would not contain them. Notwithstanding what had been alleged by Higgs of his forsaking his companions in the field, it appeared by other evidence that he followed his companions to Ball's house, and was seen hovering about the house during the time the murder was committed, with a pistol in his hand.

As for Burnworth, after conviction, his behaviour was as ludicrous as ever; and being as I said, a painter's son, he had some little notion of designing, and therewith diverted himself in sketching his own picture in several forms; particularly as he lay under the press. This being engraved in copper, was placed in the frontispiece of a sixpenny book which was published of his life, and the rest seemed to fall no way short of him in that silly contempt of death, which with the vulgar passes for resolution.

On Monday, the 4th day of April, they were brought up again from the stock-house to receive sentence of death. Before he passed it upon them Mr. Justice Denton made a very pathetic speech, in which he represented to them the necessity there was of punishing crimes like theirs

with death, and exhorted them not to be more cruel to themselves than they had obliged the law to be severe towards them, by squandering away the small remainder of their time, and thereby adding to an ignominious end, an eternal punishment hereafter. When sentence was passed, they entreated leave for their friends to visit them in the prison, which was granted them by the Court, but with a strict injunction to the keeper to be careful over them. After they returned to the prison, they bent their thought wholly on making their escape, and to that purpose sent to their friends, and procured proper implements for the execution of it: Burnworth's mother being surprised with several files, etc., about her, and the whole plot discovered by Blewit's mother who was heard to say that she had forgot the opium.

It seems the scheme was to murder the two persons who attended them in the gaol, together with Mr. Eliot, the turnkey; after they had got out they intended to have fired a slack of bavinns [firewood] adjoining to the prison, and thereby amused the inhabitants while they got clear off. Burnworth's mother was confined for this attempt in his favour, and some lesser implements that were sewed up in the waistband of their breeches being ripped out, all hopes whatsoever of escape were now taken away. Yet Burnworth affected to keep up the same spirit with which he had hitherto behaved, and talked in a rhodomantade to one of his guard, of coming in the night in a dark entry, and pulling him by the nose, if he did not see him decently buried.

About ten of the clock, on Wednesday morning, together with one Blackburn, who was condemned for robbing on the highway, a fellow grossly ignorant and stupid, they were carried out in a cart to their execution, being attended by a company of foot to the gallows. In their passage thither, that audacious carriage in which they had so long persisted totally forsook them, and they all appeared with all that seriousness and devotion which might be looked for from persons in their condition. Blewit perceiving one Mr. Warwick among the spectators desired that he might stop to speak to him; which being granted, he threw himself upon his knees, and earnestly intreated his pardon for having once attempted his life by presenting a pistol at him, upon suspicion that Mr. Warwick knowing what his profession was had given information against him.

When at the place of execution and tied up, Blewit and Dickenson, especially, prayed with great fervour and with a becoming earnestness, exhorted all the young persons they saw near them to take warning by them, and not follow such courses as might in time bring them to so terrible an end. Blewit acknowledged that for sixteen years last past he had lived by stealing and pilfering only. He had given all the clothes he had to his mother, but being informed that he was to be hung in chains, he desired his mother might return them to prevent his being put up in his shirt. He then desired the executioner to tie him up so that he might be as soon out of his pain as possible; then he said the Penitential Psalm, and repeated the words of it to the other criminals. Then they all kissed one another, and after some private devotions the cart drew away and they were turned off. Dickenson died very hard, kicking off one of his shoes, and loosing the other.

Their bodies were carried back under the same guard which attended them to their execution. Burnworth and Blewit were afterwards hung in chains over against the sign of the Fighting Cocks, in St. George's Fields, Dickenson and Berry were hung up on Kennington Common, but the sheriff of Surrey had orders at the same time to suffer his relations to take down the body of Dickenson in order to be interred, after its hanging up one day, which favour was granted on account of his father's service in the army, who was killed at his post in the late war. Levee and Higgs were hung up on Putney Common, beyond Wandsworth, which is all we have to add concerning these hardened malefactors who so long defied the justice of their country, and are now, to the joy of all honest people, placed as spectacles for the warning of their companions who frequent the places where they are hung in chains.

[73]

Falcon Stairs were just east of where Blackfriars Bridge now stands.

[74]

Trig Lane ran from Thames Street to the water's edge, near Lambeth Hill.

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### **The Life of JOHN GILLINGHAM, an Highwayman and Footpad, etc.**

As want of education hath brought many who might otherwise have done very well in the world to a miserable end, so the best education and instructions are often of no effect to stubborn and corrupt minds. This was the case of John Gillingham, of whom we are now to give an account. He had been brought up at Westminster School, but all he acquired there was only a smattering of learning and a great deal of self-conceit, fancying labour was below him, and that he ought to live the life of a gentleman. He associated himself with such companions as pretended to teach him this art of easily attaining money. He was a person very inclinable to follow such advices, and therefore readily came into these proposals as soon as they were made. Amongst the rest of his acquaintance, he became very intimate with Burnworth, and made one of the number in attacking the chair of the Earl of Scarborough, near St. James's Church, and was the person who shot the chairman in the shoulder.

As he was a young man of a good deal of spirit, so he committed abundance of facts in a very short space; but the indefatigable industry which the officers of Justice exerted, in apprehending Frazier's desperate gang, soon brought him to the miserable end consequent from such wicked

courses. He was indicted for assaulting Robert Sherly, Esq., upon the highway, and taking from him a watch value £20. He was a second time indicted for assaulting John du Cummins, a footman, and taking from him a silver watch, a snuff-box, and five guineas in money. Both of which facts he steadily denied after his conviction, but there was a third crime of which he was convicted, viz., sending a letter to extort money from Simon Smith, Esq., and which follows in these words:

Mr. Smith.

I desire you to send me twenty guineas by the bearer, without letting him know what it is for, he is innocent of the contents if your offer to speak of this to anybody— My blood and soul, if you are not dead man before monday morning; and if you don't send the money, the devil dash my brains out, if I don't shoot you the first time you stir out of doors, or if I should be taken there are others that will do your business for you by the first opportunity, therefore pray fail not ——. Strike me to instant D— if I am not as good as my word.

To Mr. Smith in Great George Street over against the Church near Hanover Square.

He confessed that he knew of the writing and sending this epistle, but denied that he did it himself, and indeed the indictment set forth that it was in company with one John Mason, then deceased, that the said conspiracy was formed. Under sentence of death, he behaved himself very sillily, laughing and scoffing at his approaching end, and saying to one of his companions, as the keeper went downstairs before them, *Let us knock him down and take his keys from him. If one leads to heaven, and the other to hell, we shall at least have a chance to get the right!* Yet when death with all its horror stared him in the face, he began to relent in his behaviour, and to acknowledge the justness of that sentence which had doomed him to death. At the place of execution he prayed with great earnestness, confessed he had been a grievous sinner, and seemed in great confusion in his last moments. He was about twenty years of age when he died, which was on the 9th of May, 1726, at Tyburn.

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### **The Life of JOHN COTTERELL, a Thief, etc.**

The miseries of life are so many, so deep, so sudden, and so irremediable, that when we consider them attentively, they ought to inspire us with the greatest submission towards that Providence which directs us and fills us with humble sentiments of our own capacities, which are so weak and incapable to protect us from any of those evils to which from the vicissitudes of life we are continually exposed.

John Cotterell, the subject of this part of our work, was a person descended of honest and industrious parents, who were exceedingly careful in bringing him up as far as they were able, in such a manner as might enable him to get his bread honestly and with some reputation. When he was grown big enough to be put out apprentice, they agreed with a friend of theirs, a master of a vessel, to take him with him two or three voyages for a trial. John behaved himself so well that he gained the esteem of his master and the love of all his fellow-sailors. When he had been five years at sea, his credit was so good, both as to his being an able sailor and an honest man, that his friends found it no great difficulty to get him a ship, and after that another. The last he commanded was of the burthen of 200 tons, but he sustained great losses himself, and greater still, in supporting his eldest son, who dealt in the same way, and with a vessel of his own carried on a trade between England and Holland. Through these misfortunes he fell into circumstances so narrow that he lay two years and a half in Newgate, for debt. Being discharged by the Act of Insolvency, and having not wherewith to sustain himself, he broke one night into a little chandler's shop, where he used now and then to get a halfpenny-worth of that destructive liquor gin; and there took a tub with two pounds of butter, and a pound of pepper in it. But before he got out of the shop he was apprehended, and at the next sessions was found guilty of the fact.

While under sentence of death he behaved with the greatest gravity, averred that it was the first thing of that kind he had ever done; indeed, his character appeared to be very good, for though his acquaintance in town had done little for him hitherto, yet when they saw that they should not be long troubled with him, they sent him good books, and provided everything that was necessary for him; so that with much resignation he finished his days, with the other malefactors, at Tyburn, in the fifty-second year of his age, on the 9th day of May, 1726.

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### **The Life of CATHERINE HAYES, a bloody and inhuman Murderess, etc.**

Though all crimes are in this nature foul, yet some are apparently more heinous, and of a blacker die than others. Murder has in all ages and in all climates been amongst the number of those offences held to be most enormous and the most shocking to human nature of any other; yet even this admits sometimes of aggravation, and the laws of England have made a distinction between the murder of a stranger, and of him or her to whom we owe a civil, or natural obedience. Hence it is that killing a husband, or a master is distinguished under the name of *petit* treason. Yet even this, in the story we are about to relate, had several heightening circumstances, the poor man having both a son and a wife imbruing their hands in his blood.



Catherine Hall, afterwards by her marriage, Catherine Hayes, was born in the year 1690, at a village in the borders of Warwickshire, within four miles of Birmingham. Her parents were so poor as to receive the assistance of the parish and so careless of their daughter that they never gave her the least education. While a girl she discovered marks of so violent and turbulent a temper that she totally threw off all respect and obedience to her parents, giving a loose to her passions and gratifying herself in all her vicious inclinations.

About the year 1705, some officers coming into the neighbourhood to recruit, Kate was so much taken with the fellows in red that she strolled away with them, until they came to a village called Great Ombersley in Warwickshire, where they very ungenerously left her behind them. This elopement of her sparks drove her almost mad, so that she went like a distracted creature about the country, until coming to Mr. Hayes's door, his wife in compassion took her in out of charity. The eldest child of the family was John Hayes, the deceased; who being then about twenty-one years of age, found so many charms in this Catherine Hall that soon after he coming into the house he made proposals to her of marriage. There is no doubt of their being readily enough received, and as they both were sensible how disagreeable a thing it would be to his parents, they agreed to keep it secret. They quickly adjusted the measures that were to be taken in order to their being married at Worcester; for which purpose Mr. John Hayes pretended to his mother that he wanted some tools in the way of his trade, viz., that of a carpenter, for which it was necessary he should go to Worcester; and under this colour he procured also as much money as, with what he had already had, was sufficient to defray the expense of the intended wedding.

Catherine having quitted the house without the formality of bidding them adieu, and meeting at the appointed place, they accompanied each other to Worcester, where the wedding was soon celebrated. The same day Mrs. Catherine Hayes had the fortune to meet with some of her quondam acquaintance at Worcester. They understanding that she was that day married, and where the nuptials were to be solemnized, consulted among themselves how to make a penny of the bridegroom. Accordingly deferring the execution of their intentions until the evening, just as Mr. Hayes was got into bed to his wife, coming to the house where he lodged, they forcibly entered the room, and dragged the bridegroom away, pretending to impress him for her Majesty's service.

This proceeding broke the measures Mr. John Hayes had concerted with his bride, to keep their wedding secret; for finding no redemption from their hands, without the expense of a larger sum of money than he was master of, he was necessitated to let his father know of his misfortune. Mr. Hayes hearing of his son's adventures, as well of his marriage and his being pressed at the same time, his resentment for the one did not extinguish his affection for him as a father, but that he resolved to deliver him from his troubles; and accordingly, taking a gentleman in the neighbourhood along with him, he went for Worcester. At their arrival there, they found Mr. John Hayes in the hands of the officers, who insisted upon detaining him for her Majesty's service; but his father and the gentleman he brought with him by his authority, soon made them sensible of their errors, and instead of making a benefit of him, as they proposed, they were glad to discharge him, which they did immediately. Mr. Hayes having acted thus far in favour of his son, then expressed his resentment for his having married without his consent; but it being too late to prevent it, there was no other remedy but to bear with the same. For sometime afterwards Mr. Hayes and his bride lived in the neighbourhood, and as he followed his business as a carpenter, his father and mother grew more reconciled. But Mrs. Catherine Hayes, who better approved of a travelling than a settled life, persuaded her husband to enter himself a volunteer in a regiment then at Worcester, which he did, and went away with them, where he continued for some time.

Mr. John Hayes being in garrison in the Isle of Wight, Mrs. Hayes took an opportunity of going over thither and continued with him for some time; until Mr. Hayes, not content with such a lazy indolent life (wherein he could find no advantage, unless it were the gratifying his wife) solicited his father to procure his discharge, which at length he was prevailed upon to consent to. But he found much difficulty in perfecting the same, for the several journeys he was necessitated to undertake before it could be done, and the expenses of procuring such discharge, amounted to sixty pound. But having at last, at this great expense and trouble, procured his son's release, Mr. John Hayes and his wife returned to Worcestershire; and his father the better to induce him to settle himself in business in the country, put him into an estate of ten pound *per annum*, hoping that, with the benefit of his trade, would enable them to live handsomely and creditably, and change her roving inclinations, he being sensible that his son's ramble had been occasioned through his wife's persuasions. But Mr. John Hayes representing to his father that it was not possible for him and his wife to live on that estate only, persuaded his father to let him have another also, a leasehold of sixteen pound *per annum*; upon which he lived during the continuance of the lease, his father paying the annual rent thereof until it expired.

The characters of Mr. John Hayes and his wife were vastly different. He had the repute of a sober, sedate, honest, quiet, peaceable man, and a very good husband, the only objection his friends would admit of against him was that he was of too parsimonious and frugal temper, and that he was rather too indulgent of his wife, who repaid his kindness with ill usage, and frequently very opprobrious language. As to his wife, she was on all hands allowed to be a very turbulent, vexatious person, always setting people together by the ears, and never free from quarrels and controversies in the neighbourhood, giving ill advice, and fomenting disputes to the disturbance of all her friends and acquaintance.

This unhappiness in her temper induced Mr. John Hayes's relations to persuade him to settle in some remote place, at a distance from and unknown to her for some time, to see if that would

have any effect upon her turbulent disposition; but Mr. Hayes would not approve of that advice, nor consent to a separation. In this manner they lived for the space of about six years, until the lease of the last-mentioned farm expired; about which time Mrs. Hayes persuaded Mr. John Hayes to leave the country and come to London, which about twelve months afterwards, through her persuasions he did, in the year 1719. Upon their arrival in town they took a house, part of which they let out in lodging, and sold sea coal, chandlery-ware, etc., whereby they lived in a creditable manner. And though Mr. Hayes was of a very indulgent temper, yet she was so unhappy as to be frequently jarring, and a change of climate having made no alteration in her temper, she continued her same passionate nature, and frequent bickerings and disputes with her neighbours, as well as before in the country.

In this business they picked up money, and Mr. Hayes received the yearly rent of the first-mentioned estate, though in town; and by lending out money in small sums, amongst his country people improved the same considerably. In speaking of Mr. Hayes to his friends and acquaintance she would frequently give him the best of characters, and commend him for an indulgent husband; notwithstanding which, to some of her particular cronies who knew not Mr. Hayes's temper, she would exclaim against him, and told them particularly (above a year before the murder was committed) that it was no more sin to kill him (meaning her husband) than to kill a mad dog, and that one time or other she might give him a jolt.

Afterwards they removed into Tottenham Court Road, where they lived for some time, following the same business as formerly; from whence about two years afterwards, they removed into Tyburn Road,<sup>[75]</sup> a few doors above where the murder was committed. There they lived about twelve months, Mr. Hayes supporting himself chiefly in lending out money upon pledges, and sometimes working at his profession, and in husbandry, till it was computed he had picked up a pretty handsome sum of money. About ten months before the murder they removed a little lower to the house of Mr. Whinyard, where the murder was committed, taking lodgings up two pairs of stairs. There it was that Thomas Billings, by trade a tailor, who wrought journey-work in and about Monmouth Street; under pretence of being Mrs. Hayes's countryman came to see them. He did so, and continued in the house about six weeks before the death of Mr. Hayes.

He (Mr. Hayes) had occasion to go a little way out of town, of which his wife gave her associates immediate notice, and they thereupon flocked thither to junket with her until the time they expected his return. Some of the neighbours out of ill-will which they bore the woman, gave him intelligence of it as soon as he came back, upon which they had abundance of high words, and at last Mr. Hayes gave her a blow or two. Maybe this difference was in some degree the source of that malice which she afterwards vented upon him.

About this time Thomas Wood, who was a neighbour's son in the country, and an intimate acquaintance both of Mr. Hayes and his wife, came to town, and pressing being at that time very hot he was obliged to quit his lodgings; and thereupon Mr. Hayes very kindly invited him to accept of the convenience of theirs, promising him moreover, that as he was out of business, he would recommend him to his friends, and acquaintances. Wood accepted the offer, and lay with Billings. In three or four days' time, Mrs. Hayes having taken every opportunity to caress him, opened to him a desire of being rid of her husband, at which Wood, as he very well might, was exceedingly surprised, and demonstrated the business as well as cruelty there would be in such an action, if committed by him, who besides the general ties of humanity, stood particularly obliged to him as his neighbour and his friend. Mrs. Hayes did not desist upon this, but in order to hush his scruples would fain have persuaded him that there was no more sin in killing Hayes than in killing a brute-beast for that he was void of all religion and goodness, an enemy to God, and therefore unworthy of his protection; that he had killed a man in the country, and destroyed two of his and her children, one of which was buried under an apple tree, the other under a pear tree, in the country. To these fictitious tales she added another, which perhaps had the greatest weight, viz., that if he were dead, she should be the mistress of fifteen hundred pounds. *And then, says she, you may be master thereof, if you will help to get him out of the way. Billings has agreed too, if you'll make a third, and so all may be finished without danger.*

A few days after this, Wood's occasions called him out of town. On his return, which was the first day of March, he found Mr. Hayes and his wife and Billings very merry together. Amongst other things which passed in conversation, Mr. Hayes happened to say that he and another person once drank as much wine between them as came to a guinea, without either of them being fuddled. Upon this Billings proposed a wager on these terms, that half a dozen bottles of the best mountain wine should be fetched, which if Mr. Hayes could drink without being disordered, then Billings should pay for it; but if not, then it should be at the cost of Mr. Hayes. He accepting of this proposal, Mrs. Hayes and the two men went together to the Brawn's Head, in New Bond Street, to fetch the wine. As they were going thither, she put them in mind of the proposition she had made them to murder Mr. Hayes, and said they could not have a better opportunity than at present, when he should be intoxicated with liquor. Whereupon Wood made answer that it would be the most inhuman act in the world to murder a man in cool blood, and that, too, when he was in liquor. Mrs. Hayes had recourse to her old arguments, and Billings joining with her, Wood suffered himself to be overpowered.

When they came to the tavern they called for a pint of the best mountain, and after they had drunk it ordered a gallon and a half to be sent home to their lodgings, and Mrs. Hayes paid ten shillings and sixpence for it, which was what it came to. Then they all came back and sat down together to see Mr. Hayes drink the wager, and while he swallowed the wine, they called for two or three full pots of beer, in order to entertain themselves. Mr. Hayes, when he had almost

finished the wine, began to grow very merry, singing and dancing about the room with all the gaiety which is natural to having taken a little too much wine. But Mrs. Hayes was so fearful of his not having his dose, that she sent away privately for another bottle, of which having drunk some also, it quite finished the work, by depriving him totally of his understanding; however, reeling into the other room, he there threw himself across the bed and fell fast asleep. No sooner did his wife perceive it than she came and excited the two men to go in and do the work; whereupon Billings taking a coal-hatchet in his hand, going into the other room, struck Mr. Hayes therewith on the back of the head. This blow fractured the skull, and made him, through the agony of the pain, stamp violently upon the ground, in so much that it alarmed the people who lay in the garret; and Wood fearing the consequence, went in and repeated the blows, though that was needless since the first was mortal in itself, and he already lay still and quiet. By this time Mrs. Springate, whose husband lodged over Mr. Hayes's head, on hearing the noise came down to enquire the reason of it, complaining at the same time that it so disturbed her family that they could not rest. Mrs. Hayes thereupon told her that her husband had had some company with him, who growing merry with their liquor were a little noisy, but that they were going immediately, and desired she would be easy. Upon this she went up again for the present, and the three murderers began immediately to consult how to get rid of the body.

The men were in so much terror and confusion that they knew not what to do; but Mrs. Hayes quickly thought of an expedient in which they all agreed. She said that if the head was cut off, there would not be near so much difficulty in carrying off the body, which could not be known. In order to put this design in execution, they got a pail and she herself carrying the candle, they all entered the room where the deceased lay. Then the woman holding the pail, Billings drew the body by the head over the bedside, that the blood might bleed the more freely into it; and Wood with his pocket penknife cut it off. As soon as it was severed from the body, and the bleeding was over, they poured the blood down a wooden sink at the window, and after it several pails of water, in order to wash it quite away that it might not be perceived in the morning. However, their precautions were not altogether effectual, for the next morning Springate found several clots of blood, but not suspecting anything of the matter, threw them away. Neither had they escaped letting some tokens of their cruelty fall upon the floor, stain the wall of the room, and even spin up against the ceiling, which it may be supposed happened at the giving the first blow.

When they had finished the decollation, they again consulted what was next to be done. Mrs. Hayes was for boiling it in a pot till nothing but the skull remained, which would effectually prevent anybody's knowing to whom it belonged; but the two men thinking this too dilatory a method, they resolved to put it in a pail, and go together and throw it in the Thames. Springate, hearing a bustling in Mr. Hayes's room for some time, and then somebody going down stairs, called again to know who it was and what was the occasion of it (it being then about eleven o'clock). Mrs. Hayes answered that it was her husband, who was going a journey into the country, and pretended to take a formal leave of him, expressing her sorrow that he was obliged to go out of town at that time of night, and her fear lest any accident should attend him in his journey.

Billings and Wood being thus gone to dispose of the head, went towards Whitehall, intending to have thrown the same into the river there, but the gates being shut, they were obliged to go forward as far as Mr. Macreth's wharf, near the Horseferry at Westminster, where Billings setting down the pail from under his great coat, Wood took up the same with the head therein, and threw it into the dock before the Wharf. It was expected the same would have been carried away by the tide, but the water being then ebbing, it was left behind. There were also some lighters lying over against the dock, and one of the lightermen walking then on board, saw them throw the pail into the dark; but by the obscurity of the night, the distance, and having no suspicion, they did not apprehend anything of the matter. Having thus done, they returned home again to Mrs. Hayes's where they arrived about twelve o'clock and being let in, found Mrs. Hayes had been very busily employed in washing the floor, and scraping the blood off from it, and from the walls, etc. After which, they all three went into the fore room, Billings and Wood went to bed there, and Mrs. Hayes sat by them till morning.

On the morning of the second of March, about the dawning of the day, one Robinson a watchman saw a man's head lying in the dock, and the pail near it. His surprise occasioned his calling some persons to assist in taking up the head, and finding the pail bloody, they conjectured the head had been brought thither in it. Their suspicions were fully confirmed therein by the lighterman who saw Billings and Wood throw the same into the dock, as before mentioned.

It was now time for Mrs. Hayes, Billings, and Wood to consider how they should dispose of the body. Mrs. Hayes and Wood proposed to put it in a box, where it might lie concealed till a convenient opportunity offered for removing it. This being approved of, Mrs. Hayes brought a box; but upon their endeavouring to put it in, the box was not big enough to hold it. They had before wrapped it up in a blanket, out of which they took it; Mrs. Hayes proposed to cut off the arms and legs, and they again attempted to put it in, but the box would not hold it. Then they cut off the thighs, and laying it piecemeal in the box, concealed them until night.

In the meantime Mr. Hayes's head, which had been found as before, had sufficiently alarmed the town, and information was given to the neighbouring justices of the peace. The parish officers did all that was possible towards the discovery of the persons guilty of perpetrating so horrid an action. They caused the head to be cleaned, the face to be washed from the dirt and blood, and the hair to be combed, and then the head to be set upon a post in public view in St. Margaret's churchyard, Westminster, so that everybody might have free access to see the same, with some

of the parish officers to attend, hoping by that means a discovery of the same might be attained. The high constable of Westminster liberty also issued private orders to all the petty constables, watchmen, and other officers of that district, to keep a strict eye on all coaches, carts, etc., passing in the night through their liberty, imagining that the perpetrators of such a horrid fact would endeavour to free themselves of the body in the same manner as they had done the head.

These orders were executed for some time, with all the secrecy imaginable, under various pretences, but unsuccessfully; the head also continued to be exposed for some days in the manner described, which drew a prodigious number of people to see it, but without attaining any discovery of the murderers. It would be impertinent to mention the various opinions of the town upon this occasion, for they being founded upon conjecture only, were far wide of the truth. Many people either remembered or fancied they had seen that face before, but none could tell where or who it belonged to.

On the second of March, in the evening, Catherine Hayes, Thomas Wood, and Thomas Billings took the body and disjointed members out of the box, and wrapped them up in two blankets, viz., the body in one, and the limbs in the other. Then Billings and Wood first took up the body, and about nine o'clock in the evening carried it by turns into Marylebone Fields, and threw the same into a pond (which Wood in the day time had been hunting for) and returning back again about eleven o'clock the same night, took up the limbs in the other old blanket, and carried them by turns to the same place, throwing them in also. About twelve o'clock the same night, they returned back again, and knocking at the door were let in by Mary Springate. They went up to bed in Mrs. Hayes's fore-room, and Mrs. Hayes stayed with them all night, sometimes sitting up, and sometimes lay down upon the bed by them.

The same day one Bennet, the king's organ-maker's apprentice, going to Westminster to see the head, believed it to be Mr. Hayes's, he being intimately acquainted with him; and thereupon went and informed Mrs. Hayes, that the head exposed to view in St. Margaret's churchyard, was so very like Mr. Hayes's that he believed it to be his. Upon which Mrs. Hayes assured him that Mr. Hayes was very well and reproved him very sharply for forming such an opinion, telling him he must be very cautious how he raised such false and scandalous reports, for that he might thereby bring himself into a great deal of trouble. This reprimand put a stop to the youth's saying anything about it, and having no other reason than the similitude of faces, he said no more about it. The same day also Mr. Samuel Patrick, having been at Westminster to see the head, went from thence to Mr. Grainger's at the Dog and Dial in Monmouth Street, where Mr. Hayes and his wife were intimately acquainted, they and most of their journeymen servants being Worcestershire people. Mr. Patrick told them that he had been to see the head, and that in his opinion it was the most like to their countryman Hayes of any he ever saw.

Billings being there then at work, some of the servants replied it could not be his, because there being one of Mrs. Hayes's lodgers (meaning Billings) then at work, they should have heard of it by him if Mr. Hayes had been missing, or any accident had happened to him; to which Billings made answer, that Mr. Hayes was then alive and well, and that he left him in bed, when he came to work in the morning. The third day of March, Mrs. Hayes gave Wood a white coat and a pair of leathern breeches of Mr. Hayes's, which he carried with him to Greenford, near Harrow-on-the-Hill. Mrs. Springate observed Wood carrying these things downstairs, bundled up in a white cloth, whereupon she told Mrs. Hayes that Wood was gone down with a bundle. Mrs. Hayes replied it was a suit of clothes he had borrowed of a neighbour, and was going to carry them home again.

On the fourth of March, one Mrs. Longmore coming to visit Mrs. Hayes, enquired how Mr. Hayes did, and where he was. Mrs. Hayes answered, that he was gone to take a walk, and then enquired what news there was about town. Her visitor told her that most people's discourse run upon the man's head that had been found at Westminster; Mrs. Hayes seemed to wonder very much at the wickedness of the age, and exclaimed vehemently against such barbarous murderers, adding, *Here is a discourse, too, in our neighbourhood, of a woman who has been found in the fields, mangled and cut to pieces. It may be so,* replied Mrs. Longmore, *but I have heard nothing of it.*

The next day Wood came again to town, and applied himself to his landlady, Mrs. Hayes, who gave him a pair of shoes, a pair of stockings and a waistcoat of the deceased, and five shillings in money, telling him she would continue to supply him whenever he wanted. She informed him also of her husband's head being found, and though it had been for some time exposed, yet nobody had owned it.

On the sixth of March, the parish officers considering that it might putrify if it continued longer in the air, agreed with one Mr. Westbrook, a surgeon, to have it preserved in spirits. He having accordingly provided a proper glass, put it therein, and showed it to all persons who were desirous of seeing it. Yet the murder remained still undiscovered; and notwithstanding the multitude which had seen it, yet none pretended to be directly positive of the face, though many agreed in their having seen it before.



### THE MURDER OF JOHN HAYES

Catherine Hayes assisting Wood and Billings to cut off the head from her husband's corpse  
(From the *Annals of Newgate*)

In the meantime Mrs. Hayes quitted her lodgings, and removed from where the murder was committed to Mr. Jones's, a distiller in the neighbourhood, with Billings, Wood, and Springate, for whom she paid one quarter's rent at her old lodgings. During this time she employed herself in getting as much of her husband's effects as possibly she could, and amongst other papers and securities, finding a bond due to Mr. Hayes from John Davis, who had married Mr. Hayes's sister, she consulted how to get the money. To which purpose she sent for one Mr. Leonard Myring, a barber, and told him that she, knowing him to be her husband's particular friend and acquaintance, and he then being under some misfortunes, through which she feared he would not presently return, she knew not how to recover several sums of money that were due to her husband, unless by sending fictitious letters in his name, to the several persons from whom the same were due. Mr. Myring considering the consequences of such a proceeding declined it. But she prevailed upon some other person to write letters in Mr. Hayes's name, particularly one to his mother, on the 14th of March, to demand ten pounds of the above-mentioned Mr. Davis, threatening if he refused, to sue him for it. This letter Mr. Hayes's mother received, and acquainting her son-in-law Davis with the contents thereof, he offered to pay the money on sending down the bond, of which she by a letter acquainted Mrs. Hayes on the twenty-second of the same month.

During these transactions, several persons came daily to Mr. Westbrook's to see the head. A poor woman at Kingsland, whose husband had been missing the day before it was found, was one amongst them. At first sight she fancied it bore some resemblance to that of her husband, but was not positive enough to swear to it; yet her suspicion at first was sufficient to ground a report, which flew about the town, in the evening, and some enquiries were made after the body of the person to whom it was supposed to belong but to no purpose.

Mrs. Hayes, in the meanwhile, took all the pains imaginable to propagate a story of Mr. Hayes's withdrawing on account of an unlucky blow he had given to a person in a quarrel, and which made him apprehensive of a prosecution, though he was then in treaty with the widow in order to make it up. This story she at first told with many injunctions of secrecy, to persons who she had good reason to believe would, notwithstanding her injunctions, tell it again. It happened, in the interim, that one Mr. Joseph Ashby, who had been an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Hayes, came to see her. She, with a great deal of pretended concern, communicated the tale she had framed to him. Mr. Ashby asked whether the person he had killed was him to whom the head belonged; she said, No, the man who died by Mr. Hayes's blow was buried entire, and Mr. Hayes had given or was about to give, a security to pay the widow fifteen pounds *per annum* to hush it up. Mr. Ashby next enquired where Mr. Hayes was gone; she said to Portugal, with three or four foreign gentlemen.

He thereupon took his leave; but going from thence to Mr. Henry Longmore's, cousin of Mr. Hayes, he related to him the story Mrs. Hayes had told him and expressed a good deal of dissatisfaction thereat, desiring Mr. Longmore to go to her and make the same enquiry as he had done, but without saying they had seen one another. Mr. Longmore went thereupon directly to Mrs. Hayes's, and enquired in a peremptory tone for her husband. In answer she said that she had supposed Mr. Ashby had acquainted him with the misfortune which had befallen him. Mr. Longmore replied he had not seen Mr. Ashby for a considerable time and knew nothing of his cousin's misfortune, not judging of any that could attend him, for he believed he was not indebted to anybody. He then asked if he was in prison for debt. She answered him, No, 'twas worse than that. Mr. Longmore demanded what worse could befall him. As to any debts, he believed he had not contracted any. At which she blessed God and said that neither Mr. Hayes nor herself owed a farthing to any person in the world. Mr. Longmore again importuning her to know what he had

done to occasion his absconding so, said *I suppose he has not murdered anybody?* To this she replied, he had, and beckoning him to come upstairs, related to him the story as before mentioned.

Mr. Longmore being inquisitive which way he was gone, she told him into Herefordshire, that Mr. Hayes had taken four pocket pistols with him for his security, viz., one under each arm, and two in his pockets. Mr. Longmore answered, 'twould be dangerous for him to travel in that manner; that any person seeing him so armed with pistols, would cause him to be apprehended on suspicion of being a highwayman. To which she assured him that it was his usual manner; the reason of it was that he had like to have been robbed coming out of the country, and that once he was apprehended on suspicion of being an highwayman, but that a gentleman who knew him, accidentally came in, and seeing him in custody, passed his word for his appearance, by which he was discharged. To that Mr. Longmore made answer that it was very improbable of his ever being stopped on suspicion of being an highwayman, and discharged upon a man's only passing his word for his appearance; he farther persisted which way he was supplied with money for his journey. She told him she had sewn twenty-six guineas into his clothes, and that he had about him seventeen shillings in new silver. She added that Springate, who lodged there, was privy to the whole transaction, for which reason she paid a quarter's rent for her at her old lodgings, and the better to maintain what she had averred, called Springate to justify the truth of it. In concluding the discourse, she reflected on the unkind usage of Mr. Hayes towards her, which surprised Mr. Longmore more than anything else she had said yet, and strengthened his suspicion, because he had often been a witness to her giving Mr. Hayes the best of characters, viz., of a most indulgent, tender husband.

Mr. Longmore then took leave of her and returned back to his friend Mr. Ashby; when, after comparing their several notes together, they judged by very apparent reasons that Mr. Hayes must have had very ill play shown him. Upon which they agreed to go to Mr. Eaton, a Life Guardman who was also an acquaintance of Mr. Hayes's, which accordingly they did, intending him to have gone to Mrs. Hayes also, to have heard what relation she would give him concerning her husband. They went and enquired at several places for him, but he was not then to be found; upon which Mr. Longmore and Mr. Ashby went down to Westminster to see the head at Mr. Westbrook's. When they came there, Mr. Westbrook told them that the head had been owned by a woman from Kingsland, who thought it to be her husband, but was not certain enough to swear it, though the circumstances were strong, because he had been missing from the day before the head was found. They desired to see it and Mr. Ashby first went upstairs to look on it, and coming down, told Mr. Longmore he really thought it to be Mr. Hayes's head, upon which Mr. Longmore went up to see it, and after examining it more particularly than Mr. Ashby, confirmed him in his suspicion. Then they returned to seek out Mr. Eaton, and finding him at home, informed him of their proceedings, with the sufficient reasons upon which their suspicions were founded, and compelled him to go with them to enquire into the affair.

Mr. Eaton pressed them to stay to dinner with him, which at first they agreed to, but afterwards altering their minds, went all down to Mr. Longmore's house and there renewed the reasons of their suspicions, not only of Mr. Hayes's being murdered (being satisfied with seeing the head) but also that his wife was privy to the same. But in order to be more fully satisfied they agreed that Mr. Eaton should in a day or two's time go and enquire for Mr. Hayes, but withal taking no notice of his having seen Mr. Longmore and Mr. Ashby. In the meantime Mr. Longmore's brother interfered, saying, that it seemed apparent to him that his cousin (Mr. Hayes) had been murdered, and that Mrs. Hayes appeared very suspicious to him of being guilty with some other persons, viz., Wood and Billings (who she told him, had drunk with him the night before his journey). He added, moreover, that he thought time was not to be delayed, because they might remove from their lodgings upon the least apprehensions of a discovery.

His opinion prevailed as the most reasonable, and Mr. Longmore said they would go about it immediately. Accordingly he immediately applied to Mr. Justice Lambert and acquainted him with the grounds of their suspicions and their desire of his granting a warrant for the apprehension of the parties. On hearing the story the justice not only readily agreed with them in their suspicions, and complied with their demand, but said also he would get proper officers to execute it in the evening, about nine o'clock, putting Mrs. Hayes, Thomas Wood, Thomas Billings, and Mary Springate into a special warrant for that purpose.

At the hour appointed they met, and Mr. Eaton bringing two officers of the Guards along with them, they went altogether to the house where Mrs. Hayes lodged. They went directly in and upstairs, at which Mr. Jones, who kept the house, demanded who and what they were. He was answered that they were sufficiently authorised in all they did, desiring him at the same time to bring candles and he should see on what occasion they came. Light being thereupon brought they went all upstairs together. Justice Lambert rapped at Mrs. Hayes's door with his cane; she demanded who was there, for that she was in bed, on which she was bid to get up and open it, or they would break it open.

After some time taken to put on her clothes, she came and opened it. As soon as they were in the room they seized her and Billings, who was sitting upon her bedside, without either shoes or stockings on. The justice asked whether he had been in bed with her. She said no, but that he sat there to mend his stockings. *Why, then,* replied Mr. Lambert, *he has very good eyes to see to do it without fire or candle,* whereupon they seized him too. And leaving persons below to guard them, they went up and apprehended Springate. After an examination in which they would confess nothing, they committed Billings to New Prison, Springate to the Gate House, and Mrs.

The consciousness of her own guilt made Mrs. Hayes very assiduous in contriving such a method of behaviour as might carry the greatest appearance of innocence. In the first place, therefore, she entreated Mr. Longmore that she might be admitted to see the head, in which request she was indulged by Mr. Lambert, who ordered her to have a sight of it as she came from Tothill Fields Bridewell to her examination. Accordingly Mr. Longmore attending the officers to bring Mrs. Hayes from thence the next day to Mr. Lambert's, ordered the coach to stop at Mr. Westbrook's door. And as soon as he entered the house, being admitted into the room, she threw herself down upon her knees, crying out in great agonies, *Oh, it is my dear husband's head! It is my dear husband's head!* and embracing the glass in her arms kissed the outside of it several times. In the meantime Mr. Westbrook coming in, told her that if it was his head she should have a plainer view of it, that he would take it out of the glass for her to have a full sight of it, which he did, by lifting it up by the hair and brought it to her. Taking it in her arms, she kissed it, and seemed in great confusion, withal begging to have a lock of his hair; but Mr. Westbrook replied that he was afraid she had had too much of his blood already. At which she fainted away, and after recovering, was carried to Mr. Lambert's, to be examined before him and some other Justices of the Peace. While these things were in agitation, one Mr. Huddle and his servant walking in Marylebone Fields in the evening, espied something lying in one of the ponds in the fields, which after they had examined it they found to be the legs, thighs, and arms of a man. They, being very much surprised at this, determined to search farther, and the next morning getting assistance drained the pond, where to their great astonishment they pulled out the body of a man wrapped up in a blanket; with the news of which, while Mrs. Hayes was under examination, Mr. Crosby, a constable, came down to the justices, not doubting but this was the body of Mr. Hayes which he had found thus mangled and dismembered.

Yet, though she was somewhat confounded at the new discovery made hereby of the cruelty with which her late husband had been treated, she could not, however, be prevailed on to make any discovery or acknowledgment of her knowing anything of the fact; whereupon the justices who examined her, committed her that afternoon to Newgate, the mob attending her thither with loud acclamations of joy at her commitment, and ardent wishes of her coming to a just punishment, as if they were already convinced of her guilt.

Sunday morning following, Thomas Wood came to town from Greenford, near Harrow, having heard nothing further of the affair, or of the taking up of Mrs. Hayes, Billings, or Springate. The first place he went to was Mrs. Hayes's old lodging; there he was answered that she had moved to Mr. Jones's, a distiller, a little farther in the street. Thither he went, where the people suspected of the murder said Mrs. Hayes was gone to the Green Dragon in King Street, which is Mrs. Longmore's house; and a man who was there told him, moreover, that he was going thither and would show him the way; Wood being on horseback followed him, and he led him the way to Mr. Longmore's house. At this time Mr. Longmore's brother coming to the door, and seeing Wood, immediately seized him, and unhorseing him, dragged him indoors, sent for officers and charged them with him on suspicion of the murder. From thence he was carried before Mr. Justice Lambert, who asked him many questions in relation to the murder; but he would confess nothing, whereupon he was committed to Tothill Fields Bridewell. While he was there he heard the various reports of persons concerning the murder, and from those, judging it impossible to prevent a full discovery or evade the proofs that were against him, he resolved to name an ample confession of the whole affair. Mr. Lambert being acquainted with this, he with John Madun and Thomas Salt, Esqs., two other justices of the peace, went to Tothill Fields Bridewell, to take his examination, in which he seemed very ingenuous and ample declaring all the particulars before mentioned, with this addition that Catherine Hayes was the first promoter of, and a great assistance in several parts of this horrid affair; that he had been drawn into the commission thereof partly through poverty, and partly through her crafty insinuations, who by feeding them with liquors, had spirited them up to the commission of such a piece of barbarity. He farther acknowledged that ever since the commission of the fact he had had no peace, but a continual torment of mind; that the very day before he came from Greenford he was fully persuaded within himself that he should be seized for the murder when he came to town, and should never see Greenford more; notwithstanding which he could not refrain coming, though under an unexpected certainty of being taken, and dying for the fact. Having thus made a full and ample confession, and signed the same on the 27th March, his *mittimus* was made by Justice Lambert, and he was committed to Newgate, whither he was carried under a guard of a serjeant and eight soldiers with muskets and bayonets to keep off the mob, who were so exasperated against the actors of such a piece of barbarity that without that caution it would have been very difficult to have carried him thither alive.

On Monday, the 28th of March, after Mrs. Hayes was committed to Newgate, being the day after Wood's apprehension, Joseph Mercer going to see Mrs. Hayes, she told him that as he was Thomas Billings's friend as well as hers; she desired he would go to him and tell him 'twas in vain to deny any longer the murder of her husband, for they were equally guilty, and both must die for it. Billings hearing this and that Wood was apprehended and had fully confessed the whole affair, thought it needless to persist any longer in a denial, and therefore the next day, being the 29th of March, he made a full and plain discovery of the whole fact, agreeing with Wood in all the particulars; which confession was made and signed in the presence of Gideon Harvey and Oliver Lambert, Esqs., two of his Majesty's justices of peace, whereupon he was removed to Newgate the same day that Wood was.

Wood and Billings, by their several confessions, acquitting Springate of having any concern in the aforesaid murder, she was soon discharged from her confinement.

This discovery making a great noise in the town, divers of Mrs. Hayes's went to visit her in Newgate and examine her as to the and motives that induced her to commit the said fact. Her acknowledgment in general was: that Mr. Hayes had proved but an indifferent husband to her; that one night he came home drunk and struck her; that upon complaining to Billings and Wood they, or one of them, said such a fellow (meaning Mr. Hayes) ought not to live, and that they would murder him for a halfpenny. She took that opportunity to propose her bloody intentions to them, and her willingness that they should do so; she was acquainted with their design, heard the blow given to Mr. Hayes by Billings, and then went with Wood into the room; she held the candle while the head was cut off, and in excuse for this bloody fact, said the devil was got into them all that made them do it. When she was made sensible that her crime in law was not only murder, but petty treason, she began to show great concern indeed, making very strict enquiries into the nature of the proof which was necessary to convict, and having possessed herself with a notion that it appeared she murdered him with her own hands, she was very angry that either Billings or Wood should, by their confession, acknowledge her guilty of the murder, and thereby subject her to that punishment which of all others she most feared, often repeating that it was hard they would not suffer her to be hanged with them! When she was told of the common report that Billings was her son, she affected, at first, to make a great mystery of it; said he was her own flesh and blood, indeed, but that he did not know how nearly he was related to her himself; at other times she said she would never disown him while she lived, and showed a greater tenderness for him than for herself, and sent every day to the condemned hold where he lay, to enquire after his health. But two or three days before her death, she became as the ordinary tells us a little more sincere in this respect, affirming that he was not only her child, but Mr. Hayes's also, though put out to another person, with whom he was bred up in the country and called him father.

There are generally a set of people about most prisons, and especially about Newgate, who get their living by imposing on unhappy criminals, and persuading them that guilt may be covered, and Justice evaded by certain artful contrivances in which they profess themselves masters. Some of these had got access to this unhappy woman, and had instilled into her a notion that the confession of Wood and Billings could no way affect her life. This made her vainly imagine that there was no positive proof against her, and that circumstantial only would not convict her. For this reason she resolved to put herself upon her trial (contrary to her first intentions; for having been asked what she would do, she had replied she would hold up her hand at the bar and plead guilty, for the whole world could not save her). Accordingly, being arraigned, she pleaded not guilty, and put herself upon her trial. Wood and Billings both pleaded guilty, and desired to make atonement for the same by the loss of their blood, only praying the Court would be graciously pleased to favour them so much (as they had made an ingenuous confession) as to dispense with their being hanged in chains. Mrs. Hayes having thus put herself upon her trial, the King's Counsel opened the indictment, setting forth the heinousness of the fact, the premeditated intentions, and inhuman method of acting it; that his Majesty for the more effectual prosecution of such vile offenders, and out of a tender regard to the peace and welfare of all his subjects, and that the actors and perpetrators of such unheard of barbarities might be brought to condign punishment, had given them directions to prosecute the prisoners. Then Richard Bromage, Robert Wilkins, Leonard Myring, Joseph Mercer, John Blakesby, Mary Springate, and Richard Bows, were called into Court; the substance of whose evidence against the prisoner was that the prisoner being interrogated about the murder, when in Newgate, said, the devil put it into her head, but, however, John Hayes was none of the best of husbands, for she had been half starved ever since she was married to him; that she did not in the least repent of anything she had done, but only in drawing those two poor men into this misfortune; that she was six weeks importuning them to do it; that they denied it two or three times, but at last agreed; her husband was so drunk that he fell out of his chair, then Billings and Wood, carried him into the next room, and laid him upon the bed; that she was not in that room but in the fore room on the same floor when he was killed, but they told her that Billings struck him twice on the head with a pole-axe, and that then Wood cut his throat; that when he was quite dead she went in and held the candle whilst Wood cut his head quite off, and afterwards they chopped off his legs and arms; that they wanted to get him into an old chest, but were forced to cut off his thighs and arms, and then the chest would not hold them all; the body and limbs were put into blankets at several times the next night, and thrown into a pond, that the devil was in them all, and they were all drunk; that it would signify nothing to make a long preamble, she could hold up her hand and say she was guilty, for nothing could save her, nobody could forgive her; that the men who did the murder were taken and confessed it; that she was not with them when they did it; that she was sitting by the fire in the shop upon a stool; that she heard the blow given and somebody stamp; that she did not cry out, for fear they should kill her; that after the head was cut off, it was put into a pail, and Wood carried it out; that Billings sat down by her and cried, and would lie all the rest of the night in the room with the dead body; that the first occasion of this design to murder him was because he came home one night and beat her, upon which Billings said this fellow deserved to be killed, and Wood said he would be his butcher for a penny; that she told them they might do as they would do it that night it was done; that she did not tell her husband of the design to murder him, for fear he should beat her; that she sent to Billings to let him know it was in vain to deny the murder of her husband any longer, for they were both guilty, and must both die for it.

Many other circumstances equally strong with those before mentioned appeared, and a cloud of witnesses, many of whom (the thing appearing so plain) were sent away unexamined. She herself



confessed at the bar her previous knowledge of their intent several days before the fact was committed; yet foolishly insisted on her innocence, because the fact was not committed by her own hands. The jury, without staying long to consider of it, found her guilty, and she was taken from the bar in a very weak and faint condition. On her return to Newgate, she was visited by several persons of her acquaintance, who yet were so far from doing her any good that they rather interrupted her in those preparations which it became a woman in her sad condition to make.

When they were brought up to receive sentence, Wood and Billings renewed their former requests to the Court, that they might not be hung in chains. Mrs. Hayes also made use of her former assertion, that she was not guilty of actually committing the fact, and therefore begged of the Court that she might at least have so much mercy shown her as not to be burnt alive. The judges then proceeded in the manner prescribed by Law, that is, they sentenced the two men, with the other malefactors, to be hanged, and Mrs. Hayes, as in all cases of petty treason, to die by fire at a stake; at which she screamed, and being carried back to Newgate, fell into violent agonies. When the other criminals were brought thither after sentence passed, the men were confined in the same place with the rest in their condition, but Mrs. Hayes was put into a place by herself, which was at that time the apartment allotted to women under condemnation.

Perhaps nobody ever kept their thoughts so long and so closely united to the world, as appeared by the frequent messages she sent to Wood and Billings in the place where they were confined, and that tenderness which she expressed for both of them seemed preferable to any concern she showed for her own misfortunes, lamenting in the softest terms of having involved those two poor men in the commission of a fact for which they were now to lose their lives. In which, indeed, they deserved pity, since, as I shall show hereafter, they were persons of unblemished characters, and of virtuous inclinations, until misled by her.

As to the sense she had of her own circumstances, there has been scarce any in her state known to behave with so much indifference. She said often that death was neither grievous nor terrible to her in itself, but was in some degree shocking from the manner in which she was to die. Her fondness for Billings hurried her into indecencies of a very extraordinary nature, such as sitting with her hand in his at chapel, leaning upon his shoulder, and refusing upon being reprimanded (for giving offence to the congregation) to make any amendment in respect of these shocking passages between her and the murderers of her husband, but on the contrary, she persisted in them to the very minute of her death. One of her last expressions was to enquire of the executioner whether he had hanged her dear child, and this, as she was going from the sledge to the stake, so strong and lasting were the passions of this woman.



#### THE MURDER OF JOHN HAYES

The murdered man's head is exhibited in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster

The Friday night before her execution (being assured she should die on the Monday following) she attempted to make away with herself; to which purpose she had procured a bottle of strong poison, designing to have taken the same. But a woman who was in the place with her, touching it with her lips, found that it burnt them to an extraordinary degree, and spilling a little on her handkerchief, perceived it burnt that also; upon which suspecting her intentions, she broke the phial, whereby her design was frustrated.

On the day of her execution she was at prayers, and received the Sacrament in the chapel, where she still showed her tenderness to Billings. About twelve, the prisoners were severally carried away for execution; Billings with eight others for various crimes were put into three carts, and Catherine Hayes was drawn upon a sledge to the place of execution; where being arrived, Billings with eight others, after having had some time for their private devotions, were turned off.

After which Catherine Hayes being brought to the stake, was chained thereto with an iron chain

running round her waist and under her arms and a rope about her neck, which was drawn through a hole in the post; then the faggots, intermixed with light brush wood and straw, being piled all round her, the executioner put fire thereto in several places, which immediately blazing out, as soon as the same reached her, with her arms she pushed down those which were before her. When she appeared in the middle of the flames as low as her waist, the executioner got hold of the end of the cord which was round her neck, and pulled tight, in order to strangle her, but the fire soon reached his hand and burnt it, so that he was obliged to let it go again. More faggots were immediately thrown upon her, and in about three or four hours she was reduced to ashes.

In the meantime, Billings's irons were put upon him as he was hanging on the gallows; after which being cut down, he was carried to the gibbet, about one hundred yards distance, and there hung up in chains.

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The old name for Oxford Street.

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### **The Life of THOMAS BILLINGS, a Murderer.**

We have said so much of this malefactor in the foregoing life, yet it was necessary, in order to preserve the connection of that barbarous story, to leave the particular consideration of these two assistants in the murder of Mr. Hayes to particular chapters, and therefore we will begin with Billings. Mrs. Hayes, some time before her execution, confidently averred that he was the son both of Mr. Hayes and of herself, that his father not liking him, he was put out to relations of hers and took the name of Billings from his godfather. But Mr. Hayes's relations confidently denying all this, and he himself saying he knew nothing more than that he called his father a shoemaker in the country, who some time since was dead. He was put apprentice to a tailor with whom he served his time, and then came up to London to work journey-work, which he did in Monmouth Street, lodging at Mr. Hayes's and believed himself nearly related to his wife, who from the influence she always maintained over him, drew him to the commission of that horrid fact.

But the most certain opinion is that he was found in a basket upon the common, near the place where Mrs. Hayes lived before she married Mr. Hayes, that he was at that time of his death about twenty-two or twenty-three years old; whereas it evidently appeared by her own confession, that she had been married to Mr. Hayes but twenty years and eight months. He was put out to nurse by the charge of the parish, to people whose names were Billings, and when he was big enough to go apprentice, was bound to one Mr. Wetherland, a tailor, to whom the parish gave forty shillings with him. It is very probable he might be a natural son of Mrs. Hayes's, born in her rambles (of which we have hinted) before her marriage, and dropped by her in the place where he was found.

As to the character of Billings in the country he was always reputed a sober, honest, industrious young man. During the time he had worked in town, he had done nothing to impeach that reputation which he brought up with him, and might possibly have lived very happily, if he had not fallen into the temptation of this unfortunate woman, who seems to have been born for her own undoing and for the destruction of others. Whatever knowledge he might have of that relation in which he stood to Mrs. Hayes, certain it is that she always preserved such an authority over him that in her presence he would never answer any questions but constantly referred himself to her, or kept an obstinate silence; he affected, also, a strange fondness for her, kissing her cheek when she fainted in the chapel at Newgate, and behaving himself when near her, in such a manner as gave great offence to the spectators. As to the remorse he had for the horrid crime he had committed, those who had occasion to know him while under confinement thought him sincere therein; but the Ordinary, whose place it is to be supreme judge in these matters, told the world in his account of the behaviour and confession of the malefactors, that he was a confused, hard-hearted fellow, and had few external signs of penitence; and a little farther, when possibly he was in a better humour, he says that in all appearance he was very penitent for his sins, and died in the Communion of the Church of England, of which he owned himself an unworthy member.

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### **Life of THOMAS WOOD, a Murderer**

This malefactor, Thomas Wood, was born at a place called Ombersley, between Ludlow and Worcester, of parents in very indifferent circumstances, who were therefore able to give him but little education. He was bred up to no settled business, but laboured in all such country employments as require only a robust body for their performance. When the summer's work was over, he used to assist as a tapster at inns and alehouses in the neighbourhood of the village where he was born, and by the industry, care, and regularity which he observed in all things, gained a very great reputation as an honest and faithful servant with all that knew him.

His mother having been left in a needy condition, with several small children, she set up a little alehouse in order to get bread for them. Thomas was very dutiful, and as his diligence enabled him to save a little money, so he was by no means backwards in giving her all the assistance that was in his power. Some few months before his death, he grew desirous of coming to London,

which he did accordingly, and worked at whatsoever employment he could get both with fidelity and diligence; but a fleet being then setting out for the Mediterranean, press-warrants were granted for the manning thereof, and the diligence that was used in putting them in execution gave great uneasiness to Wood, who, having no settled business, was afraid of falling into their hands. Whereupon he bethought himself of his countryman, Mr. Hayes, to whom he applied for his advice and assistance. Mr. Hayes kindly invited him to live with them in order to avoid that danger, and he accordingly lay with Mr. Billings, as has been before related. Mr. Hayes was moreover so desirous of doing him service that he applied himself to finding out such persons as wanted labourers in order to get him into business, while Mrs. Hayes, in the meantime, made use of every blandishment to seduce the fellow into following her wicked inclinations. Perceiving that both Billings and he had religious principles then in common with ordinary persons, she artfully made even those persons' dispositions subservient to her brutal and inhuman purpose.

It seems that Mr. Hayes had fallen, within a few years of his death, into the company of some who called themselves Free-thinkers and fancy an excellency in their own understandings because they are able to ridicule those things which the rest of the world think sacred. Though it is no great conquest to obtrude the belief of anything whatsoever on persons of small parts and little education, yet they triumph greatly therein and communicate the same honour of boasting in their pupils. Mr. Hayes now and then let fall some rather rash expression, as to his disbelief of the immortality of the soul, and talked in such a manner on religious topics that Mrs. Hayes persuaded Billings and Wood that he was an Atheist, and as he believed his own soul of no greater value than that of a brute beast, there could be no difference between killing him and them. It must be indeed acknowledged that there was no less oddity in such propositions than in those of her husband; however, it prevailed, it seems, with these unfortunate men; and as she had already persuaded them it was no sin, so when they were intoxicated with liquor she found it less difficult than at any other time, to deprive them also of the humanity, and engage them in perpetrating a fact so opposite not only to religion but to the natural tenderness of the human species. Wood, as he yielded to her persuasions with reluctance, so he was the first who showed any true remorse of conscience for that cruel act of which he had been guilty; his confession of it being free and voluntary, and at the same time full and ingenious. Two days after receiving sentence, his constitution began to give way to the violence of a feverish distemper, which by a natural death prevented his execution, he dying in Newgate, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, much more pitied than either Billings or Mrs. Hayes who suffered at Tyburn. And thus with Wood we put a period to the relation of a tragedy which surprised the world exceedingly at the same time it happened, and will doubtless be read with horror in succeeding generations.

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### **The Life of CAPTAIN JAEN, a Murderer**

Though there is not perhaps any sin so opposite to our nature as cruelty towards our fellow creatures, yet we see it so thoroughly established in some tempers, that neither education nor a sense of religion are strong enough to abate it, much less to wear it out. The person of whom we are speaking, John Jaen, was the son of parents in very good circumstances at Bristol, who they bred him up to the knowledge of everything requisite to a person who was to be bred up in trade, and he grew a very tolerable proficient as well in the knowledge of the Latin tongue, as in writing and accounts, for his improvement in all which he was put under the best masters. When he had finished that course of learning which his friends thought would qualify him for what they designed him, he was immediately put apprentice to a cooper in Bristol, where he served his time with both fidelity and industry. When it was expired, he applied himself to trade with the same diligence, and sometimes went to sea, till in the year '24 he became master of a ship called the *Burnett*, fitted out by some merchants at Bristol, for South Carolina. In his return from this voyage he committed the murder for which he died.

On the 25th April, 1726, an Admiralty Sessions was held at the Old Bailey, before the Hon. Sir Henry Penrice, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, assisted by the Honourable Mr. Baron Hale, at which Captain Greagh was indicated for feloniously sinking the good ship called the *Friendship*, of which he was commander; but as there appeared no grounds for such a charge, he was acquitted. Afterwards Captain John Jaen, of Bristol, was set to the bar, and arraigned on an indictment for wilfully and inhumanly murdering one Richard Pye, who had been cabin-boy, in the month of March, in the year 1724. It appeared by the evidence produced against him that he either whipped the boy himself or caused him to be whipped every day during the voyage; that he caused him to be tied to the mainmast with ropes for nine days together, extending his arms and legs to the utmost, whipping him with a cat (as it is called) of five small cords till he was all bloody, then causing his wounds to be several times washed with brine and pickle. Under this terrible usage the poor wretch grew soon after speechless. The Captain, notwithstanding, continued his cruel usage, stamping, beating and abusing him, and even obliging him to eat his own excrements, which forcing its way upwards again, the boy in his agony of pain made signs for a dram, whereupon the captain in derision took a glass, carried it into the cabin, and made water therein, and then brought it to the boy to drink, who rejected the same. The lamentable condition in which he was made no impression on the captain, who continued to treat him with the same severity, by whipping, pickling, kicking, beating, and bruising him while he lingered out his miserable life. On the last day of this he gave him eighteen lashes with the aforesaid cat of five tails, in a little time after which the boy died. The evidence farther deposed that when the boy's body was sewn up in a hammock to be thrown overboard it had in it as many colours as there are in a rainbow, that his flesh in many places was as soft as jelly, and his head swelled as

big as two. Upon the whole it very fully appeared that a more bloody premeditated and wilful murder was never committed, and Sir Henry Penrice declared, that in all the time he had had the honour of sitting on the Bench he never heard anything like it, and hoped that no person who should sit there after him should hear of such an offence.

Under sentence of death he behaved with a great deal of piety and resignation though he did not frequent the public chapel for two reasons, the first because the number of strangers who were admitted thither to stare at such unhappy persons as are to die are always numerous and sometimes very indiscreet; the second was, that he had many enemies who took a pleasure in coming to insult him, and as he was sure either of these would totally interrupt his devotions, he thought it excusable to receive the assistance of the minister in his own chamber. As to the general offences of his life, he was very open in his confession, but as to the particular fact for which he suffered, he endeavoured to excuse it by saying he never intended to murder the boy, but only to correct him as he deserved, he being exceedingly wicked and unruly; he charged him with thieving in their voyage out, being yet worse as they came home, and that particularly one evening when he was asleep in the cabin, the lad broke open his lockers, and took out a bottle of rum, of which he drank near a pint, making himself therefor so drunk that his excrements fell involuntarily from him, which stunk so abominably that it awakened him (the Captain), whereupon he called in several of his men, who found the boy in a sad condition, and were obliged to sit down and smoke tobacco in order to overcome the stench he had raised. This produced the terrible punishment of tying him to the mast for several days and the offering him his excrements which he rejected.

Notwithstanding the captain owned all this, yet he could not forbear reflections on those who gave testimony against him at his trial, charging them with perjury and conspiracy to ruin him, though nothing like it appeared from the manner in which they delivered their testimony. As the time of his death approached nearer, the fear thereof, and remorse of conscience, brought the captain into so weak and low a state that he could scarce speak or attend to any discourses of others, but lay in a languishing condition, often fainting, and in fine appearing not unlike a person who had taken something to produce a sudden death, in order to prevent an ignominious one. Yet when such suspicions were mentioned to him, he declared that they were without ground, that he had never suffered such a thought once to enter into his head. His wife, who attended him constantly while in prison, said she loved him too well to become his executioner, and that she was positive since his commitment, he had had nothing unwholesome administered to him.



CATHERINE HAYES BURNT FOR THE MURDER OF HER HUSBAND  
(From the *Annals of Newgate*)

As he was carried to execution, he was so very much spent, that it was thought he would hardly have lived to have reached it. There he had the assistance of a minister of distinction, who prayed with him till the instant he was thrown off, which was on the 13th day of May, 1726, being then about twenty-nine years of age. As soon as he was cut down, he was put in chains, in order to be hung up.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM BOURN, a Notorious Thief**

As the want of education, from a multitude of instances, seems to be the chief cause of many of those misfortunes which befall persons in the ordinary course of life, so there are some born with such a natural inaptitude thereto, that no care, no pains, is able to conquer the stubborn stupidity of their nature, but like a knotty piece of wood, they defy the ingenuity of others to frame anything useful out of such cross-grained materials. This, as he acknowledged himself upon all occasions, was the case of the malefactor we are now speaking of, who was descended of honest

and reputable parents, who were willing in his younger years to have furnished him with a tolerable share of learning; but he was utterly incorrigible, and though put to a good school, would never be brought to read or write at all, which was no small dissatisfaction to his parents, with whom in other respects he agreed tolerably well.

When of age to be put out apprentice, he was placed with a hatter in the city of Dublin, to whom he served his time honestly and faithfully; as soon as he was out of his time, he came up to London in order to become acquainted with his business. He had the good luck, though a stranger, to get into good business here, but was so unfortunate as to fall into the acquaintance of two lewd women, who fatally persuaded him that thieving was an easier way of getting money to supply their extravagant expenses than working. He being a raw young lad, unacquainted with the world, was so mad as to follow their advice, and in consequence thereof snatched a show-glass out of the shop of Mr. Lovell, a goldsmith in Bishopsgate Street, in which there was four snuff-boxes, eight silver medals, six pairs of gold buttons, five diamond rings, twenty pairs of earrings, sixty-four gold rings, several gold chains, and other rich goods, to the amount of near £300, with all of which he got safe off, though discovered soon afterwards by his folly in endeavouring to dispose of them.

He threw aside all hopes of life as soon as he was apprehended, as having no friends to make intercession likely to procure a pardon. He was, indeed, a poor young creature, rather stupid than wicked and his vices more owing to his folly than to the malignity of his inclinations. He seemed to have a just notion both of the heinousness of that crime which he had committed and of the shame and ignominy he had brought upon himself and his relations. He was particularly affected with the miseries which were likely to fall upon his poor wife for his folly, and when the day of his death came, he seemed very easy and contented under it, declaring, however, at last that he died in the communion of the Church of Rome. This was on the 27th of June, 1726, being then not much above eighteen years old.

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### **The Life of JOHN MURREL, a Horse-Stealer**

This malefactor was descended of very honest and reputable parents in the county of York, who took care not only that he should read and write tolerably well, but also that he should be instructed in the principles of religion. They brought him up in their own way of business, which was grazing of cattle (both black cattle and horses), and afterwards selling them at market. As he grew up a man, he settled in the same occupation, farming what is called in Yorkshire a grazing room, for which he paid near a hundred pounds a year rent, and dealt very considerably himself in the same way which had been followed by his parents. He married also a young woman with a tolerable fortune, who bore him several children, five of which were alive at the time of his execution, and lived with their mother upon some little estate she had of her own.

For some years after his marriage he lived with tolerable reputation in the country, but being lavish in his expenses, he quickly consumed both his own little fortune and what he had with his wife, and then failing in his business, a whim took him in the head to come to London, whither also he brought his son. Here he soon fell into bad company, and getting acquaintance with a woman whom he thought was capable of maintaining him, he married her, or at least lived with her as if they had been married, for a considerable space; the news of which reaching his wife in the country, affected her so much that she had very nigh fallen into a fit of sickness. Thereupon her friends demonstrated to her, in vain, how unreasonable a thing it was for her to give herself so much pain about a man who treated her at once with unkindness and injustice; in spite of their remonstrances she came up to London, in hopes that her presence might reclaim him. But herein she was utterly mistaken, for he absolutely denied her to be his wife, and even persuaded his son to deny her also for his mother, which the boy with much fear and confusion did; and the poor woman was forced to go down into the country again, overwhelmed with sorrow at the ingratitude of the one and the undutifulness of the other. However, Murrel still went on in the same way with the woman he had chosen for his companion.

There is all the reason imaginable to suppose that he did not take the most honest ways of supporting himself and his mistress. However, he fell into no trouble nor is there any direct evidence of his having been guilty of any dishonesty within the reach of the Law, until he ran away with a mare from a man in town, as to which he excused himself by saying that she had formerly been his own, and that there having nothing more than a verbal contract between them, he thought fit to carry her off and sell her again. Sometime afterwards, going down to Newcastle Fair (for he still continued to carry on some dealing in horse-flesh) he fell there into the company of some merchants in the same way, who found means to get gains and sell very cheap, by paying nothing at the first hand. Among these, there was a country man of his who went by the name of Brown, with whom Murrel had formerly had an acquaintance. This fellow knowing the company in general to be persons of the same profession, began to talk very freely of his practices in that way (viz., of horse stealing), and amongst other stories related this. He said he once rode away with an officer's horse, who had just bought it with an intent to ride him up to London; he carried the creature into the West, and having made such alterations in his mane and tail as he thought proper, sold him there to a parson for thirteen guineas, which was about seven less than the horse was worth. But knowing the doctor had another church about eight miles from the parish in which he lived, and that there was a little stable at one angle of the churchyard, where the horse was put up during service, he resolved to make bold with it again. Accordingly, when the people were all at church, having provided himself with a red coat and a horse-soldier's

accoutrements, he picked the stable door, clapped them on the priest's beast, and rode him without the least suspicion as hard as conveniently he could to Worcester. There he laid aside the habit of a cavalier, and transforming himself into the natural appearance of a horse-courser, he sold the horse to a physician, telling him at the time he bought it, that it would be greatly the better for being suffered to run at grass a fortnight or so. *No doubt on it*, said he; *but I had some design of so doing*.

Yet they were much sooner executed than at first they were intended to have been, by an accident which happened the very day after the beast came into the hands of the physician; for one evening as Brown was taking a walk in the skirts of the city, who should he perceive but his old Cornish parson and his footman, jogging into town. Guilt struck him immediately with apprehensions at their errand relating to him, so that walking up and down, nor daring to go into the town for fear of being taken up and at last supposing it the only way to rid him of danger, he caught the horse once more in the doctor's close, and having stolen a saddle and bridle out of the inn where he lodged, he rode on him as far as Essex.

There he remained until Northampton Fair, where he sold the horse for the third time, for twenty-seven guineas, to an officer in the same regiment with him from whom it had been first stolen, on whose return from Flanders it was owned and the captain who bought it (though he refused to lose his money) yet gave as good description as he could of the person who sold it. Upon this the other officer put out an advertisement, describing both the man and the horse, and offering a reward of five guineas for whoever should apprehend him. This advertisement roused both the parson and the doctor, and the former took so much pains to discover him that he was at length apprehended in Cornwall, where at the assizes he was tried and convicted for the fact. But the captain who was the original possessor of the horse was so much pleased with his ingenuity that he procured a reprieve for him, and carried him abroad with him where he continued until the peace of Utrecht, when he returned home and fell to his old way of living, by which he had submitted himself unto the time in which he fell into company with Murrel, and had then bought five or six horses which had been stolen from the South, to be disposed of at the fair.

Murrel liked the precedent, and put it in practice immediately by stealing a brown mare which belonged to Jonathan Wood, for which he was shortly after apprehended and committed to Newgate. At the next sessions at the Old Bailey he was tried and convicted on very clear evidence, and during the space in which he lay under condemnation, testified a true sorrow for his sins, though not so just a sense of that for which he died as he ought to have had, and which might have been reasonably expected. For as horse-stealing did not appear any very great sin to him at the time of his committing it, so now, when he was to die for it, such an obstinate partiality towards ourselves is there naturally grafted in human nature that he could not forbear complaining of the severity of the Law, and find fault with its rigour which might have been avoided. What seemed most of all to afflict him under his misfortune was that he saw his son and nearest relations forsake him, and as much as they could shun having anything to do with his affairs. Of this he complained heavily to the minister of the place, during his confinement in Newgate, who represented to him how justly this had befallen him for first slighting his family, and leaving them without the least tenderness of respect, either to the ties of a husband, or the duty of a parent; so he began to read his sin in his punishment, and to frame himself to a due submission to what he had so much merited by his follies and his crimes.

When he was first brought up to receive sentence, he counterfeited being dead so exactly that he was brought back again to Newgate, but this cheat served only to gain a little time; for at the next sessions he was condemned and ordered for execution, which he suffered on the 27th of June, 1726, being then between forty and fifty years of age.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM HOLLIS, a Thief and an Housebreaker**

This unhappy lad was born in Portugal, while the English army served there in the late war. His father was drum-major of a regiment, but had not wherewith to give his child anything but food, for intending to bring him up a soldier, he perhaps thought learning an unnecessary thing to one of that profession. During the first years of his life the poor boy was a constant campaigner, being transported wherever the regiment removed, with the same care and conveniency as the kettle [drum] and knapsack, the only thing besides himself which make up the drum-major's equipage. When he grew big, he got, it seems, on board a man-of-war in the squadron that sailed up the Mediterranean. This was a proper university for one who had been bred in such a school; so that there is no wonder he became so great a proficient in all sorts of wickedness, gaming, drinking, and whoring, which appear not to such poor creatures as sins, but as the pleasures of life, about which they ought to spend their whole care; and, indeed, how should it be otherwise, where they know nothing that better deserves it.

When he came home to England his father dying, he was totally destitute, except what care his mother-in-law was pleased to take of him, which was, indeed, a great deal, if he would have been in any degree obedient to her instructions. But instead of that he looked upon all restraints on his liberty as the greatest evil that could befall him. Wherefore, leaving his mother's house, he abandoned himself to procuring money at any rate to support those lewd pleasures to which he had addicted himself.

It happened that he lodged near one John Mattison, a working silversmith, into whose house he got, and stole from thence no less than one hundred and forty silver buckles, the goods of one

Samuel Ashmelly. For this offence he was apprehended, and committed to Newgate; at the next sessions he was tried, and on the evidence of the prosecutor, which was very full and direct, he was convicted, and having no friends, he laid aside all hopes of life, and endeavoured as far as poor capacity would give him leave to improve himself in the knowledge of the Christian Faith, and in preparing for that death to which his follies and his crimes had brought him. The Ordinary, in the account he gives of his death, says that he was extremely stupid, a thing no ways improbable considering the wretched manner in which he had spent the years of his childhood and his youth. However, at last either his insensibility or having satisfied himself with the little evil there is in death compared with living in misery and want, furnished him with so much calmness that he suffered with greater appearance of courage than could have been expected from him. Just before he died he stood up in the cart, and turning himself to the spectators, said, *Good people, I am very young, but have been very wicked. It is true I have had no education, but I might have laboured hard and lived well for all that; but gaming and ill-company were my ruin. The Law hath justly brought me where I am, and I hope such young men as see my untimely fate will avoid the paths which lead unto it. Good people, pray for our departing souls, as we do, that God may give you all more grace than to follow us thither.* He suffered with the malefactors before-mentioned, being at the time of his execution between seventeen and eighteen years old.

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### **The Life of THOMAS SMITH, a Highwayman**

There is a certain commendable tenderness in human nature towards all who are under misfortunes, and this tenderness is in proportion to the magnitude of those evils which we suppose the pitied person to labour under. If we extend our compassion to relieving their necessities, and feeling a regret for those miseries which they undergo, we undoubtedly discharge the duties of humanity according to the scheme both of natural religion and the laws laid down in the Gospel. Perhaps no object ever merited it from juster motives than this poor man, who is the subject of the following pages. His parents were people in tolerable circumstances in Southwark; his father was snatched from him by death, while he was yet a child, but his mother, as far as she was able, was very careful that he should not pass his younger days without instruction, and an uncle he then had, being pleased with the docile temper of the youth, was at some expense also about his education. By this means he came to read and write tolerably well, and gained some little knowledge of the Latin tongue; and having a peculiar sweetness in his behaviour, it won very much upon his relations, and encouraged them to treat him with great indulgence.

But unfortunately for him, by the time he grew big enough to go out apprentice, or to enter upon any other method of living, his friends suddenly dropped off, and, by their death becoming in great want of money, he was forced to resign all the golden hopes he had formed and for the sake of present subsistence submit to becoming footman to a gentleman, who was, however, a very good and kind master to him, till in about a year's time he died also, and poor Smith was again left at his wits' end. However, out of this trouble he was relieved by an Irish gentleman, who took him into his service, and carried him over with him to Dublin. There he met with abundance of temptations to fall into that loose and lascivious course of life which prevails more in that city, perhaps, than in any other in Europe. But he had so much grace at that time as to resist it, and after a stay there of twenty months, returned into England again, where he came into the service of a third master, no less indulgent to him than the two former had been. In this last service an odd accident befell him, in which, though I neither believe myself, nor incline to impose on my readers that there was anything supernatural in the case of it, yet I fancy the oddness of the thing may, under the story I am going to tell, prove not disagreeable.

In a journey which Thomas had made into Herefordshire, with his first master, he had contracted there an acquaintance with a young woman, daughter to a farmer, in tolerable circumstances. This girl without saying anything to the man, fell it seems desperately in love with him, and about three months after he left the country, died. One night after his coming to live with this last master, he fancied he saw her in a dream, that she stood for some time by his bedside, and at last said, *Thomas, a month or two hence you will be in danger of a fever, and when that is over of a greater misfortune. Have a care, you have hitherto always behaved as an honest man; do not let either poverty or misfortunes tempt you to become otherwise;* and having so said, she withdrew. In the morning the fellow was prodigiously confounded, yet made no discovery of what had happened to any but the person who lay with him, though the thing made a very strong impression on his spirits, and might perhaps contribute not a little to his falling ill about the time predicted by the phantom he had seen.

This fever soon brought him very low, and obliged him to make away with most of his things in order to support himself. Upon recovery he found himself in lamentable circumstances, being without friends, without money, and out of business. Unfortunately for him, coming along the Haymarket one evening, he happened to follow a gentleman somewhat in liquor, who knowing him, desired that he would carry him home to his house in St. Martin's Lane, to which Thomas readily agreed. But as they were going along thither, a crowd gathered about the gentleman, who became as quarrelsome as they, and took it into his head to box one of the mob, in order to do which more conveniently, he gave Smith his hat and cane, and his wig. Smith held them for some time, the mob forcing them along like a torrent, till the gentleman, whose name was Brown, made up a court near Northumberland House, and Smith thereupon marched off with the things, the necessity he was under so far blinding him that he made no scruple of attempting to sell them the next day; by which means Mr. Brown hearing of them, he caused Smith to be apprehended as

a street-robber, and to be committed to Newgate, though he had the good luck, notwithstanding, to get all his things again. It seems he visited the poor man in prison, and if he did not prevaricate at his death, made him some promises of softening at least, if not of dropping the prosecution, which, as Smith asserted, prevented his making such a preparation for his defence as otherwise he might have done; which proved of very fatal consequence to him, since on the evidence of the prosecutor he was convicted of the robbery and condemned.

Never poor creature suffered more or severer hardships in the road of death than this poor man did, for by the time sentence was passed, all that he had was gone, and he had scarce a blanket to cover him from downright nakedness, during the space he lay in the hold under sentence. As he was better principled in religion than any of the other malefactors, he had retained his reading so well as to assist them in their devotions, and to supply in some measure the want of somebody constantly to attend them in their preparation for another world. So he picked up thereby such little assistances from amongst them as prevented his being starved before the time appointed for their execution came.

As this man did not want good sense, and was far from having lost what learning he had acquired in his youth, so the terrors of an ignominious death were quickly over with him, and instead of being affrighted with his approaching fate, he considered it only as a relief from miseries the most piercing that a man could feel, under which he had laboured so long that life was become a burden, and the prospect of death the only comfort that was left. He died with the greatest appearance of resolution and tranquillity on the 3rd August, 1726, being then about twenty-three years of age.

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### **The Life of EDWARD REYNOLDS, a Thief, etc.**

Notwithstanding the present age is so much celebrated for its excellency in knowledge and politeness, yet I am persuaded both these qualities, if they are really greater, are yet more restrained than they have been any time herefore whatsoever. The common people are totally ignorant, almost even of the first principles of religion. They give themselves up to debauchery without restraint, and what is yet more extraordinary, they fancy their vices are great qualifications, and look on all sorts of wickedness as merit.

This poor wretch who is the subject of our present page was put to school by his parents, who were in circumstances mean enough; but from a natural aversion to all goodness he absolutely declined making any proficiency therein. Whether he was educated to any business I cannot take upon me to say, but he worked at mop-making and carried them about to the country fairs for sale, by which he got a competency at least, and therefore had not by any means that ordinary excuse to plead that necessity had forced him upon thieving. On the contrary, he was drawn to the greatest part of those evils which he committed, and which consequently brought of those which he suffered, by frequenting the ring at Moorfields—a place which since it occurs so often in these memoirs, put me under a kind of necessity to describe it, and the customs of those who frequent it.

It lies between Upper and Middle Moorfields, and as people of rank, when they turn vicious, frequent some places where, under pretence of seeing one diversion in which perhaps there is no moral evil, they either make assignations for lewdness, or parties for gaming or drinking, and so by degrees ruin their estates, and leave the character of debauchees behind them, so those of meaner rank come thither to partake of the diversions of cudgel-playing, wrestlings, quoits, and other robust exercises which are now softened by a game of toss-up, hustle-cap, or nine-holes, which quickly brings on want; and the desire continuing, naturally inclines them to look for some means to recruit. And so, when the evening is spent in gaming, the night induces them to thieve under its cover, that they may have wherewith to supply the expenses of the ensuing day. Hence it comes to pass that this place and these practices hath ruined more young people, such as apprentices, journeymen, errand-boys, etc., than any other seminary of vice in town. But it is time that we should now return to the affairs of him who hath occasioned this digression.

In the neighbourhood of this place Reynolds found out a little alehouse to which he every night resorted. There were abundance of wicked persons who used to meet there, in order to go upon their several villainous ways of getting money; Reynolds (whose head was always full of discovering a method by which he might live more at ease than he did by working) listened very attentively to what passed amongst them. One Barnham, who had formerly been a waterman, was highly distinguished at these meetings for his consummate knowledge in every branch of the art and mystery of cheating. He had followed such practices for near twenty years, and commonly when they came there at night they formed a ring about the place where he sat and listened with the greatest delight to those relations of evil deeds, which his memory recorded.

It happened one evening, when these worthy persons were assembled together, that their orator took it in his head to harangue them on the several alterations which the science of stealing had gone through from the time of his becoming acquainted with its professors. In former days, said he, knights of the road were a kind of military order into which none but decayed gentlemen presumed to intrude themselves. If a younger brother ran out of his allowance, or if a young heir spent his estate before he had bought a tolerable understanding, if an under-courtier lived above his income, or a subaltern officer laid out twice his pay in rich suits and fine laces, this was the way they took to recruit; and if they had but money enough left to procure a good horse and a case of pistols, there was no fear of their keeping up their figure a year or two, till their faces



were known. And then, upon a discovery, they generally had friends good enough to prevent their swinging, and who, ten to one, provided handsomely for them afterwards, for fear of their meeting with a second mischance, and thereby bringing a stain upon their family. But nowadays a petty alehouse-keeper, if he gives too much credit, a cheesemonger whose credit grows rotten, or a mechanic that is weary of living by his fingers-ends, makes no more ado, when he finds his circumstances uneasy, but whips into a saddle and thinks to get all things retrieved by the magic of those two formidable words, *Stand and Deliver*. Hence the profession is grown scandalous, since all the world knows that the same methods now makes an highwayman, that some years ago would have got a commission.

*But hark ye, says one of the company, in the days of those gentlemen highwaymen, was there no way left for a poor man to get his living out of the road of honesty? Puh! Ay, replied Barnham, a hundred men were more ingenious then than they are now, and the fellows were so dexterous that it was dangerous for a man to laugh who had a good set of teeth, for fear of having them stole. They made nothing of whipping hats and wigs off at noon-day; whipping swords from folks' sides when it grew dusk; or making a midnight visit, in spite of locks, bolts, bars, and such like other little impediments to old misers, who kept their gold molding in chests till such honest fellows, at the hazard of their lives, came to set at liberty. For my part, continued he, I believe Queen Anne's war swept away the last remains of these brave spirits; for since the Peace of Utrac (as I think they call it) we have had a wondrous growth of blockheads, even in our business. And if it were not for Shephard and Frazier, a hundred years hence, they would not think that in our times there were fellows bold enough to get sixpence out of a legal road, or dare to do anything without a quirk of the law to screen them.*

All his auditors were wonderfully pleased with such discourses as these, and when the liquor had a little warmed them, would each in their turn tell a multitude of stories they had heard of the boldness, cunning, and dexterity of the thieves who lived before them. In all cases whatever, evil is much sooner learnt than good, and a night debauch makes a ten times greater impression on the spirits than the most eloquent sermon. Between the liquor and the tales people begin to form new ideas to themselves of things, and instead of looking on robbery as rapine and stealing as a villainous method of defrauding another, they, on the contrary, take the first for a gallant action, and the latter for a dexterous piece of cunning; by either of which they acquire the means of indulging themselves in what best suits their inclinations, without the fatigue of business or the drudgery of hard labour.

Reynolds, though a very stupid fellow, soon became a convert to these notions, and lost no time in putting them in execution, for the next night he took from a person (who it seems knew him and his haunts well enough) a coat and a shilling, which when he came to be indicted for the fact, he pretended they were given him to prevent his charging the prosecutor with an attempt to commit sodomy—an excuse which of late years is grown as common with the men, as it has long been with the women to pretend money was given them for flogging folks, when they have been brought to the bar for picking it out of their pockets; hoping by this reverberation of ignominy to blacken each other so that the jury may believe neither. However, in this case, it must be acknowledged that Reynolds went to death with the assertion that he received the coat and the shilling on the before-mentioned account, and that he did not take it by violence, which was the crime whereof he was convicted.

He had married a poor woman, who lived in very good reputation both before and after; by her he had three children, and though he had long associated himself with other women, and left her to provide for the poor infants, yet he was extremely offended because she did not send him as much money as he wanted under his confinement, and he could not forbear treating her with very ill language when she came to see him under his misfortunes. As he was a fellow of little parts and no education, so his behaviour under condemnation was confused and unequal, as it is reasonable to suppose it should be, since he had nothing to support his hopes or to comfort him against those fears of death which are inseparable from human nature. However, he sometimes showed an inclination to learn somewhat of religion, would listen attentively while Smith was reading, and as well as his gross capacity would give him leave, would pray for mercy and forgiveness. At chapel he behaved himself decently, if not devoutly, and being by his misfortunes removed from the company of those who first seduced him into his vices, he began to have some ideas of the use of life when he was going to leave it; and his thoughts had received certain ideas (though very imperfect ones) of death and a future state, when the punishment appointed by Law sent him to experience them. He died on the 23rd of August, 1726, being then upwards of twenty-six years of age.

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### **The Life of JOHN CLAXTON, *alias* JOHNSTON, a Thief, etc.**

This unhappy malefactor was amongst the number of those who, through want of education, was the more easily drawn into the prosecution of such practices as became fatal to him. His father was a common sailor belonging to the town of Sunderland, who had it not in his power to breed him in a very extraordinary manner; and what little he was able to do was frustrated by the evil inclinations of his son, who instead of applying himself closely while he remained at school, loitered away his time, and made little or no proficiency there. His head, as those of most seamen's children do, ran continually on voyages and seeing foreign countries, with which roving temper the father too readily complied, and while yet a boy, unacquainted with any kind of learning and unsettled in the principles of religion, he was sent forth into the world to pick up

either as he could.

The first voyage he made was up the Straits, where he touched at Gibraltar, and went soon after to Leghorn, the port to which they were bound. Being a young sprightly lad the mate carried him on shore with him, and being a man of intrigue, made use of him to go between him and an Irish woman, who was married to an Italian captain of a ship. The lady's husband was in Sicily, and they therefore apprehended themselves to be secure; she proposed to the mate the carrying off of jewels and other things, to the amount of some thousand crowns, and then flying with him from Italy. The project had certainly succeeded if it had not been for their imprudence; for the mate, who passed for her cousin, being continually in the house for three days before the ship went away, a suspicion entered into some of the neighbours (as they often do amongst Italians) that there was something more than ordinary concealed under the frequency of his visits. They therefore dispatched a messenger to Signor Stefano di Calvo, the captain's brother, with the account of their surmises. He came immediately to Leghorn, and going directly to his brother's house, found his sister had packed up all his valuable effects, and having loaded the boy with as much as he could carry, was on the point of setting out with him for the vessel. Stefano dragged her back into an inner apartment, where he locked her in, and afterwards fastened the doors of the outward apartment, through which they passed thither. But Jack, seeing how things went, laid down his burden and fled as hard as he could drive to the port, where he gave notice to the master of their disappointment, and caused the vessel immediately to weigh anchor and stand to sea, as fearing the consequences of the affair, which he knew would make a great noise, and might possibly turn to the detriment of his owners.

Claxton had hitherto done nothing that was criminal within the eye of the Law, though while at sea he was continually employed in some mischievous trick or other. When he came into England the ship happened to go to Yarmouth, and as all places were alike to him, so short a stay there engaged him to marry a young woman who had some little matter of money, with which he proposed to do for himself some little matter at sea, and taking the greatest part of it with him, came up to London in order to see after a good voyage.

But this was the most fatal journey he ever made, for falling unfortunately into the hands of bad women and their companions, they quickly drew him to be as bad as themselves; so that forgetting the poor woman he had married, and regardless of the business which brought him up to town, he gave himself up entirely to the pursuit of such villainies as they taught him, and in a short space became as expert a proficient as any in the gang.

Some of them had consulted together to rob a woodmonger's house of a considerable quantity of plate, but there was one difficulty to be encountered, without overcoming which there was no hopes of success. The woodmonger's maid carried up the keys every night to her master (the outer court having a gate to it), and unless they could call upon some stratagem either to prevent the gate being shut, or to gain the means of unlocking it, their attempt was certainly in vain. In order to bring this to pass, they put Jack, who was a neat little fellow, into a very good habit, and found means to introduce him to the acquaintance of the wench at a neighbouring chandler's shop, where he took lodgings. In a fortnight's time he prevailed upon Mrs. Anne to come out at twelve of the clock to meet him, which she could not do without leaving the great gate ajar, having first carried up the key to her master, though for her own conveniency she had thus left it upon a single lock. While she and her sweetheart were drinking punch and making merry together, the rest of the confederates got into the house and carried away silver plate to the value of £80, leaving everything behind them in so good order that the maid, who was a little tipsy into the bargain, discovered nothing that night. Going to acquaint her lover with the accident as soon as it was found out, to her great surprise she was informed that he was removed, having carried away all the things before his landlord and landlady were up. The girl carefully concealed the passage, knowing how fatal it would be to her if it should reach her master's ears; but for her spark, she heard no more of him until his commitment to Newgate for another fact, for which he was ordered for transportation.

Being on board the vessel with the rest of the convicts, he soon procured the favour of the master to be let to go out upon deck, and being a strong able sailor, he ingratiated himself so far as to meet no worse usage than any other sailor in the ship. On their arrival at the Canaries, where by stress of weather they were obliged to put in, a quarrel happened between the master of their vessel and the captain of a Jamaicaman homeward bound. It ended in a duel with sword and pistol, and the captain of the transport having carried John with him, he behaved so well upon this occasion that he promised him his liberty as soon as they arrived in America, which he honorably performed; and Jack was so indefatigable in his endeavours to get home that he arrived at London six weeks before the captain came back.

He herded again with his old crew, though before he was able to do much mischief amongst them he was apprehended for returning from transportation, and was at the next sessions tried and convicted. By this time the captain who had carried him was arrived, and hearing of John's misfortune, he made such interest as procured the sentence of death to be changed into a second transportation.

Such narrow escapes, one would have imagined, might have taught him how dangerous a thing it was to dally with the laws of the nation in any respect whatsoever; and yet, when he was on shore in New England, where the master took care to provide him with as easy a service as a man could have wished, as soon as the captain's back was turned, he found means to give the planter the slip, and in nine months' time revisited London a second time. Whether he intended to

have gone on in the old trade or no is impossible for us to determine, but this we are certain, that he had not been in England many weeks ere a person who made it his business to detect such as returned from transportation clapped him up in his old lodging at Newgate, brought him to his trial, and convicted him the third time. As soon as he had received sentence, he relinquished all hopes of life, and as in all this time he had never made any enquiry after his wife at Yarmouth, so he would not now bring an odium upon her and her family by sending to them, and making his misfortune public in the place where they lived.

The man seemed to be of an easy, tractable disposition, readily yielding to whatever those who conversed with them desired to bring him to, whether it were good or evil. He attended with great seeming piety and devotion to the books which Thomas Smith read to his fellow prisoners, and gained thereby a tolerable notion of the duty of repentance, and that faith which men ought to have in Jesus Christ. Thus by degrees he brought himself to a perfect indifference as to life or death, and at the place of execution showed neither by change of colour, or any other symptom any extraordinary fear of his approaching dissolution; and having conformed very devoutly to the prayers said by the Ordinary, after a short private devotion, he submitted to his fate with the afore-mentioned malefactors Smith and Reynolds, being then about twenty-eight years old or thereabouts.

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### **The Life of MARY STANDFORD, a Pickpocket and Thief**

This unfortunate woman was born of very good parents, who sent her to school, and caused her to be bred up in every other respect so as to be capable of performing well in her station of the world, and doing her duty towards God, from a just notion of religion. But it happening, unluckily, that she set her mind on nothing so much as the company of young men and running about with them to fairs and such other country diversions, her friends were put under the necessity of sending her to London, a thing which they saw could not be avoided.

When she came to town, she got in one or two good places, which she soon lost from her forward behaviour; and having been seduced by a footman, she soon became a common street walker, and practised all the vile arts of those women who were a scandal to their sex. When she was young, she was tolerably handsome, and associated herself with one Black Mary, whose true name was Mary Rawlins, a woman of notorious ill-fame, and who, from being kept by a man of substance in the City, by her own ill-management was turned upon the town, and reduced to getting her bread after the infamous manner of the inmates of Drury. These two Marys used to walk together between Temple Bar and Ludgate Hill, where sometimes they met with foolish young fellows out of whom they got considerable sums, though at other times their adventures produced so little that they were obliged to part with almost every rag of clothes they had; nay, they were now and then reduced so low that one was obliged to stay at home while the other went out.

Mary Rawlins, contrary to the rules established amongst the sisterhood, married a man who had been a Life-Guardsman, and so was obliged to remove her lodgings to go with him into a little court near King Street, Westminster. Some of my readers may perhaps imagine that either her love for her husband, or the fear of his authority, might work a reformation, but therein they would be highly mistaken for he proposed no other end to himself than plundering her of those presents she received from gallants, so that whenever evening drew on, he was very assiduous for her to turn out (as they phrase it), that is to go upon the street-walking account picking pockets. She had not followed this trade long before she became so uneasy under it that one night meeting with her old companion Standford, she persuaded her to remove into a new quarter of the town, whither she fled to her from her husband. They there carried on their intrigues together, and lived much more at their ease than they had done before; for being now got towards Wapping, they drew in the sailors when they had any money to part with for their favours, and getting into acquaintance with some navy solicitors, they found means to raise them cash, at the rate of 60 per cent. to the broker, and as much to the whore.

Thus they lived till Standford took it in her head to serve her partner as she had done her before, for finding a man mad enough to marry her, she was fool enough to consent to the marriage. But after living with the man for about a year, she repented her bargain, and left him, as Rawlins had done hers. Some time after this she contracted an acquaintance with another man, at that time servant to a person in the City. By him she had a child, which as it increased her necessary expense, so it plunged her into the greater difficulty of knowing how to supply it. However, fancying her gains would be larger if she plied by herself, she totally left the company of her former associates, and applied herself with an infamous industry to her shameful trade of prostitution.

Not long after she had entered upon this single method of street-walking, she fell into the company of a gentleman who was more than ordinary amorous of her, and who after treating her with a supper, lay with her, and (as she said) gave her four guineas; but he on the contrary charged her with picking his pocket of a shagreen book, a silk handkerchief, and the money before mentioned. For this fact she was committed to Newgate, and soon after tried and convicted, notwithstanding her excuse of the man bestowing it on her as a present.

After she had received sentence, some of her friends gave her hopes of having it changed into a transportation pardon, but this she rejected utterly, declaring that she had rather die not only the most ignominious, but the most cruel death that could be invented at home, rather than be sent

abroad to slave for her living. Such strange apprehensions enter into the head of these unhappy creatures, and hinder them from taking the advantage of the only possibility they have left of tasting happiness on this side of the grave; and as this aversion to the plantations has so bad effects, especially in making the convicts desirous of escaping from the vessel, or of flying out of the country whither they were sent, almost before they have seen it, I am surprised that no care has been taken to print a particular and authentic account of the manner in which they are treated in those places. I know it may be suggested that the terror of such usage as they are represented to meet with there has often a good effect in diverting them from such acts as they know must bring them to transportation; yet though I confess I have heard this more than once repeated, yet I am far from being convinced, and I am thoroughly satisfied that instead of magnifying the miseries of their pretended slavery, or rather of inventing stories that make a very easy service pass on these unhappy creatures for the severest bondage, the convicts should be told the true state of the case, and be put in mind that instead of suffering death, the lenity of our Constitution permitted them to be removed into another climate no way inferior to that in which they were born, where they were to perform no harder tasks than those who work honestly for their bread in England do. And this, not under persons of another nation, who might treat them with less humanity, but with those who are no less English for their living in the New, than if they dwelt in Old England, people famous for their humanity, justice, and, piety,<sup>[76]</sup> and amongst whom they are sure of meeting with no variation of manners, customs, etc., unless in respect of the progress of their vices which are at present more numerous there than in their motherland. I say if pains were taken to instil into these unhappy persons such notions, at the same time demonstrating to them that from being exposed either to want and necessity from the loss they had sustained of this reputation, and being thereby under a kind of force in following their old courses, and as soon as discharged from the fears of death (supposing a free pardon could be procured) obliged to run a like hazard immediately after, they might probably conceive justly of that clemency which is extended towards them, and instead of shunning transportation, flying from the country where they are landed as soon as they have set their foot in them, or neglecting opportunities they might have on their first coming there, and be brought to serve their masters faithfully, to endure the time of their service cheerfully, and settle afterwards in the best manner they are able, so as to pass the close of their life in an honest, easy and reputable manner. Now it too often happens that their last end is worse than their first, because those who return from transportation being sure of death if apprehended, are led thereby to behave themselves worse and more cruelly than any malefactors, whatsoever.

But to return to Mary Standford, who led us into this digression. She showed little or no regard for anything; no, not even for her own child, who, she said, she hoped would be well taken care of by the parish, and added that she had been a great sinner, for which she hoped God would forgive her, praying as well as she could, both while under sentence and at the place of execution. She declared that she bore no malice either against her prosecutor, or any other person, and in this disposition she finished her life at Tyburn, the same day with the aforementioned malefactors, being at that time near thirty-six years of age.

[76]

A New Hampshire law regulating the behaviour of masters towards their white servants enacts, "if any man smite out the eye or tooth of his manservant or maid-servant or otherwise maim or disfigure them much, unless it be mere casualty, he shall let him or her go free from his service and shall allow such further recompense as the Court of Quarter Sessions shall adjudge them." A good example of New England humanity and justice.

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### **The Life of JOHN CARTWRIGHT, a Thief**

This unhappy young man was born in Yorkshire, of a tolerable family, who had been sufficiently careful in having him instructed in whatever was necessary for a person of his condition, breeding him up to all works of husbandry in general, and also qualifying him in every respect for a gentleman's service; in one of which capacities they were in hopes he would not find it difficult to get his bread. He lived with several persons in the country with unspotted reputation, until at last a whim came into his head of coming up to London. An uncle of his procured him a very good service with one Mr. Charvin, a mercer in Paternoster Row, with whom he Stayed for some time with great satisfaction on both sides; for his master was highly pleased with the careful industry of the young man's temper, and Cartwright on the other side had not the least reason to complain, considering the great kindness and indulgence with which he was used. But some young fellows of loose principles taking notice of Cartwright's easy and tractable temper, quickly drew him into becoming fond of their company and conversation.

Every other Sunday he was permitted to go out where he would, until nine o'clock at night, and these young fellows meeting at a fine alehouse not far from his master's house, whither they began to bring Yorkshire John (as they called him), there they usually ran over the description of the diversions of the town, and of those places round it which are most remarkable for the resort of company. These were new scenes to poor John, who was unacquainted with any representation better than a puppet show, or recreation of a superior nature to bullbaitings at a country fair; and therefore his thoughts were extremely taken up with all he heard, and his companions were so obliging that they took abundance of pains to satisfy such questions as he asked them, and were often soliciting him to go and partake with them at plays, dancing-bouts, and all the various

divertissements to which young unthinking youths are addicted. He wanted not many intreaties to comply with their request, but money, the main ingredient in such delights, was wanting, and of this he at last acknowledged the deficiency to one of the young men his companions. This fellow took no notice of it at that time, farther than to wish he had more, and to tell him that a young man of his spirit ought never to be without and that there were ways and means enough to get it, if a man had not as much cash as courage.

He repeated these insinuations often, without explaining them at all, until frequent stories of the fine sights at the theatres and elsewhere had so far raised poor John's curiosity that one evening he entreated his companion to let him into the bottom of what he meant. The cunning villain turned it at first into a jest and continued to banter him about his being a country put, and so forth, until he perceived it was past twelve o'clock, and knew that it was too late for him to get in at home; then he told him that if he promised never to reveal it, he would tell him what he meant. John being full of liquor swore he would not, and the other replied, *Why, here you stand complaining of the want of money, while I warrant you, there's a hundred or two pounds in your master's drawer under the counter. Maybe there may, said Cartwright, but what's that to me? Nay, replied the other, nothing, if you have not the courage to go and fetch it; why now, you can get in I'm sure. Come, I'll put you in a way of never being taken.*

Cartwright, who was half drunk, remembered that there was a parcel of gold in the drawer, and that it was in his power to get at a silver watch and some plate, so that he fatally yielded to the temptations of his companion, and thereupon the next morning, conveyed to him the watch, fourscore pounds in money, and three silver spoons. They shared the greatest part of the booty, of which Cartwright was quickly cheated, and though he fled with the remainder as far as Monmouthshire, in Wales, yet some way or other he was there detected, committed prisoner to the county gaol and then sent up to London, where a few days after his arrival he was tried and convicted.

Never poor wretch suffered deeper affliction than he did, in the reflection of his follies, for giving up all hopes of life, he spent the whole interval of time between sentence and execution in grieving for the sorrows he had brought upon himself and the stain his ignominious death would leave upon his family. His companion, in the meantime, was fled far enough out of the reach of Justice, so that Cartwright had nothing to expect but death to which he patiently submitted, acknowledging upon all occasions the justice of that sentence which had befallen him, and wishing that his death might be sufficient to warn other young men in such circumstances, as his once were, from falling into faults of that kind, which had brought him to ruin and shame. Yet though he laid aside all desires relating to worldly things, he yet expressed a little peevishness from the neglect shown towards him by his friends in the country, who though they knew well enough of his misfortunes, yet they absolutely declined doing anything for him, from a notion perhaps that it might reflect upon themselves. Above all things Cartwright manifested a due sense of the ingratitude he had been guilty of towards so good a master as the gentleman whom he robbed had been to him, he therefore prayed for his prosperity, even with his last breath, and declared he died without malice or ill-will against any person whatsoever.

At the place of his execution he attended very devoutly to the prayers, but did not say anything to the people more than to beg of them to take warning by him, after the rope was fixed about his neck. He was executed at Tyburn, on Monday, the 21st of September, 1726, being then about twenty-three years of age, a remarkable instance of how far youth, even of the best principles, is liable to be corrupted, if they are not carefully watched over and may justify those restraints which parents and masters, from a just apprehension of things, put upon their children or servants.

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### **The Life of FRANCES, *alias* MARY BLACKET, a Highwaywoman**

Nothing deserves observation more than the resolution, or rather obstinacy, with which some criminals deny the facts they have committed, though ever so evidently proved against them. There are two evils which follow from a hasty judgment formed from this consideration; the first is, that people either instigated through malice, or rashly and by mistake, swear against innocent persons from a presumption that nobody would be so wicked as to die with a lie in their mouths; the other fault consists in imagining that the prosecutor is never in the wrong, but believing that covetousness or revenge can never bring people to such a pitch as to take away the life of another to gain money, or glut their passions. Our experience convinces us that either of these notions taken generally is wrong in itself, and that even as many have died in the profession of falsehoods, so some have suffered though innocent of the crime for which they died. The true use, therefore, of this reflection is that where life is concerned, too much care cannot be taken to sift the truth, since appearances often deceive us and circumstances are sometimes strong where the evidence, if the whole affair were known, would be but weak.

Mary Blacket, which was the real name of this unfortunate woman, was the daughter of very mean parents, who yet were so careful of her education that they brought her up to read and write tolerably well, and to do everything which could be expected from a household servant, which was the best station they ever expected she would arrive at. When she grew big enough to go out, they procured for her a service in which as well as in several others, while a single woman, she lived with very good reputation. After this she married a sailor, and for all her neighbours knew, lived by hard working while he was abroad. Then on a sudden she was taken

up and committed to Newgate, for assaulting William Whittle, in the highway, and taking from him a watch value £4, and sixpence in money, on the 6th of August, 1726.

When sessions came on, the prosecutor appeared and swore the fact positively upon her, whereupon the jury found her guilty, though at the bar she declared with abundance of asseverations that she never was guilty of anything of that sort in her life, and insisted on it that the man was mistaken in her face. While under sentence of death, she behaved herself with great devotion, and seemed to express no concern at leaving the world, excepting her only apprehensions that her child would neither be taken care of nor educated so well after her decease, at the charge of the parish, as hitherto it had been. Yet with respect to the crime for which she was to die, she still continued to profess her innocency thereof, averring that she had never been concerned in injuring anybody by theft, and charging the oath of the prosecutor wholly upon his mistake, and not upon wilful design to do her prejudice. At chapel, as well as in the place of her confinement, she declared she absolutely forgave him who had brought her to that ignominious end, as freely as she hoped forgiveness from her Creator; and with these professions she left the world at Tyburn, on the same day with the before-mentioned malefactor, being then about thirty-four years of age, persisting even at the place of execution in the denial of the fact.

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### **The Life of JANE HOLMES, *alias* BARRET, *alias* FRAZER, a Shoplifter**

In the summer of the year 1726, shoplifting became so common a practice, and so detrimental to the shopkeepers, that they made an application to the Government for assistance in apprehending the offenders; and in order thereto, offered a reward and a pardon for any who would discover their associates in such practices. It was not long before by their vigilance and warmth in carrying on the prosecution, they seized and committed several of the most notorious shoplifters about town, and at the next several ensuing sessions convicted six or seven of them, which seems to have pretty well broke the neck of this branch of thieving ever since.

The malefactor of whom we are now speaking pretended to have been the daughter of a gentleman of some rank in a northern county. Certain it is that the woman had had a tolerable education, and neither in her person, nor in her behaviour betrayed anything of vulgar birth. Yet those whom she called her nearest relations absolutely disowned her on her application to them, and would not be prevailed on to take any steps whatsoever in order to procure her a reprieve.

When between fifteen and sixteen years old, she came up to London to her aunt, as she asserted, much against the will of her relations. At that time she was not ugly, and therefore a young man in the neighbourhood began to be very assiduous in his courtship to her, hoping also that the persons she talked of, as her father and brothers in the country, would give him a sum of money to set up his trade. Miss Jenny was a forward lass, and the fellow being a spruce young spark, soon prevailed over her affections, and they were accordingly privately married, though it proved not much to her advantage. For her husband finding no money come, began to use her indifferently, upon which she fell into that sort of business which goes under the name of a Holland's Trader, and gave the best opportunities of vending goods that are ill come by, at a tolerable price, and with little danger.

Whether in the life-time of this husband or afterwards, I cannot say, but she fell into the acquaintance of the famous Jonathan Wild, and possibly received some of his instructions in managing her affairs in the disposal of stolen goods; but as Jonathan's friendships were mostly fatal, so in about a year's time afterwards she was apprehended upon that score, and shortly after was tried and convicted, and thereupon ordered for transportation. She continued abroad for two years or somewhat more; and then, under pretence of love to her children, ventured over to England again, where it was not long before she got acquainted with her old crew, who, if they were to be believed upon their oaths, were inferior to her in the art or mystery of shoplifting. However it were, whether by selling stolen goods, or by stealing them, certain it is that she ran into so much money that an Irish sharper thought fit, about Christmas before her death, to marry her in order to possess himself of her effects; which without ceremony he did upon her being last apprehended, disposing of every thing she had, and taking away particularly a large purse of old gold, which by her industry she had collected against a rainy day.

The woman who became an evidence against her swore so positively on the several indictments, and what she said was corroborated with so many circumstances, that the jury found her guilty on the four following indictments, viz.: for stealing 20 yards of straw-ground brocaded silk, value £10, the goods of John Moon and Richard Stone, on the 1st of June, 1726; of stealing, in the shop of Mr. Mathew Herbert, 40 yards of pink-coloured mantua silk, value £10, on the 1st of May, in the same year; of stealing, in company with Mary Robinson, a silver cup of the value of £5, the goods of Elizabeth Dobbinson, on the 7th January; of stealing, in the company of Mary Robinson aforesaid, 80 yards of cherry-coloured mantua silk value £5, the goods of Joseph Bourn and Mary Harper, on the 24th December.

Notwithstanding the clearness of the evidence given against her, while under sentence of death she absolutely denied not only the several facts of which she was convicted, but of her having been ever guilty of any theft during the whole life. Yet she confessed her acquaintance with Jonathan Wild, nay, she went so far as to own having bought stolen goods, and disposing of them, by which she had got great sums of money. She was exceedingly uneasy at the thoughts of dying, and left no method untried to procure a reprieve, venting herself in most opprobrious terms

against some whom she would have put upon procuring it for her, by pretending to be their near relation, though the people knew very well that she had nothing to do with them or their family; and she herself had been reprov'd for nuking such pretensions by the ministers who assist condemned persons; yet she still persisted therein, and on the Ordinary of Newgate's acquainting her that the gentleman she called her father died the week before, suddenly, she fell into a great agony of crying, and as soon as she came a little to herself, reproach'd, though in very modest terms, the unnatural conduct of those she still averred to be so nearly related to her.

Nothing could be more fond than she was of her children, who were brought to Newgate to see her, and over whom she wept bitterly, and expressed great concern at her not having saved wherewith to support them in their tender years. At last, when she lost all hopes of life, instead of growing calmer and better reconciled to death, as is frequent enough with persons in that sad condition, on the contrary, she became more impatient than ever, flew out into excessive passions and behaved herself with such vehemency and flights of railing, that she did not a little disturb those who lay under sentence in the same place with her. For this she was reprimanded by the keepers, and exhorted to alter her behaviour by the minister of the place, which had at last so good an effect upon her that she became more quiet for the two or three last days of her life; in which she professed herself exceedingly grieved for the many offences of her misspent life, declaring she heartily forgave the woman who was an evidence against her, and who she believed was much wickeder than herself, because as this criminal pretended, she had varied not a little from the truth. At the place of execution she was more composed than could have been expected, and with many prayers that her life might prove a warning to others, she yielded up her last breath, at Tyburn, on the same day with the before-mentioned malefactors, being then about thirty-four years of age.

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### **The Life of KATHERINE FITZPATRICK, *alias* GREEN, *alias* BOSWELL, a notorious Shoplift**

After once the mercers had got Burton, who was the evidence, into their hands, she quickly detected numbers of her confederates, several of whom were apprehended, and chiefly on her evidence, convicted. Amongst the rest was this Katherine Fitzpatrick, who was born in Lincolnshire, of parents far from being in low circumstances, and who were careful in bestowing on her a very tolerable education. In the country she discovered a little too much forwardness, and though London was a very improper place in which to hope for her amendment, yet hither her friends sent her, where she quickly fell into such company as deprived her of all sentiments, either of virtue or honesty. What practices she might pursue before she fell into shoplifting I have not been able to learn, and will not therefore impose upon my readers at the expense of a poor creature, who is so long ago gone to answer for her offences, which, as they were doubtless many of themselves, so they shall never be increased by me.

Being a woman of a tolerable person, notwithstanding her not having the best of characters, she got a man in the mind to marry her, to whom she made an indifferent good wife; and though he was not altogether clear from knowing of her being concerned with shoplifters, yet he was so far from giving her the least encouragement therein that they were on the contrary continually quarrelling upon this subject; and whenever, from any circumstances, he guessed she had been thieving, he beat her severely. Yet all this was to no purpose, she still continued to treat in the old path and associated herself with a large number of women, who were at this time busy in stealing silks out of the shops, either in the absence of the master, or under the pretence of seeing others. It is observable not only of Katherine Fitzpatrick, of whom we are now speaking, but also of all the persons who died for this offence, that they were extremely shy of making detailed confessions, though ready enough to confess in general that they had been grievous sinners, and that the punishment they were to undergo was very just from the hand of God. Fitzpatrick, as well as the former criminal Holmes, charged Burton the evidence with disingenuity in what she delivered on her oath against them, and yet Fitzpatrick could not absolutely deny having been guilty of a multitude of offences as to shoplifting, so that it is highly probable, even if the evidence erred a little in immaterial circumstances, that in the main she swore truth.

The particular facts on which Fitzpatrick was convicted, were: (1) stealing 19 yards of green damask valued at £9, the goods of Joseph Giffard and John Ravenal, on July the 29th, 1724; (2) Taking 10 yards of green satin out of the shop of John Moon and Richard Stone, value £3, on the 10th February, 1724/25; (3) Stealing, in company with another person, 50 yards of green mantua, value £10, the goods of John Autt, May the 5th, 1725; (4) Stealing 63 yards of modena and pink italian mantua, the goods of Joshua Fairy, February 24, 1724/25. These dates were all of them somewhat more than a twelvemonth before the time of her apprehension, and she insisted on it that she had left off committing any such thing for a considerable space, which made the evidence envy her, and so brought on the prosecution.

As she was a woman of good natural parts, and had not utterly lost that education which had been bestowed upon her, she was not near so much confuted at the apprehensions of death as people in her circumstances usually are. She said she was glad she had some reformation in her life before this great evil came upon her, because she hoped her repentance was the more sincere as it had not proceeded from force; yet she was very desirous of life when first condemned, and, like Mrs. Holmes, pleaded her belly, in hopes her pregnancy might have prevented her execution. But a jury of matrons found neither of them to be quick with child; yet

both to the time of their death averred they were so, and seemed exceedingly uneasy that their children should die violent deaths within them.

When the time of her execution drew very near, she called her thoughts totally off from worldly affairs, and seemed to apply herself to the great business which lay before her, with an earnestness and assiduity seldom to be seen in such people. The assistance she had from her friends abroad were not large, but she contented herself with a very spare diet, being unwilling that anything should call her off from penitence and religious duties. She seemed to have entirely weaned her affections from the desire of life, and never showed any extraordinary emotions, except on the visit of her youngest child, in the nurse's arms, at the first sight of which she fell into strong convulsion fits, from which she was not brought to herself without great difficulty. She sometimes expressed a little uneasiness at the misfortunes which had befallen her after she had left off that way of living, but upon her being spoken to by several reverend persons, who explained and vindicated the wisdom and justice of Providence, she acquiesced under its decrees, and without murmuring submitted to her fate.

A little before she died, she, with the rest of the shoplifters, was asked some questions concerning one Mrs. Susanna, who was suspected of having been in some degree concerned with her. Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Holmes each of them declared that they knew nothing evil about her. Mrs. Fitzpatrick did indeed say that she had some little acquaintance with the woman, and knew that she got her living by selling coffee, tea, and some other little things, yet never was concerned in any ill practices in relation to them, or anybody else she knew of. After having done this public justice, she, with great meekness, yielded up her breath at Tyburn, the 6th of September, 1726, being then about thirty-eight years of age.

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### **The Life of MARY ROBINSON, a Shoplift**

The indiscretions of youth are always pitied, and often excused even by those who suffer most by them; but when persons grown up to years of discretion continue to pursue with eagerness the most flagitious courses, and grow in wickedness as they grow in age, pity naturally forsakes us, and they appear in so execrable a light that instead of having compassion for their misfortunes we congratulate our country on being rid of such monsters, whom nothing could tame, nor the approach even of death in a natural way hinder them from anticipating it by drawing on a violent one through their crimes.

I am drawn to this observation from the fate of the miserable woman of whom we are now speaking. What her parents were, or what her education it is impossible to say, since she was shy of relating them herself; and being seventy years old at the time of her execution, there was nobody then living who could give an account about her. She was indicted for stealing a silver cup, in company with Jane Holmes, and also stealing eighty yards of cherry-coloured mantua silk, value five pounds, in company with the aforesaid Jane Holmes, the property of Joseph Brown and Mary Harper, on the 24th of December. On these facts she was convicted as the rest were, in the evidence of Burton, whom, as is usual in such cases, they represented as a woman worse than themselves, and who had drawn many of them into the commission of what she now deposed against them.

As to this old woman Mary Robinson, she said she had been a widow fourteen years, and had both children and grandchildren living at the time of her execution; she said she had worked as hard for her living as any woman in London. Yet when pressed thereupon to speak the truth and not wrong her conscience in her last moments, she did then declare she had been guilty of thieving tricks; but persisted in it that the evidence Burton had not been exactly right in what she had sworn against her. It was a melancholy thing to see a woman of her years, and who really wanted not capacity, brought into those lamentable circumstances, and going to a violent and ignominious death, when at a time when she could not expect it would be any long term before she submitted to a natural one.

Possibly my readers may wonder how such large quantities of silk were conveyed away. I thought, therefore, proper to inform them that the evidence Burton said they had a contrivance under their petticoats, not unlike two large hooks, upon which they laid a whole roll of silk, and so conveyed it away at once, while one of their confederates amused the people of the shop in some manner or other until they got out of reach; and by this means they had for many years together carried on their trade with great success and as much safety, until the losses of the tradesmen ran so high as to induce them to take the method before-mentioned, which quickly produced a discovery, not only of the persons of the offenders, but of the place also where they had deposited the goods. By this means a good part of them were recovered, and those who had so long lived by this infamous practice were either detected or destroyed; so that shoplifting has been thereby kept under ever since, or at least the offenders have not ventured in so large a way as before.

But to return to the criminal of whom we are to treat. She said she was not afraid of death at all, though she confessed herself troubled as to the manner in which she was to die, and reflected severely upon Burton, who had given evidence against her. By degrees she grew calmer, and on the day of her execution appeared more composed and cheerful than she had done during all her troubles. She suffered at the same time with the malefactors before mentioned, and in her years looked as if she had been the mother of those with whom she died.

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## **The Life of JANE MARTIN, *alias* LLOYD, a Cheat and a Thief, etc.**

This woman was the daughter of parents in very good reputation, about an hundred miles off in the country. While they lived they took care to breed her to understand everything as became a gentlewoman of a small fortune, and in her younger years she was tractable enough; but her parents dying while Jane was but a girl, she came into the hand of guardians who were not altogether so careful as they ought. Before she was of age she married a young gentleman who had a pretty little fortune, which he and she quickly confounded; insomuch that he became a prisoner in the King's Bench for debt. Being thus destitute, and in great want of money, she set her wits to work to consider ways and means of cheating people for her support, in which she became as dexterous as any who ever followed that infamous trade. Yet her husband (as she herself owned) was a man of strict honour, and so much offended at these villainies that he used her with great severity thereupon, but that had no effect, for she still continued the old trade, putting on the saint until people trusted her, and pulling off the mask as soon as she found there was no more to be got by keeping it on.

Amongst the rest of her adventures in this way she once took it in her head that it was possible for her to set up a great shop, entirely upon credit, for except some good clothes she had nothing else to go to market with. Accordingly she first took a shop not far from Somerset House, and having caused some bales of brick-bats to be made up, sent them thither in a cart with one of her confederates, which was safely deposited in that which was to pass for the warehouse. A carpenter was sent for, who was employed in making shelves, drawers, and other utensils for a haberdasher's shop. Then going to the wholesale people in that way, she found means to draw them in to six or seven hundred pounds worth of goods to the house which she had taken. All of this stuff the Saturday night following, she caused to be carried over into the Mint, a practice very common with the infamous shelterers there who preserve their pretended privileges.

Mrs. Martin having got some acquaintance in a tolerable family, and having a very fair tongue, she quickly wheedled them into a belief of her being able to do great matters by her interest with some person of distinction, whose name she made use of on this occasion, and thereby got several presents and small sums of money, and (if she herself were to be believed) among the rest a silver cup. Whether her failing in her promises really provoked the people to swearing a theft upon her, or whether (which is more probable) she took an opportunity of conveying it secretly away, certain it is that for this she was prosecuted, and the fact appearing clear enough to the jury, was thereupon convicted and ordered for transportation. This afflicted her at least as much as if she had been condemned to instant death, and therefore she applied herself continually to thinking which way it might be eluded, and she might escape. Soon after her going abroad, she effected what she so earnestly desired, and unhappily for her returned again into England.

The numerous frauds she had committed had exasperated many people against her, who as soon as it was rumoured that she was come back again, never left searching for her until they found her out, and got her committed to Newgate; and on the record of her conviction being produced the next sessions, and the prosecutor swearing positively that she was the same person, the jury, after a short consultation, brought her in guilty, and she received sentence of death, from which, as she had no friends, she could not hope to escape. When she found death was inevitable, she fell into excessive agonies and well-nigh into despair. The reflection on the many people she had injured gave her so great grief and anxiety of mind that she could scarce be persuaded to get down a sufficient quantity of food to preserve her life until the time of her execution. But the minister at Newgate having demonstrated to her the wickedness and the folly of such a course, she by degrees came to have a better sense of things; her mind grew calmer, and though her repentance was accompanied with sighs and tears, yet she did not burst out into those lamentable outcries by which she before disturbed both herself and those poor creatures who were under sentence with her. In this disposition of mind she continued until the day of her death, which was on the 12th of September, 1726, being between twenty-seven-and-eight years of age, in the company of the before-mentioned malefactors, Cartwright, Blacket, Holmes, Fitzpatrick, Robinson, and William Allison, a poor country lad of about twenty-five, apparently of an easy gentle temper who had been induced into the fact, partly through covetousness, and partly through want.

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## **The Life of TIMOTHY BENSON, a Highwayman**

Amongst the number of those unfortunate persons whose memory we have preserved to the world in order that their punishments may become lasting warnings unto all who are in any danger of following their footsteps, none is more capable of affording useful reflections than the incidents that are to be found in the life of this robber are likely to create. He was the son of a serjeant's wife, in the regiment of the Earl of Derby, but who his father was it would be hard to say. His mother having had a long intrigue with one Captain Benson and the serjeant dying soon after this child was born, she thought fit to give him the captain's name, declaring publicly enough, that if it was in her power to distinguish, the captain must be his father. Certain it is that the woman acted cunningly, at least, for Benson, who had never had a child, was so pleased with the boy's ingenuity that he sent him to a grammar school in Yorkshire, where he caused him to be educated as well as if he had been his legitimate son.

Nothing could be more dutiful than Tim was, while a child. The captain was continually vexed

with long letters from the gentlewoman where he was boarded, concerning master's fine person, great parts and wonderful improvements, which Benson, being a man of sense, took to be such gross flattery that he came down to Bellerby, the village where the child was, on purpose to take it away. But Mr. Tim, upon his arrival, appeared such a prodigy both in beauty and understanding that the old gentleman was perfectly ravished with him, and whatever he might believe before, vanity now engaged him to think the youth his son. For this reason he doubled his care in providing for him, and when he had made a sufficient progress at the Grammar School, he caused him to be sent over to Leyden, a university of which he had a great opinion.

Timothy lost not any of his reputation in this change of climate, but returned in three years time from Holland as accomplished a young fellow as had been bred there for a long time. He had but just made his compliments to his supposed father, and received thirty guineas from him as a welcome to England, before the old gentleman fell ill of a pleurisy, which in four days' time deprived him of his life; and as he had no will, his estate of £300 a year, and about £700 in money (which he had lent out on securities), descended to his sister's son, as arrant a booby as ever breathed, and deprived Tim both of his present subsistence and future hopes.

In this distressed condition he took lodgings in a little court at the farther end of Westminster. He had a great number of good clothes, and as he then addicted himself to nothing so much as reading, he lived so frugally as to make a very tolerable appearance, and to pay everybody justly for about half a year, which so well established his credit in the neighbourhood that he was invited to the houses of the best families thereabouts, and might undoubtedly, if he had had his wits about him, have married some young gentlewoman thereabouts of a tolerable fortune. But happening to lodge over against a great mantua-maker's, he took notice of a young girl who was her apprentice, and happened to be a chandler's daughter, at Hammersmith. The wench, whose name was Jenny, was really handsome and agreeable, but as things were circumstanced with him, nothing could be more ridiculous than that passion which he suffered himself to entertain for her.

It is very probable that he might have had some transient amours before this, but Jenny was certainly the mistress to whom he made his first addresses, and the real passion of his heart. The girl was quickly tempted by the person and appearance of her lover, and without enquiring too narrowly into his circumstances, would certainly have yielded to his passion, if marriage had been the thing at which he aimed; but he was an obstacle hard to get over. Tim looked upon himself to be irretrievably undone from the hour he entered into that state. At last he conquered that virtue which his mistress had hitherto preserved, and after they had fooled away a month or two together, at the expense of all he had, Tim found himself at last obliged to confess the truth of his circumstances, and by that confession brought a flood of grief upon his fair one, who had hitherto been unaccustomed to misfortunes.

When they first came together it was agreed between them to quit that part of the town where they were both known, and they afterwards lodged in a very pretty little house on the edge of Red Lion Fields. On the morning Tim made this discovery, his cash was reduced to a single crown. It is true he had abundance of things of value, but when once they began to go, he was conscious to himself that starving would be quickly their lot, and what added more to his misfortunes was that his mistress, amidst all her sighs and afflictions, declared she would rather continue with him than go home to her relations, though from the indulgence of a mother she did not doubt of meeting with a good reception.

However, they came to this resolution, that Jenny should go and raise five guineas upon a diamond ring of his, and while she was gone on this errand, poor Benson sat leaning with his head upon his arm in a window that looked towards the fields. Casting up his eyes by chance, he saw a gentleman walking up and down as if for his diversion, whereupon a thought immediately struck him, that it would be an easy matter to rob him, and by his appearance it was not unlikely but that he might prove a good prize. Without reflecting, he resolved upon the thing, and putting on over his nightgown an old great coat which he had in his closet and with a case of pistols in his breast, he slipped out at the garden gate without being perceived, and was up with him in an instant. Then, taking the button of his hat in his teeth, he mumbled out, *Deliver or you're a dead man*. The gentleman in great confusion gave him a green purse of gold, and was going to pull his ring off from his finger, and his watch out of his pocket, but Tim stopped him and said he had enough, only commanded him to turn his back towards him, and not to alter his position for fifteen minutes by his own watch. This the gentleman religiously observed, and Tim made all the haste he could through the garden into his own chamber, where having hid the cloak at the back of the bed, he began to examine the value of the plunder, and found that the purse contained seventy guineas and two diamond rings, one a single stone and a very fine one, the other consisting of seven, but small and of no great value. These he went down and buried in the garden, having first burnt the purse in the fire.

The hurry of the fact being over, he sat down once again in his own room, and had leisure to reflect a little on what he had done, which threw him into such an agony that he was scarce able to sit upon the chair. Shame at the villainy he had committed, the fear of being apprehended, and the apprehensions of Tyburn, gave so many wounds to his imagination that he thought his former uneasiness a state of quiet to the pangs which he now felt, which were much more bitter, as well as of a very different nature from anything he had known before.

In the midst of these terrors, he heard the voices of a great deal of company in his landlady's parlour. The hopes of being a little easy where he had not so much opportunity of affrighting

himself with his own thoughts, occasioned his going downstairs, and without well knowing what he did, he knocked at the parlour door, which when opened, the first thing which struck his eyes was the gentleman whom he had robbed, drinking a glass of water. This gave him such a shock that he had much ado to collect spirits enough to tell the gentlewoman of the house that he perceived she had company, and therefore would not intrude. But she, laying her hand upon his arm, said, *Pray, Mr. Benson, walk in; here's nobody but a gentleman who has had the misfortune to be robbed in the field, the fright of which has put him into such a disorder that he desired to step in here that he might have leisure to come a little to himself.* Tim saw it was impossible for him to retreat, and so putting on the best face he was able, he came in and sat down.

The landlady began then to enquire the circumstances of the robbery. *Why, madam,* replied he, *I was walking there, as I generally do of a fine afternoon, in order to get a little fresh air, when a man came up all of a sudden to me, close muffled up in a green or blue great-coat, in truth I cannot say which. He clapped a pistol to my breast, and I gave him my purse, and my niece's two rings, one of which cost me fourscore guineas, but three weeks ago. And as I was afraid he would murder me, I was going to give him this off my finger, and my watch out of my pocket, but that the fellow said he had enough, and his leaving these, surprised me almost as much as taking the rest. But what sort of a man was he?* said she. *Why, I think he was about that gentleman's height,* added he; *but I am so short-sighted that I question whether I should have known his face, even had it not been covered with his hat. Besides I am so much taken with the rogue's generosity that I would not prosecute him if I had him in the room.*

This set Tim's heart so much at rest that he began to come to himself a little, and asked the strange gentleman if he would not be so good as to drink a glass of wine. A bottle was sent for, and during the time they were drinking it, Jenny came in, and it being quite dark before they had finished it, a coach was called, and Mr. Benson offered to see the gentleman home, in order to which he was going upstairs to put on his clothes. But this the stranger would not permit, begging him to go as he was, upon which Jenny said, *Then, my dear, I'll fetch your great-coat.* He had much ado to desire the gentleman to walk to the coach and he'd go as he was, which he did accordingly, and after drinking a glass of citron water with the lady whose rings he had stolen, he came home again as fast as the coach could carry him.

Jenny was very melancholy at his return, and giving him three guineas, told him that it was all the pawnbroker would lend, and she had much ado to get that, as she was not known. Tim bid her be of good cheer, and said he hoped things would mend, and so they went to bed. Two or three days after, he took an opportunity of going out pretty early, and returning about dinner time, told her, with much seeming joy, that he had met with a gentleman whom he had been acquainted with at Leyden, and who hearing of his father's death, had begged him to accept of twenty guineas as a mark to his esteem. Jenny was in raptures at their good fortune, and went that afternoon and fetched the ring home, returning, poor creature, with as much satisfaction as if she had received ever so much money; for the hopes of living quietly a month or two with the man she loved, dispelled all the apprehensions of poverty which she was before under.

Tim considering that this supply would not last always, and resolving with himself never to run such a hazard again, he began to beat his brains about the best method to be taken of getting money in an honest way. As he had been bred to no profession, notwithstanding the excellent education he had had, never was a man more at his wits' end. After a thousand schemes had offered themselves to his mind, and were rejected, it came at last into his head that as he was tolerably versed in physic, it might not be impossible for him to get his bread by that. But how to get into practice, there was the difficulty. A little recollection helped him here. He had seen a quack doctor exhibit his medicines, with a panegyric on their good qualities, on his journey to London; he resolved, scandalous as the profession was, to venture upon it, rather than run the risk he had done before.

This scheme doubtless cost him some trouble before he brought it to bear so as to give him any hopes of his putting it into execution, but having at last settled it as well as he could, he determined with himself to go down into some distant county and undertake it. In order to have his thoughts at greater liberty to resolve about it, he took a walk into the fields, and being very dry after his perambulation, he stepped into a little alehouse, and called for a mug of drink. While he sat there he heard two men discoursing upon the vast sums of money that was got by one Smith, a practitioner in the very art which he was going to set up, and he found by them that the chief scene of Smith's adventures had lain in Lincolnshire and thereabouts; so without more ado, as all places were alike to him, he settled his intentions to go down to the same place, where he understood by the man that his *quondam* doctor had done some great cures and got a tolerable reputation.

When he came home, he could not avoid appearing very thoughtful, and Jenny fearful of some new disaster, would not let him rest until he had acquainted her fully with his design, which he would not consent to do until she promised to comply with a proposal he was to make her, after he had revealed the secret she was so desirous to know. When he had told her his project, she next demanded what the condition was to which she had bound herself to yield. Benson replied that it was to remain at some place thirty or forty miles distant from where he intended to go, that she might not be exposed to any inconveniences from that unhappy figure he saw himself obliged to make. It was with great reluctance that she ratified the consent he had given, but at length, after much persuasion, she again acknowledged he was in the right, and promised to do as he would have her. Things being thus adjusted, nothing remained for him to do but to get ready for his journey, and that his mate might be the less timorous of the event, he told her he

had procured another supply of twenty-five guineas.

His cloak-bag was soon stored with such medicines as he thought proper, and having packed up a few practical books he thought he might have occasion for, he took a place for himself and Jenny, who passed for his wife, in the stage coach for Huntingdon, at a village near which, paying the people for a month's board, he left his consort, and having hired horses to Boston, he took a young fellow from Huntingdon with him thither.

As Benson had a very smooth tongue, so he set off the wonderful properties of his drugs in so artful a manner that in the space of a fortnight he had cleared £10 besides his expenses. As he had left Jenny five guineas in her pocket, he wrote to her to pay the people another month's board, and assured her that he would return within that space. Hiring accordingly visited Sleaford, and some other great towns thereabouts, in seven weeks' time he set out for his return into Huntingdonshire, with fifty guineas, all clear gain, in his pockets. This good luck encouraged him to run through the greatest part of the North of England in the same manner, and within the compass of three years he cleared upwards of £500. At the time of his making this calculation he was set down at Bristol, in order to exercise his talent in that great city; but an unexpected accident broke all his measures. Just as his stage was set up, and he mounted, and opening his harangue which was now become familiar to him, a constable stepped up upon the stage, and told him that a gentleman had sworn a robbery directly against him, and he must go immediately before the mayor. This put him into a lamentable confusion. He knew himself innocent, but the character of a mountebank was sufficient to make the thing believed at first, and therefore he could not be blamed for his apprehensions, especially considering he took it as a just return for that robbery which he had committed in town, and for which he made no satisfaction when it was so fully in his power.

Upon his prosecutor's appearing before the mayor, and swearing flatly to his face as to his robbing him of seven guineas, a silver watch, and a snuff box, Tim had his *Mittimus* made for Newgate; but upon his desiring the mayor that his effects might be searched, but not plundered, he had leave given him to return with the officer and see them looked over at the inn. As many of them were valuable of themselves, as the drugs were of the best sorts, and as he had several letters from persons of good character, in the several counties through which he had passed, and bank notes and bills to the value of £400, they thought fit to report all this to the mayor, before they did anything. The mayor thereupon resolved to act very cautiously, and having first looked over everything himself, he then ordered the effects to be delivered up to Mr. Benson, himself, who, however, was obliged to undergo a confinement of eight weeks, till the assizes. The prosecutor not appearing, and Mr. Benson, by permission of the Court, examining two gentlemen of undoubted credit, who proved to his being at the time when the robbery was sworn in another place, he was acquitted, and a copy of his indictment ordered him. It seems a person under condemnation at Hertford acknowledged the fact for which Tim had been committed, and produced both the snuff-box and watch; which though the gentleman who lost them got again, yet it proved an affair of very ill-consequence to him, for he was obliged to give Benson one hundred guineas to obtain a general release, and Tim fearing the noise of the thing had undone his reputation, resolved to go over to America and settle there.

A gentleman at Bristol who traded largely to the plantations offered him his assistance in the affair, and matters being quickly adjusted between them, Tim, to show himself grateful, and a man of honour, was married privately to Jenny, whom he resolved should be the companion of his future fortunes, as she had hitherto been the constant solace of all his sorrows. But before they set out, he thought it proper to make a journey to London, as well as to provide some necessary articles in the profession he intended to follow, as to make an end of a little affair which we have before related, and which lay very hard upon his conscience. To town then came Jenny and he, and took a lodging near Tower Street, where in about a fortnight's time, Mr. Benson had put everything in order for his voyage. The day before he sat out on his return for Bristol, he wrote the following letter to the old gentleman he had robbed, and who as he informed himself, was still living at the same place.

Sir,

Under the pressure of severe necessity my misfortunes tempted me to commit so great a piece of villainy as the robbing you in Red Lion Fields. You may remember, sir, that I took from you a green purse, in which was seventy guineas, and two diamond rings, the one of a large, the other of a less value. The first comes to you enclosed in this, the latter, the same necessity which urged me so far as to take them, obliged me some months after to dispose of, which I did for fourteen pounds. As a satisfaction for the injury I did you, be so good, sir, as to accept of the enclosed note of one hundred pounds, which I hope will amount to the whole value of those things I took from you, and may I flatter myself, procure your pardon, the only thing wanting to making him easy, who is,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant.

This he took care to convey by a ticket-porter of whose fidelity he was well assured, and having despatched this affair, he let slip nothing to make his intended voyage successful. His skill in his profession was such that he soon had as much business in the plantation where he settled, as he knew what to do with, and in seven or eight years' practice, acquired such an estate as was sufficient to furnish him with all the necessaries of life, upon which he lived when he gave this account to the gentleman who communicated it to me. And as it is an instance of a return of virtue not often to be met with, I thought it might be as useful as any other relation which hitherto had a place in this confession.

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### **The Life of JOSEPH SHREWSBERRY, *alias* SMITH, a Robber, etc.**

This unhappy criminal of whom we are now to speak was the son of parents in so mean circumstances that they were not able to give him any education at all; yet they were careful in carrying him constantly to church with them, and instructing him as far as they were able in the principles of the Christian faith, and did everything that narrow capacity would give them leave, in order to enable him to get his bread in some honest employment. Then they put him out apprentice to a tanner in the neighbourhood, a very honest, considerate man, who treated him with all the indulgence and kindness he could have wished throughout the time of his apprenticeship. But he was so unfortunate as to fall into the company of a set of giddy young people who were totally addicted to merry-making and dancing, which when he had once got into the road of, he so neglected his business that his master, after abundance of reproofs, was obliged to part with him.

He had not at that time any designs of doing anything like the fact for which he afterwards suffered, but continuing still to frequent his dancing-mates' company, they promised to put him into a road to supply him with money enough to live without working, provided he had courage to do as they would have him; and he, without considering what he did, giving consent to their motions, went out one evening with David Anderson, Country Will and Jenny Austin, and after a while they stripped one Thomas Collier, and robbed him of his coat and waistcoat, hat, and a pair of silver buckles and other things, with a half guinea in gold, and twenty-five shillings in silver. For this offence he was quickly after committed, apprehended, and sent to Newgate, where, upon a plain proof of the fact, he was convicted and ordered for execution.

When the poor man was under sentence of death, he sufficiently repented those idle hours he had consumed in dancing, and in the other merriments into which he had been led by his companions. He was now sensible how easily he might have lived if he had taken the advice of his kind master, who with so much pains endeavoured not only to instruct him in his profession, but also to reclaim him from those follies in which he saw him engaged. The thoughts of death threw him into violent agonies from whence his natural sense (of which he had a great deal) at last in some measure recovered him; and when upon the coming down of the death warrant, he saw there were no hopes left for him in this life, he applied himself with very great ardency to secure happiness in the next.

He declared that the fact for which he died was the first he ever committed, and that the depositions against him were not exactly conformable to truth. A day or two before his death, he appeared to be very calm and very cheerful, submitted with a perfect resignation to the lot which had befallen him, and at the place of execution exhorted the people not to let their curiosity only be satisfied in the sight of his wretched death, but he warned them also from the commission of such crimes as might bring them to a like fate. He suffered on the 3rd of November, 1726, at Tyburn, being then about twenty-two years of age.

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### **The Life of ANTHONY DRURY, a Highwayman**

This unfortunate man, whose fate made a great noise in the town at the time it happened, was born of parents neither mean in family nor fortune, in the county of Norfolk, where he received his education, on which no little pains and expense were bestowed. As to the particular circumstances of his life in his most early years, as no exact accounts have come to my hands, so I do not think myself obliged to frame any adventures for the entertainment of my readers, a practice very common, yet I think unjustifiable in itself. All that I can say is that it appears he lived at Oxford and Bicester before he came to Wendover, at which place he had a house and family at the time of his death.

He was not, as far as I am able to learn, bred up to any particular profession whatever, his parents leaving him in circumstances capable of supporting himself. However, whether he arrived at it after some misfortunes, or had it discovered to him before, certain it is that he gained some knowledge in the art of curing smoking chimneys, by which he got very considerably, and from whence he derived the name of the Smoky Chimney Doctor, by which he was commonly known in the county of Bucks.

Some few years before his death, he married a widow gentlewoman at Oxford, of a considerable fortune. The world (though something too largely) reported that she had fifteen hundred pounds. However it were, he still addicted himself to women, and in all probability made her but an indifferent husband, since she took so little care about him, when in the midst of so great

calamities. However it were, he maintained a tolerable character in the neighbourhood, and his credit had not been impeached in any degree when he committed the fact I am going to relate.

On the twenty-fifth of September, 1726, he attacked the Bicester wagon as it was coming from London, and committed the following robberies therein, viz., he took from Thomas Eldridge, fifteen moidores, two hundred and ten guineas, eighty half-guineas, and the goods and money of Mr. Burrows. He was likewise indicted and found guilty for assaulting Sarah, the wife of Robert King, on the highway, and robbing her of two shillings and sixpence. As likewise on a third indictment, for assaulting the aforesaid Thomas Eldridge, and taking from him a calico gown and petticoat, value twenty shillings, the goods of Giles Betts. There was a fourth indictment against him for assaulting Mary, the wife of Joseph Page, and taking from her two shillings and sixpence, but the three former being all capital, the court did not think proper to try him upon this.

While he lay under sentence of death he did not discover any signs of excessive fear, but appeared rather perplexed and confused than dispirited or dejected. He entertained at first great hopes of a reprieve, at least in order to be transported, and for obtaining it he spent a great deal of time writing to several friends who he thought might be instrumental in procuring it. However, he was far from neglecting the concerns of his soul, but read daily with much seeming diligence several little books proper for a man in his condition, and whenever he attended at chapel behaved with the utmost gravity, praying, if we may guess from exterior signs, with much fervour and devotion. He was a man very well acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion, and was in all appearance better persuaded of the merit and efficacy of his Saviour's passion than people often are in his condition.

As to his capacity, it appeared to have been very tolerable in itself, and to have received many advantages from education. How he acquired the art of curing smoky chimneys is not very well known, he having been bred up to no trade whatsoever, but coming into the world with a little fortune left him by his parents, he lived thereupon with a tolerable reputation, until the time of his marriage.

When he was first under sentence he was very desirous of having his wife come to town, and for that purpose wrote her several pressing letters, to which he received no answer. This gave him great disturbance. He thereupon wrote to a friend in the country, who lived near her, on whom also he had a strong dependance, entreating him to go to his wife and solicit her not absolutely to desert him in his extreme calamity, but to come up to town with him, in order to make their last efforts for his preservation. This epistle, however, proved in the main as unsuccessful as the rest, though it procured him an answer, wherein the person he wrote to informed him that his wife was extremely lame, insomuch that she could not put on her own clothes; that her servant was gone; that she had no money wherewith to defray the expenses of a journey to town, much less to assist him in his distress. As for himself, his friend excused his coming by reason of a great cold which he had caught in London when he came up before to attend Mr. Drury's affairs.

Hereupon the unfortunate criminal bethought himself of another expedient, which he imagined would not fail of engaging Mrs. Drury to come to London. He informed her by letter, that in the beginning of his troubles he had pawned some silver plate in town for four-and-twenty pounds, that it was more than double the value, and might probably be lost on his death. To this his friend wrote him back that if anybody would take the plate out, and give advice thereof to Mrs. Drury, she would repay them, and gratify them also for their trouble. When this letter came to the poor man's hand he said he was satisfied that his wife did not desire he should live, however he heartily forgave her.

He constantly denied that he had ever been concerned in any act of a like kind with that for which he died. He acknowledged that with what his wife had, and the business he followed, he might have lived very genteelly in the country; that he had not indeed, been very prudent in the management of his affairs; however, it was no necessity that forced him on the base and wicked act for which he died, the sole cause of his committing which was, as he solemnly protested, the repeated solicitations of King, the wagoner, who for a considerable time before represented the attempt to him as a thing no way dangerous in itself, and which would bring him a very large sum of ready money. As soon as King perceived that his insinuations begun to make some impression, he opened himself more fully as to the facility of robbing the Bicester wagon, *Wherein*, says he, *you will find generally a pretty handsome sum of money; and as to opposition, depend on it you shall meet with none.* At last these speeches prevailed on him, and it was agreed that the wagoner should have half the booty for his advice and assistance; and the better to conceal it, Drury, was directed to rob King's wife of about four pounds, which was all she had about her.

A minister of the Church of England, who was either acquainted with Mr. Drury, or out of charitable intention, attended him at the request of his friends, took abundance of pains to give him just notions of his duty in that unfortunate slate into which his folly had brought him; he repeated to him the reasons which render a public confession necessary from those who die by judgment of the Law; he exhorted him not to equivocate, or even extenuate in his declarations concerning his offence. Mr. Drury heard him with great patience, seemed to be much affected with the remonstrances which were made to him, and finally promised that he would act sincerely in the confessions he made to the public; adding that he had none in whom to trust but God alone, and therefore he would not offend him. The reverend divine to whom he spoke approved his resolution, and promised to afford him all the assistance in his power till death.

As soon as the criminal was satisfied that all applications that had been made for mercy were ineffectual, and that there was not the least probability of a pardon, he immediately sent for the

clergyman before-mentioned, and desired to receive the Sacrament at his hands, to which the gentleman readily assented, uttering only a short previous exhortation unto a true repentance, open and genuine confession, and full and free forgiveness unto all who had ever injured him, or unto whom he bore any ill will. Mr. Drury, therefore, before he received the Elements, owned in express terms his being guilty of the fact for which he died, affirmed the truth of what he had formerly said concerning the wagoner, declared that he forgave both him and his own wife sincerely, and that having now in some measure eased his mind, he was no longer afraid of death.

Mr. Drury, even after receiving sentence, was indulged by the keepers of Newgate in having a room to himself in the Press Yard, which afforded him leisure and privacy for his devotions; and he seemed, especially for the last days of his life, to make proper use of those conveniences by excluding himself from all company and applying earnestly to God in prayer for the forgiveness of his sins. During the two or three days succeeding that whereon he received sentence, a gentlewoman attended pretty constantly upon him. Who she was we can neither say, nor is it very material; but Mr. Drury appealing to her in the presence of some persons, as to the truth of what he alleged concerning King, the wagoner, she desired to relate what she knew as to that point. The account she gave was to this purpose. *Mr. Drury carried me out of town with him in a chaise to Wendover. On the road we were met by the wagoner he speaks on, who desired Mr. Drury to step out, for he wanted to speak with him. Thereupon he complying with the wagoner's request, they walked together to a considerable distance, and there stopping talked to each other very earnestly for some time.* As to the subject of their discourse she declared she could say nothing, but as they came back to the chaise, the wagoner said, *You need not be afraid, you will be sure to get what you want.* To say truth, it was very odd for a single man to rob a wagon to which so many people belonged, in company with several other wagons, without any opposition, though it be likewise true that he did not attempt any of the rest.

Some persons of quality were prevailed on by his earnest solicitations and the circumstances we have before mentioned to endeavour the procuring him a pardon, but it was in vain; and it would have certainly have been much better for the man if he never had any hopes given him, for though he did not depend as much on promises as men in his miserable condition frequently do, yet the desire of life, sometimes excited the hopes of it, and thereby took off his thoughts from more weighty concerns, or at least made him more languid and confused than otherways he would have been, for the very day before his death he still entertained some expectations of mercy.

The evening before he suffered a woman knocked at his chamber door, and earnestly desired to speak a few words to him. He accordingly came towards the door and asked her what it was she would have to say to him. The woman, after expressing much sorrow for his misfortunes, told him she was desired by a person to whom she had been servant, if the thing were possible, to learn from his own mouth what he had to say against the wagoner. Mr. Drury replied that he had never had any thought of robbing wagons, or any such thing, if the wagoner had not advised and pressed him to it; so that his blood, the loss of his life, and all he had in the world lay upon that man. Then shutting the door he returned to his devotions, and continued to them all the evening and until the night was considerably spent.

As death drew near it seemed not to affect him so much as might be expected. On the morning of his execution he appeared not only easy, but cheerful, attended at the prayers at chapel with much composure, and went out of Newgate without any sign of fright or disturbance of mind. On the road to Tyburn he appeared serious but melancholy, spoke a good deal concerning the errors of his former life, said he had never been addicted to drinking, but had conversed too much with bad women, which had made his wife jealous, and caused home to be very uneasy. He seemed truly penitent for these offences, as he confessed them without any questions being asked by those about him.

At the place of execution his courage did not forsake him. He still preserved a great deal of serenity in his countenance, and when he was desired to acquaint the people with anything he had to say concerning the crime for which he died, he spoke with a strong voice, and repeated what he had formerly alleged about King, the wagoner, adding that he advised him also to rob the Banbury wagon; and that notwithstanding he talked of his wife's having four pounds about her, yet he took but three shillings, whereon the third indictment was founded, on which he was convicted. He then complained of his wife's unkindness, and both prayed for the spectators, and desired their prayers for him. As he was leaning on the side of the cart, the Ordinary told him that a man had charged him the day before with having married a man's daughter at Norwich, who is still living. Mr. Drury answered, he was reproached by many people, and he forgave them all, he then called to a gentleman who was near the gallows and spoke to him about his estate, which he had before settled. Afterwards he exhorted the people to live virtuously, and be warned by his example, and then submitted patiently to his fate, on Thursday, the third of November, 1726, being at that time of his decease about twenty-eight years of age.

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### **The Life of WILLIAM MILLER, a Highwayman, etc.**

As necessary correction is often a method by which, when young people begin to stray into the paths of vice, they are deterred and brought back again into the road of virtue; yet when this is incautiously inflicted or done in a violent manner, it frequently excites worse thoughts than would otherwise probably have entered the breasts of young people thus punished; and instead of

hindering them from committing trivial offences, puts them on doing the worst things imaginable in order to deliver them from a state more hateful to them than death itself.

This criminal William Miller, was the son of very honest parents who lived at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who took care to give him a good education, and what was much more commendable, a good example. They put him out apprentice to a tradesman at Alnwick, with whom he might have lived tolerably well had it not been for the churlishness of his master's temper, who was continually picking quarrels with him, and thereupon beating him inhumanly. At last an accident happened which supplied a continual fund of anger and resentment and this was on account of William's losing a horse, which, though his friends paid for, yet every time it came into his masters head there was a battle between them; for Miller being now grown pretty big made resistance when he struck him, and not seldom got the better of him, and beat him in his turn. This occasioned such disturbances and falling out between them that at last Miller took a resolution for leaving him for good and all, and determined to live as he could, up and down the country.

At first he was so lucky as to meet with a man who employed him readily, treated him with kindness, and gave him good advice, without accompanying his reproofs with blows; but upon discovering that his man William had not served out his time, but had only five years and a half with his master, he absolutely refused to suffer him to work any longer. It was with great reluctance that Miller parted with this master, and he became every day after more and more uneasy, because he found no other master would let him work with them, upon the same account; so that by degrees he was reduced to the great necessity in the country, and though he was willing to work, yet could not tell which way to turn his hand.

In the midst of these perplexities, he bethought himself of coming up to London, which he put in execution. On his arrival there he listed himself as a soldier in one of the regiments of Guards, and as it is no very hard matter in this town, got abundance of amorous affairs upon his hands. With one woman he lived a short time after his coming up to London, but her he soon turned off for the sake of another, who was a blacksmith's wife, and whom he married, notwithstanding her first husband was then to his acknowledge alive. This was, indeed, the source of a great part of his misfortunes, since what between the woman's drinking and the money which the husband got out of him for permitting him to live quietly with her, he was (notwithstanding he had learnt a new employment, viz., that of a basket maker) miserably poor; and the woman having brought him a child to increase his expenses, he was at last forced, whether he would or no, to leave her and it both. After this he associated with another woman, and at length married her also, with whom he lived quietly enough until the time of his death. These numerous intrigues drew him in consequence into a multitude of other vices, which both lost him his reputation, and damaged his understanding, especially when he came to drink hard, which he at last did to such a degree that he was seldom or never sober, or if he were, the reflecting on his misfortunes pushed him on getting drunk as fast as he could—a case but too common amongst the meaner sort of people, who as they have no philosophy of learning to support them, endeavour to drown all care by setting.

Whether Miller really intended to go a-robbing at the time he committed the fact for which he died, or whether drunkenness and the sense, even in that condition which he retained of his misfortune, on a sudden suggested to him the stripping of the old man Nicholas Bourn under the favour of the night, certain it is (though from motives we cannot determine) that he attacked the man and took from him his coat and hat. On the injured person's crying out a watchman ran immediately to his assistance, and with his pole, notwithstanding Miller drew his bayonet, knocked him down, and so seized him and delivered him up to Justice. At the next sessions at the Old Bailey he was indicted for this fact, and the same was very fully and clearly proved against him; yet though he had no friends capable of procuring him either a reprieve or pardon, he had the good luck to remain a considerable space under condemnation, viz., from one sessions to another, before the report was made, and so had the greater leisure left him for repentance.

During the space he lay in the condemned hold he expressed a very hearty sorrow for all his offences and particularly regretted his having addicted himself so much to the company of women, which, as it at first led him into expenses, naturally brought him into narrow circumstances; and his necessities unfortunately put him upon taking the fatal method of supplying himself. Yet in the midst of these tokens of penitence and contrition several women came still about him, so he resolved to send the child he had by the second down to his friends in the country, not doubting, as he said, but that they would take care of it. And for the last of those who went for his wife, he really looked upon her as such, and therefore treated her with more kindness and affection than he did any of the rest. However, doubtless they were no great help to him in his preparations for death. And amongst the other miseries produced, to our view, this is not a small one, that they continue to pursue us even to the last, and fasten so strongly about our thoughts and inclinations that as at first, they defeated all consideration, so in the end they are in danger of preventing a hearty and sincere repentance.

As to the particular fact for which he was to die, he acknowledged himself guilty thereof, but for all that objected to the several circumstances that were sworn against him at his trial; nor could all the arguments that were used towards him persuade him that those trifling variations (for as he himself represented them they were no more) were not now at all material to him, but that as he justly deserved to die according to his own confession, it signified little to him whether the particular steps taken in his apprehension were exactly stated by the Court or not. As the day of his execution drew near, he receded a little from these objections, and began to set himself in



earnest to acquire that calmness with which every reasonable man would desire to meet death. The women he forbid visiting him, refused to eat or drink anything but what was absolutely necessary to support Nature, plied himself regularly and constantly to his devotions, and seemed to have nothing at heart but to reconcile himself to that Divine Being, who by the multitude of his crimes he had so much offended. To say truth, it was not a little wonderful that a person after continuing for such a length of time in the practice of wickedness and debauchery, should at last be capable of applying himself with such zeal and attention to the duties of a dying man. He yielded up his life the 13th of February, 1727, at Tyburn, being then twenty-six years of age.

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### **The Life of ROBERT HAYNES, a Murderer, etc.**

As from a multitude of instances in the course of these memoirs it has been shown how great a misfortune it is to be destitute of education, so from the following life it will appear that an improper education is as dangerous as none at all.

Robert Haynes, the criminal whose history we are to give at present, was the son of persons in Ireland, of none of the best circumstances, who yet afforded him a very good education, causing him to be instructed not only in the Latin, but also in the Greek tongue, in both of which to the day of his death he attained a tolerable knowledge. His father, it seems, though he had done everything for his son in breeding him a scholar, though when he grew up to man's estate he had nothing to give him, and was forced to let him come over to England to list himself in the Foot Guards. His officers gave him always the character of a quiet, inoffensive lad, who injured nobody, nor was himself addicted to those vices which are common to the men of his profession. On the contrary, he retained yet strong notions of those religious principles in which he had been educated. He addicted himself much to reading, and though his spirit was not a little broken by the consideration of that low life by which he was obliged to stoop, yet he preserved a becoming spirit and a very gentleman-like behaviour upon all occasions; so that the officers of his regiment very much regretted that misfortune which brought him to an untimely end. Of the occasion of this we come next to speak, since his youth and the regularity of his life prevented any other of his adventures coming to our notice.

It happened one Sunday evening, as he was walking along St. James's Park, with two other soldiers, they met two men and two women. Haynes unluckily kissed one of the women, upon which one of the men turned and broke his head. As was insisted even to the time of the death of this unfortunate person, the swords of both were drawn; however that were, he gave his antagonist a wound in the breast of which he died. For this he was apprehended and committed prisoner to Newgate. At the ensuing sessions of the Old Bailey he was indicted for wilfully murdering Edward Perry, by giving him a wound on the left part of the right breast near the short ribs, of the depth of twelve inches, and of the length of one. He was also indicted a second time on the Statute of Stabbing, and a third time upon the coroner's inquest for wilful murder. On all three of which, notwithstanding his defence, and the witnesses he called, he was found guilty; and although some honourable persons took a great deal of pains to procure a pardon or reprieve for him, yet it proved of no purpose, but he and the afore-mentioned malefactor were put into the death warrant and ordered for execution.

For himself he had little hopes from the endeavours of his friends and therefore behaved himself as if he had had none, being not only constant and devout at the public exercises in the chapel, but also ardent in his devotions in private and by himself. As the youth wanted not good sense, and had not forgot the education he had received in Ireland, so in every respect while under sentence of death he performed what could be expected from a man of courage, and a Christian, under his circumstances. A minister, out of charity, visited him several times and prayed with him, exhorting him always to make a dear and candid confession of the fact, and, since there were no hopes, not to go to death with a lie between his lips. Yet he persisted still in what he had at first declared, and continued to assert the truth of that declaration, until the gaol sickness brought him so low, that he was scarce able to speak at all. In this low state of health he continued until within two or three days of his death, when he began to pick up strength a little; and as soon as he was able to go up the stairs, he attended as usual the devotions of the chapel. In this frame and disposition of heart he remained until the day of his execution came, upon which he appeared not only calm but cheerful, received the Sacrament as is usual with malefactors at the day of their death, and behaved at it in a very pious and religious manner.

When he came to Tyburn he stood up, and intended to have spoken to the people, but finding himself too weak, he referred to a paper which he delivered to Mr. Applebee, a printer, and which contained the substance of what (if he had been able) he would have there spoken; and then, after a few private ejaculations, he easily resigned up his breath at the same time with the other malefactor, being then in the one-and-twentieth year of his age. I thought proper to insert the copy of that letter I have before spoken of, and it follows verbatim.

Good people,

I am to suffer by Law an ignominious death (God's will be done) which untimely end I never expected. I am a youth and it's above twelve months since I enlisted into his Majesty's Service. The character of my behaviour in that time I will leave to my acquaintance to declare; my character was sufficiently testified at my trial, by gentlemen of worth and honour. I pray God bless them for their Christian charity. I praise God my resolution to live uprightly was no constraint; as for the

cause I suffer, and the horrid imputation I am charged with which is rendered murder (from my soul I abhor) I now declare as I expect salvation, I am unjustly accused, but I freely forgive my persecutors, as I hope to be forgiven; for what I did was accidental, and in my own vindication. The real truth is as follows:

The two soldiers that were my evidence desired my company to drink with them. As we were returning home through the Park, passing by two women, and being warm with liquor, I presumed to give one of them a kiss; the other was a married woman, and resenting my freedom, called out to her husband, Edward Perry deceased, and to Toms that walked before, both entire strangers to me. They returned, Toms advanced towards me speaking abruptly, and struck me over the head and shoulders with a stick, which stunned me; likewise he urged the deceased to quarrel with me. The deceitful Perry enraged, swore he would see me out, and struck me with his sword in his scabbard over the head. He drew his sword and made several passes at me, I still retreated till provoked to draw my sword to preserve myself. This affair was in the night. I received a wound in my right hand thumb, and a thrust through my coat. This I declare to be the whole truth, as I shall answer before my great God; though my persecutors, Toms and the deceased man's wife, swore quite the reverse, which took place to my ruin. I pray God forgive them their trespasses, as I hope forgiveness for my own. I pray God bless my good colonel for his care and endeavours for my safety; I pray God bless him with length of days and prosperity in all his undertakings. I thank God, I never wronged man, woman, or child, to my knowledge, nor was I ever inclined to quarrel. I heartily beg of God pardon and forgiveness for my sins, and I confide in the merits of my dear Saviour, who died for the World. I was baptized and bred a member of the Church of England (though an unworthy and unfortunate one) in which Communion I hope for salvation through my blessed Redeemer.

Sunday, February the 12th, 1726.

Robert Haynes

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### **The Lives of THOMAS TIMMS, THOMAS PERRY, and EDWARD BROWN, Footpads**

This poor unhappy man, Thomas Timms, was the son of mean parents in the country and as indifferently educated as he was born, so that his future ill-deeds were capable of some little extenuation. With much to-do his friends and parents raised money enough to put him out apprentice to a chair-carver, with whom he lived easily and honestly during the space of his apprenticeship, coming out of it with the character of an honest religious young lad, which he maintained after he was set up and married. He had probably continued to maintain it to the end of his life if he had not fallen into unhappy circumstances, by being out of work. This obliged him to come up to Town, where for a while he lived pretty well upon his business; but at last it so far fell off that he was obliged to list himself a soldier in the first regiment of Guards. Notwithstanding this he worked still at his trade, as much as it was possible for him to do, and to perform his duty; but misfortunes still crowding upon him, he grew at first melancholy, and at last took to drinking in the company of bad women, who soon drew him into thinking of taking dishonest methods to obtain money for the support of their debaucheries.

Amongst other of his acquaintance there was a woman who had formerly lived with a very eminent lawyer in the City. It was said she had a greater familiarity with her master than she ought to have had, from whence she took the liberty to cheat him most egregiously, especially by counterfeiting receipts from most of the tradesmen with whom her master had any dealing, by which means she retained in her own hands the money which she should have paid him. Some months after, however, the roguery was discovered, and her master being newly married, he took this opportunity to discharge her suddenly. However, he promised her, if she went into any lodgings, and gave him notice, he would take care she should not want, until she could get herself into some way of business or other.

This gentleman had three clerks, all of good families and good fortunes. The wench, after she was out of the house, first went into a neighbourhood where the eldest of these clerks and his relations were very well known. Here she took upon her to be his wife, and said that they were privately married for fear of disobliging his relations. By the help of this she got so far into credit that she took up near a hundred and twenty pounds worth of things before the least apprehension was had of her being a cheat; and then removing her lodgings, she fixed herself in a first floor within a few doors of the guardian of her master's second clerk. She gave it out there as she had done before, that she was secretly married to this young gentleman; and on the credit thereof she took up near a hundred pounds in silks and shifts. But just as she was on the point of moving off and playing the same game with the third, she was detected and committed to Bridewell. From thence she found means of escape by wheedling one of the keeper's servants, and afterwards took lodgings in the house where this Timms worked.

Whether she had any hand in persuading him to go out robbing or no, I cannot take upon me to say, but soon after, he, with his companions, Perry and Brown, on the 3rd of May, went out with a design to rob upon Hounslow Heath. All that night they lay in the fields; the next morning they met a poor old man, who telling them he had no money, they let him go without misusing him.

Not long after they stopped Samuel Sells coming from Windsor, in his chair. He, it seems, kept a public-house there. Him they commanded to deliver, whereupon he gave them three half-crowns, but they toasting upon it that it was too little, he thereupon gave them ten shillings more, which both he and his companions averred was all that they took from him, though Sells at their trial, swore to a much larger sum, and that one of them held a truncheon over him, and threatened him with abundance of oaths in case he made any resistance. All of them denied this part of the charge, even to death, and said that though they had truncheons, yet they made no use of them, but kept them either in their breasts or under their coats.

Thomas Perry, the second of these malefactors, was born of parents in such wretched circumstances that when he was grown a good big lad, and death suddenly snatched them away, he found himself destitute of money, of business and even of clothes to cover him. He thereupon traveled up to London, and put himself apprentice to a glass-grinder, with whom he served his time very honestly and faithfully. Then he married and lived by working very hard in a reputable manner for about a twelve month, after which he listed in the first regiment of Foot Guards, in which he served till the Peace of Utrecht and Flanders, after the conclusion of which he returned to London in the same regiment, in which he continued to serve till this misfortune overtook him. For the last year of his life, he had, it seems, led a more loose and extravagant course than in all his days before, contracting an acquaintance with several women of the town, creatures who are the utter ruin of all such unhappy men, especially of all unlettered unexperienced persons as fall into their snares.

Some little time before he joined with Timms and his other companion in this robbery, he had the misfortune of having his leg bit by a dog at Windsor, where he was quartered. Having no friends, and but a small allowance to subsist on, he fell under great miseries there, and on his return to Town, those who had formerly employed him in glass-grinding, taking distaste at his rude and wicked behaviour, refused to have anything more to do with him. He readily gave way to the solicitations of Timms, who, as he declared, first proposed their going upon the highway, a crime which hitherto had not entered into Perry's head. However, he yielded too readily thereto, and with the persons who had shared in his crimes, came to share an ignominious and untimely death.

While under sentence, he applied himself with great seriousness and attention both to the public devotions of the chapel and to what was privately read to them in the place of their confinement, so that though he was very illiterate, he was far from being obstinate, and though he wanted the advantages of education, he was not deficient in grace, so we may therefore hope he might obtain mercy.

Edward Brown, the last of these unfortunate criminals, drew his first breath in the city of Oxford, and by the care of his parents, attained to a tolerable degree of knowledge in the Christian faith, as also in writing, reading and whatsoever was necessary in that station of life which his parents designed for him. Being arrived at an age proper to be put out an apprentice, they placed him with a glass-grinder, to whom he served an apprenticeship faithfully, and to his good liking when out of time. He worked hard as a journeyman, married a wife, and lived in reputation and credit for some small space; but falling unluckily into loose company, he gave himself up entirely to drinking, and running after bad women, which soon ruined him in the country and obliged him to come up to London for the sake of subsistence. How long he had been there, or of what standing his acquaintance was with the other two criminals, I cannot take upon me to say, only he in general was a fellow of greater openness in his behaviour than any of the criminals before mentioned. He said that they had all taken their cups pretty freely together, and had spent every farthing that they had amongst them; it was then resolved to go upon the highway for a supply, but he could not say who was the proposer of the scheme; that he himself had a sword and cane, and the rest truncheons, when they attacked Mr. Sells. He [Sells] gave them at two several times, seventeen shillings, and when they pressed for still more, said he had but eighteen pence about him, and begged they would let him have that to come to town with, which he said they agreed to, and did not offer him any ill-usage whatsoever.

At the same time these unhappy men were under sentence of death, Alexander Jones, John Platt, Mary Reynolds, Silvia Sherlock and Anne Senior were also condemned for several offences, and as is but too common with persons in their condition, all of them entertained strong notions of reprieves or pardons, so that when the death warrant came down, and these three found themselves ordered for execution, they were not a little surprised. But as they had much natural courage they made even that surprise turn to their advantage, and applied themselves with greater earnestness than ever to the duties necessary to be practised by people in their sad state.

When the day of their execution came, they were carried in one cart to Tyburn, and as they had been companions in that single action which had brought all of them to death, so there was nobody to share in that unhappy fate with them, nor were they disturbed with the sorrows of other criminals, which often distract one another's devotions at Tyburn. On the contrary, their behaviour was grave and decent, their public devotions were closed with a Psalm, and with many demonstrations of repentance they resigned their lives, on the 11th of August, 1727; Timms being about twenty-eight years of age, Perry near forty, and Brown somewhat less than twenty-four years old, at the time of their execution.

Amongst these melancholy relations of misery and death, I fancy it is some ease to my readers, as well as to myself, when the course of my memoirs leads me to mention a story as full of incidents, and followed by a less tragic end than the rest. This woman, whose life I am about to relate, was the daughter of an under-officer to one of the colleges at Oxford. As the doctrine of making up small salaries by taking up large perquisites prevails there as well as elsewhere, Alice's father made a shift to keep himself, his wife and five children in a handsome manner out of £60 a year, and what he made besides of his place.

An affectation of gentility had infected the whole family, the old man had a good voice and played tolerably well on the fiddle. This drew abundance of the young smart fellows of the university to his house, and that of course engaged his three daughters to take all the pains they were able to make themselves agreeable. The mother had great hopes that fine clothes and a jaunty air might marry her daughters to some gentlemen of tolerable fortunes, and that one of them, at least, might have a chance of catching a fellow commoner with a thousand or two *per annum*, for which reason Miss Molly, Miss Jenny, and Miss Alice were all bred to the dancing school, taught to sing prettily, and to touch the spinet with an agreeable air. In short, the house was a mansion of politeness, and except the two brothers, one of which was put out apprentice to a carpenter, and the other to a shoemaker, there was not a person to be seen in it who looked, spoke or acted as became them in their proper station of life. But it is necessary that we should come to a more particular description.

Old Peter, their father, was a man of mean birth, and of a sort of accidental education. From his youth up he had lived in Oxford, and from the time he was able to know anything, within the purlieu of a college, from whence he had gleaned up a few Latin sentences, scraps of poetry, and as the masterpiece of his improvements, had acquired a good knack of punning. All these mighty qualifications were bent to keep a good house, and drinking two or three quarts of strong ale, accompanied with a song, and two or three hours' scraping at night. The mother, again, was the last remnant of a decayed family, who charged its ruin on the Civil Wars. She was exceedingly puffed up with the notions of her birth, and the respect that was due to a person not sprung from the vulgar. Her education had extended no farther than the knowledge of preserving, pickling and making fricasees, a pretty exact knowledge in the several kinds of points and a judgment not to be despised in the choice of lace, silks and ribbons. She affected extravagance that she might not appear mean, and troublesomely ceremonious that she might not seem to want good manners. Clothes for herself and her daughters, a good quantity of china and some other exuberances of a fancy almost turned mad with the love of finery, made up the circle of what took up her thoughts, the daughters participating in their parents' tempers. But what was wonderful indeed, the sons were honest, sober, industrious young men.

In the midst of all this mirth and splendour, the father died, and left them all totally without support other than their own industry could procure for them, slender provision indeed! Miss Molly, the eldest, was about twenty-two at the time of her father's death, and her sisters were each of them younger than her, and Alice a year younger than Jenny, and about eighteen. The mother was at her wits' end to know how to procure a living for herself and them, but an old gentleman in one of the colleges, to whom Peter had been very useful, and who therefore retained a grateful sense of his service, was so kind as to give fifty pounds towards putting out the daughters, and took care to see the youngest Alice placed with a mantua-maker in London. Molly fell into a consumption, as was generally said, for the love of a young gentleman who used to spend his evenings at her father's, and who marrying a young lady of suitable birth and fortune to himself, was retired into Shropshire. Jenny ran away with a servitor, and was lost to her mother and her friends; so that Alice had it in her power to be tolerably provided for, if she had inclined to have lived virtuously, and not to have frustrated the offers of a good fortune. But she was wild and silly from her cradle, born without capacity to do good to herself, and indued only with such cunning as served her to ruin others.

The first intrigue she had after her coming up to London was with a young fellow who was clerk to a Justice of the Peace in the neighbourhood. Before he saw Alice he had been a careful, industrious young man, and through his master's kindness had picked up some money; but from the time that his master had a suit of clothes made up with Alice's mistress, and which occasioned her first coming about the house, poor Mr. Philip became the victim of her charms, and moped up and down like a hen that had lost her chickens. It was not long before the Justice's daughters found out his passion, and having communicated their discovery to the maids, exposed him to be the laughing stock of the whole house. Never was a poor young fellow so pestered! One asked him whether he liked the wife with three trades? Another was enquiring whether he had cast up the amount of remnants of silk, shreds of lace, and the savings that might be made out of linings, facings, and robings? The Justice took notice that Philip had left off reading the news, and the old lady wondered whether he had forgotten playing upon the organ in her husband's study. But all this served rather to increase than to abate his passion, so that he neglected no opportunity of meeting and paying his addresses to his mistress.

Alice was no less careful on her side, and in a short space it was agreed that she should run away from her mistress, of whom she was grown heartily weary, and that Philip should counterfeit most excessive grief at his loss, in order to prevent the least suspicion of his being privy thereto. Having adjusted this, it was not long before they put their design into execution, and Philip first having provided a lodging for her in Brewer Street, she, on a Sunday in the evening, when all the rest of the family were out, removed from her mistress's house in a court near the Strand, taking all that belonged to her in a hackney-coach, leaving the key at an alehouse. Philip had so good a

character that the grief he affected on this occasion passed for reality upon all the house, and the flight of Alice had no other effect than to excite a new spring of railery on the loss of his mistress. He laid out the greatest part of what he had saved during five years' service in furnishing out two rooms for her very neatly, passing himself, where she lodged, for the son of a gentleman of fortune in the country, who had married against his friends' consent, and was therefore obliged to keep his wife in a place of privacy until things at home could be made easy.

For some time the lovers lived mighty happily together, and nothing was wanting to complete Philip's wishes than that they were married, for Alice never making such a proposal, now and then disturbed his thoughts, and put him a little out of humour. Things remained in this state with a little alteration for about five months, until an Irish captain coming to lodge pretty near where Philip had placed Alice, he found a way to see her twice or thrice, and being a fellow of a smooth tongue, a handsome person and an immoderate assurance, it was not long before he became master of her affections. The temper of Philip having been always too grave for her, in about three weeks' time she let the captain into the truth of the whole story, and at his persuasion, during the time Philip was at Surrey assizes, sold off the furniture of her lodgings, and directing a letter to be left for him at his master's house by the Penny Post, moved off with her new gallant.

It would be impossible, should I attempt to describe it, to describe the agony the poor young fellow was in at the receipt of Alice's epistle, in which she told him flatly she was weary of him and had got another gallant; and saying that if he tried to look after her or give her any other uneasiness, she would send a full account of all things to his master. The jilt was sensible this would keep him quiet, for as he depended solely upon his favour, so a story of this sort would have inevitably deprived him of it for ever. It answered her intent, and the force he put upon his passions cost him a severe fit of sickness.

Alice, in the meanwhile, indulged for about a week with her Irish captain, at the end of which he beat her and turned her out of doors. It was in vain for her to talk of her goods and her clothes; the captain had carried her amongst a set of his acquaintance, who on the first quarrel called her a thousand foolish English whores, and bid her go back to her Justice's clerk again. In the midst of her affliction, with nothing on but a linen gown, and about three shillings in her pocket, the watchman coming his rounds, found her sitting on the steps at the door where the captain lodged. He asked her what she did there, she said her husband and she had quarrelled and he had shut her out. The watchman was going away, satisfied with the answer, when the captain called out at the window, told him she was a street-walker, and bid him take her away. The landlady confirmed this, and the fellow laying fast hold of her shoulder, compelled her to go with him to the watch-house. However, a shilling procured her liberty and a favourable report to the constable that she was an honest young woman, who had the misfortune to be married to a bad husband, who turned her into the street, and she was afraid would not suffer her to come in again that night. Upon hearing this, the constable bid her sit down by the fire, gave her a glass of brandy and promised her she should be as safe and as easy as the place would allow her for that night.

But unluckily for Alice, as she went to take the glass out of the constable's hand, he knew her face, and happening to be the baker who served the mantua-maker with bread, where she lived, the next morning he conducted Mrs. Alice, much against her will, home to her mistress. One of her fellow-apprentices ran with the news to the Justice's, and one of the daughters whispered it in Philip's ears, as he was writing a recognizance in the Justice's book. Philip no sooner heard it but he fell down in a swoon, and about half an hour was spent before they could bring him again to himself. The young lady who had played him the trick, immediately quitted the room, and he opening his eyes, and perceiving her gone, pretended it was a sudden fit, and that he had been used to them when a child.

Much as he had suffered by this ungrateful woman, he took the first opportunity to go to a coffee-house within a door or two of her mistress, in order to learn what had become of her. There was but one person who had been trusted with his ever having visited her at all, and they too, were ignorant that she had ever run away with him. Philip therefore sent for his confidant, from whom he received information, that after snivelling and crying for a hour or two, she took advantage of being left alone in a parlour (although the door was locked), and getting out at the window into the backyard, made a shift to scramble over the top of the house of office into the court, and so made her escape to the waterside, where her mistress found she had taken a pair of oars. But though they followed her to Falcon Stairs, yet they were not able to retrieve her. Philip at this news was exceedingly grieved, and returned home again very disconsolate on this occasion.

Alice, in the meantime, lurked about in St. George's Fields till evening, and then crossing the bridge, walked on towards St. James's. However dirty and despicable her dress, yet as she had a very pretty face and a very engaging manner of speaking at first sight, she drew in a merchant's book-keeper, as she walked down Cornhill, to carry her to a certain tavern at the corner of Bishopsgate Street; where, after a good supper and a bottle or two of wine, she engaged him to take her to a lodging, and by degrees to give her a great deal of fine clothes, in return for which she flattered him so greatly that he grew as fond of her and as much a fool as ever Philip had been.

In the meantime her sister, who was much of her disposition, had been turned off by a young fellow she had run away with from Oxford, and in a miserable condition had trotted up to town, in order to see whether she could have better luck with another gallant. One night, as she was

strolling through Leadenhall Street in her vocation, she saw her sister Alice and the book-keeper who kept her, walking home with a servant, and a candle and lanthorn before them. Jenny did not think fit to speak to them, but dogging them privately home, called upon her sister the next day and was mighty well received. The couple now took every opportunity (notwithstanding the allowance of the book-keeper) to enable Alice to stroll out with her together, and wandered about nightly in quest of adventures, till it began to grow towards ten o'clock, and the fear of a visit from her keeper drove Alice to her lodgings.

This trade, without any remarkable accident, was practised for about three months, when on a sudden the book-keeper vanished, and for three weeks' time Alice heard not a word of him. This threw both the sisters into a heavy peck of troubles, and the more because he had always kept it a secret in whose family he lived and went to the people where Alice lodged by another name than his own. However they got money enough by sparks they picked up to live pretty easily together, and that no misfortune might go too near their hearts, they fell to drinking a quart of brandy a day. It seems the woman at whose house they lodged was herself given to drinking, and so by treating her they fell into the same vice. The landlady in return was mighty civil to them, and every now and then invited them downstairs to drink with her.

One evening when they were below stairs, there happened to be some discourse about a trial at the Sessions House, whereupon Alice expressed her desire of seeing the trials, and her sister agreeing in the request, their landlady agreed to carry them the next morning. Accordingly they were at Sessions House by the time the Court was set, and the two young sluts were exceedingly merry at the wretched appearances the poor creatures made at the bar. In the midst of their mirth, a man was brought up to plead to his indictment, who had only a blanket wrapped over his shirt to keep him from the weather; they were laughing and talking to some of the people behind them, when Jenny patted her sister to take notice of what the man was charged with. Alice listened and heard the indictment read, which was for breaking open an escritoire and taking out of it ninety guineas, two diamond rings and a good tweezer. When the clerk had done reading, the criminal answered with a low voice, *Not Guilty*, and the keeper thereupon took him from the bar. As he turned, his face being towards them, Alice saw that it was the book-keeper who had lived with her, and in a low voice whispered her sister, *As I hope to live, it is our Tom*. They did not stay much longer, but began to consider as soon as they got home what was to be done. Alice was sensible that the tweezer-case mentioned in the indictment had been given her, and was under a thousand frights and fears that it should be discovered and was above all wondrous careful of her landlady, that she did not go any more to the trials that Sessions.

The day they heard that sentence was passed, Jenny went to one of the runners at Newgate, and giving him a shilling, asked what had become of such a person. The fellow answered that he was to be transported. Jenny came immediately home with the news to her sister. She shed a few tears and said, what if he should want in Newgate? *Nay*, says Jenny, *let him want what he will, I'm sure you shall not be fool enough to pawn your things to relieve him*; and as her fit of compassion was soon over, so they determined to remove their lodgings for fear that if he were under necessity, as they could not well doubt he was, considering the figure he made at his trial, he might send to her. But they needed not to have been under any apprehensions of that sort, for shame and grief had brought him so low that the gaol distemper seizing on him, he died the same week he had been tried, and the runner to whom Jenny had given the shilling, remembering her face, stopped her in the street, and told her the news. When Alice heard it, she pretended to fall into fits, and express abundance of sorrow and concern. The sorrows were not, however, so deep but that brandy and two days' time effaced them so well that she dressed in the best manner she was able, in order to go out and look for a spark.

Unfortunately for her, her amours produced the usual consequence, a loathsome distemper, which seizing about the same both her sister and herself, through want of proper care, ruined both their constitutions; and the ill consequence being increased by the use of improper food, they were soon after in such a condition that their infamous trade of prostitution fell off, and they were in danger of starving and rotting. In this distress they knew not what to do, till at last advising with an old woman whom they had scraped acquaintance with, she readily offered them the use of her house, and to engage for them a surgeon, who should complete their cure. The sisters were overjoyed at this, and in a hurry accepted her offer, removing themselves and what little valuable movables they had the next week.

They were received with great courtesy and kindness, and the old woman, from an acquaintance of three weeks, assured them that they were no less dear to her than if they had been her own daughters. This treatment continued until they were in the height of a salivation, and then they were acquainted with usage of another sort. This distemper was very expensive, and their course of physic very troublesome, it required much attendance, they were strangers to her, and so by degrees the old woman got from them most of the trinkets they brought with them. So that when they were come a little to themselves, and nourishing food was proper to restore them to perfect soundness, they had no way left to procure it but by pawning or selling their clothes, which being quickly done and the money spent, nakedness and poverty became their companions.

Thus plunged in misery, they were exposed to the daily insults of the bawd, who treated them with great cruelty now she had them absolutely in her power. Alice was so very uneasy under it, that having one night got a few clean things about her, she resolved to venture out in a thin linen gown, to see what might be done to free them from these difficulties. She had not got lower than Southampton Street, in the Strand, before a gentleman well dressed, though much in liquor, invited her to go with him to his chambers. He carried her as far as Essex Street, and then

turning down to the Temple, brought her into rooms up two pair of stairs, richly furnished. She saw nobody that he had to attend him, but everything seemed in very exact order, and so without further ceremony to bed they went. His weight of liquor soon forced him to sleep, but Alice, whose head was full of the miseries she had so long gone through, arose, put on her clothes and searching his pockets, found a gold watch, nineteen guineas and a large gold medal. She was so much surprised with the richness of this booty, and yet this being her first fact, so confounded within herself, that she knew not well what to do. At last, with great difficulty she forced open the chamber door, which he had locked (and laid the key where she could not find it). Next she came to the outer doors of the chambers, in which the key was, and so there was no difficulty in getting out; but then finding it impossible to shut the door after her without locking it, she even did so, and carried away the key.

She made all the haste she could home to her landlady, and without considering the consequence, paid her six pounds which she demanded, and got some clothes out of her hands, which she had retained as a security for the money. Then she removed with her sister, as secretly as she could, to an inn in Smithfield, and from thence, the next day, they removed to a little lodging in narrow lane by St. John's, where downright fear made them keep so much within doors that they had almost spent all their money in six weeks' time, without thinking of any method to get more.

At last, Jenny, as being least in danger, equipped herself as well as she could, and ventured about nine o'clock one evening into the streets. She walked about half an hour without meeting with any adventure, but at last picked up an innocent country lad. They had not gone far towards a tavern before the constable and his body-guard of watchmen surprised and hurried them away to the Wood Street Compter. There she remained until the next day, when it was intimated to her that if she could produce a couple of guineas they would be looked upon as good bail. She sent for her sister Alice, who not having so much money, foolishly offered the gold medal as a security. Some of the limbs of the Law thereabouts, were acquainted with the gentleman of the Temple who lost it, and it being shown up and down to know its value, they declared it was stolen, and Alice, instead of procuring her sister's liberty, was forced into the same prison, and confined with her. As it was about three weeks to sessions, they were permitted to remain at the Compter during that time.

This was a deeper plunge into misfortune than they had ever yet known, and the fear of hanging was so strong that Alice, in order to avoid it, resolved upon making an application to a person to whom otherwise she would never have made herself known. Who should this be but Philip, who was lately married, but still did the business of his old master the Justice, and therefore was always to be met with at his house, though he had now got a little place upon which he was capable of living pretty handsomely. Alice's letter reached him just as he was sitting down to dinner. The surprise he was in was so great that it could not be hid from the company. However, to cover the cause of it, he pretended that it brought him news of a person being gone off for whom he was bail, and which obliged him not to lose a minute in going to see what might be done. So putting on his hat, and entreating some gentlemen who were at the table with him not to disturb themselves, for he should be back in half an hour, away he went directly to the Compter. And having influence over the people in power there, he prevailed to have her let out to an adjacent tavern.

The affliction she had gone through had altered but not impaired her beauty. Philip, ill-used as he had been by her, could not forbear bursting into tears at the sight of the miserable condition in which she was. As soon as his surprise was a little over, she acquainted him with the true state of the case, and begged his assistance in prevailing on the injured gentleman to soften the prosecution. He promised her all that was in his power, but desired to know after what manner she intended to live, in case her liberty could ever be regained. She cried and promised to work hard for her living rather than fall into that miserable plight again, and then told him how unfortunately it happened that her sister also was involved in the same calamity. At parting, Philip presented her with a guinea, and told her she should have the same every week while she remained there, assuring her also that he would not fail coming to her the next day at noon, and informing her of the temper in which he found her antagonist.

It happened that the Templar was Philip's intimate acquaintance, and had a seat near his father's house in the country. Philip told him the truth of the story, and how he came to interest himself so far in the affair. The gentleman was not hard to be prevailed on, and said he did not conceive it would be of any service to the women to let them be set at liberty, considering the course of life they would be obliged immediately to fall into for bread; that for his part, he inclined rather to procure them liberty to transport themselves, and that they might not be destitute in a strange country, he was not averse, notwithstanding his loss, to give them something towards putting them in a condition of getting their livelihood when they got over. Philip readily agreed to this, though he was fearful of its proving an expedient little agreeable to the women. However, the next day, when he went, he sent for them both to the tavern, and proposed it. Alice said it was the most agreeable thing that could have befallen her. She was sensible of the manner in which she had lived in her native country, and of the difficulty there would be of her amending here, and though her sister Jenny was at first very averse, yet she quickly brought her to be as complying as herself and to wish nothing more than the possibility of living honest in any of the plantations.

Philip carried this news at night to the Temple and the gentleman there, who was a great humorist, was so much taken with the temper and spirit of Alice, that he would needs see her

again, and thereupon accompanied Philip the next day to the place of her confinement. There everything was soon settled, the Templar procured their discharge, put them to board at a house which he could command, and bargained with a captain of a New England vessel for their passage thither; not as for persons who had been guilty of any misdeeds here, but as of young women of good families, who were unwilling to go to service here, and had therefore got their friends to raise as much money as would send them over there, where perhaps they might meet with better fortune.



JOSEPH BLAKE ATTEMPTING THE LIFE OF JONATHAN WILD  
(From the *Newgate Calendar*)

In short, their two benefactors furnished them with things to the amount of two hundred pounds, accompanied them themselves on board the vessel, and recommended them to the captain with as much earnestness as if they had been near relations. Coming in this light into the abroad, they were received with great hospitality, and treated with much kindness and respect; and in fine, after remaining here about a year, Jenny married a gentleman of as good fortune as any in the country, and her sister, not long after, had the same luck. Jenny did not indeed survive it long, but Alice outlived her first husband, and marrying a second, returned into England where she is still living in as much respect and esteem as any gentlewoman in the county where she inhabits.

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**An Account of the horrid murder of MR. WIDDINGTON DARBY,  
committed in his chambers in the Temple, on the 11th of April, 1727, for  
which one HENRY FISHER was apprehended and committed to Newgate,  
from whence he escaped.**

The deceased Mr. Darby was a young gentleman who made an extraordinary good appearance in the world. He generally wore fine rings, rich snuff boxes, and an extraordinary gold watch about him. These things possibly tempted a needy person of his acquaintance to be guilty of that barbarous murder which was committed upon him. He lived in the chambers belonging to Sir George Cook's office in the Temple. His servant lived in another place, and went home every night. It happened the night before, or rather in that wherein he was murdered, that Mr. Darby had a good deal of company with him, who supping late, they did not go away until eleven o'clock, when Mr. Darby's servant also retired to his lodgings. The next morning, being Tuesday, about nine o'clock, Mr. Darby was found dead in the said office, his skull penetrated with a pistol ball, his ear and hand cut, his rings, watch and other valuables taken away, besides his escritoire broken open, and his money and linen taken from thence.

The next day the coroner's inquest sat thereon, but being able to make no discovery of the murder, they thought fit to adjourn *sine die*, as soon as the coroner had made an order for the interment of his corpse which was done accordingly in a vault in the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

Some time passed before any light was got into this affair. At length, Mr. Moody, who had been upon the coroner's inquest who had sat on the body of Mr. Darby, received information that one Fisher, who had been in very bad circumstances, and as an acquaintance had been relieved under him by the deceased Mr. Darby, was all on a sudden, since the committing of that murder, observed to have a great deal of money. He had paid some debts which had been troublesome to him and was observed to have some valuable things about him which had never been seen before. These circumstances appearing altogether very suspicious, Mr. Moody acquainted Mr. York with it, who had been very assiduous in taking all measures possible for the discover of this horrid assassination. He falling readily into Mr. Moody's opinion, they agreed together that the likeliest method to find out the truth was to go to Mr. Willoughby, who was Fisher's landlord, and known to be a very honest man. Accordingly they went to him in a tavern in Southampton Street,



where they understood he was, and falling into discourse about Mr. Darby's murder, they insinuated to him the suspicions they had of his lodger.

Returning to his house, Fisher being away, Mr. Willoughby went to his room and broke open a box, and found in it the top and bottom of a snuff-box, a vizard mask, and a pair of laced ruffles. The remains of the snuff-box Mr. York knew to have belonged to the deceased, and had reason to suspect the ruffles also to have been his, so that it was immediately agreed to go before the Honourable Sir William Thompson,<sup>[77]</sup> in order to procure a warrant. There they made an affidavit of the several circumstances attending their discovery, and Sir William upon the examination also of a lady (who produced a piece of lace before she had seen the ruffle, and declared that if it were Mr. Darby's it must tally therewith, which on a comparison it did exactly) granted a warrant. It appeared also at the same time, upon the oath of Mr. Willoughby, that the day Mr. Darby was murdered, Fisher borrowed half-a-crown of him to pay his washerwoman, and was in the utmost necessity for money.

A woman swore that a person very like Fisher was hovering about Mr. Darby's chambers the night the murder was committed, and it was proved by the oath of another person that Fisher came not to his lodgings till two o'clock on Tuesday morning, on which Mr. Darby was murdered. About eight o'clock a porter came and informed Fisher of Mr. Darby's being murdered, at which he shewed little concern and locked himself up for some hours.

Things being thus over at Sir William Thompson's, Mr. Willoughby, Mr. York, and Mr. Moody, returned to Fisher's lodgings. About two o'clock in the morning he came in, and they seized him, having a constable and proper assistance for that purpose. On Sunday noon, he was carried before Sir William Thompson in order to be examined, where he said:

That about the latter end of the week in which Mr. Darby was murdered, as he was passing through Lincoln's Inn Fields, about four in the afternoon, he took up under the wall of Lincoln's Inn Gardens, a white paper parcel in which were contained several things of great value belonging to the deceased; some of the diamonds he acknowledged he sold to a jeweller in Paternoster Row for ten guineas, the watch he pawned for nine guineas to a person at a brazier's in Bond Street, and sold the gold chain and swivels to a person in Lombard Street. He absolutely denied all knowledge of the murder, and said that at the time it happened he was at a billiard table in Duke Street, by St. James's. When taken there was found upon him two of Mr. Darby's rings with the stones taken out, wrapped up in a paper, with his seal the arms of which were taken out, and in these circumstances he was committed to Newgate.

Soon after this the coroner granted his warrant, and an order being thereupon obtained from the Commons, Mr. Darby's body was taken up and in the presence of several persons, his head opened by an eminent surgeon, who found a large lacerated wound near the left ear, the temporal bone on that side being very much fractured, several pieces of which stuck in the brain on the same side. He found, likewise, the temporal bone on the other side, exactly opposite, broken; the pieces thereof were not removed from their places, but easily removed upon his attempting to take them away. He took out the brain and the bullet dropped upon the pillow which lay upon the ground under his head. It appeared, upon comparing the said bullet taken out of the head, with some other bullets found in custody of Henry Fisher (at that time in Newgate on suspicion of the murder) that it seemed to have been cast in the same mould; and when weighing it with one of these bullets, it was very little lighter, and it fitted the bore of one of the pistols which was found in Fisher's custody, even that pistol which by some signs were looked on to have been discharged, though afterwards loaded again.

This Fisher was the son of a very eminent clothier in the West of England, who had sent him to London, and put him out clerk to an attorney, and had done everything in his power which he was able, and which was reasonable for him to do. But he being extravagant, lived far beyond the rate which was consistent with the supplies he received from his father; so that when pressed by his necessities, he had often applied to Mr. Darby for relief. When in Newgate he affected a most unreasonable gaiety and unconcernedness in his behaviour, although the circumstances were so strong against him as occasioned it to prevail as the general opinion that he would be convicted. However, he and the famous Roger Johnson took the advantage of the workmen labouring on the cells which were then building, and by breaking a hole through a place done up only with lath and plaster, they got down one of the workmen's ladders, and so made their escape. Johnson was afterwards retaken and tried for breaking prison, but alleging it was done by Fisher, he was acquitted, and this Henry Fisher, the supposed murderer of Mr. Darby, was never heard of since.

<sup>[77]</sup>

Sir William Thompson (1678-1739) was Recorder of London in 1715, Solicitor General two years later, and in 1729 became baron of the Exchequer.

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## **The Life of JOSHUA CORNWALL, a Thief and Housebreaker**

Though vices are undoubtedly the chief instruments that bring unhappy persons to that ignominious death which the Law hath appointed for enormous offences, yet it very often happens that folly rather than wickedness brings them first into the road of ruin; in which, led on by delusive hopes, they continue to run until a disastrous fate overtakes them, and puts an end at once to their vicious race, and to their lives. The criminal whose memoirs at present employ our

pen is such an example as I hope, while it entertains, may also instruct my readers to avoid his errors.

This unfortunate man was the son of reputable and honest parents in the town of Brigg in the county of Lincoln. Their circumstances were such as enabled them to give him an education; and the desire they had of doing everything that was possible for their son inclined them not to be wanting in this particular. His mother, was fond of him to a fault, and being permitted by her indulgence to run up and down amongst young people of his own age, riding across the country to friends and other diversions of a like nature, he lost all liking to things of a serious nature, and without thinking how to procure the necessaries of life, was altogether taken up in enjoying those pleasures to which he had the greatest inclination. In the midst of this pleasant situation of things (at least as it appeared to him at that time) the prospect was darkened by the death of his mother. His friends retained for him a due paternal affection, but had no notion of permitting him to go on the life he led, and therefore to break him of that as well as to make him acquainted with an honest method of getting his living, his father put him out apprentice to a baker in Hull.

But as kindness seemed of all things the most fatal to this unhappy man, so the acquaintance and friendship which his master had for Cornwall's family became a new means of leading him into misfortune, for treating the young man rather with a tenderness due to a son than that severity which is usually practised towards apprentices and servants, it gave him an opportunity of renewing his old course of life. Instead of inclining him to behave in a manner which might deserve such lenity, it gave him, on the contrary, occasion frequently to abuse it by running from one dancing bout and merry-making to another, without the least care of his master's business, who out of downright affection forbore to restrain his follies with that harshness which they deserved, and which any other person would have used.

At length, having acquired so great a habit of laziness and so strong an aversion to business that he found it impossible for him to live longer in the country, he came up to London, that great receptacle of those who are either unable or unwilling to live anywhere else. Here he got into service as a footman with several persons of worth, and discharged his duty well (as indeed it was a kind of life which of all others suited him best), so that he obtained a tolerable reputation whereby he got into the service of one Mr. Fenwick, a gentleman of affluent fortune. Here it was that through desire of abounding in money he either drew in others, or was drawn in himself to commit that crime which cost him his life.

It seems that in Mr. Fenwick's family there was a great deal of plate used, which stood on a buffet. This tempted Cornwall, and it is highly likely gave him the first notion of attempting to rob the house. When he had once formed this project he resolved to take in one Rivers, a debauched companion of his, as a partner in the designed theft.

This Rivers was certainly easy enough prevailed on to join in the commission of this fact, and after several meetings to consult upon proper measures, Rivers at last proposed that their scheme should be put in execution as soon as possible; and that he might the more perfectly conceive how it was to be managed, he went home with Cornwall, and looked upon the house. Soon after this they held their last consultation, and Cornwall saying to Rivers that he must bring some other persons to assist him, Rivers made choice of one Girst, and coming with him at the appointed hour, Cornwall in his shirt opened the door and let them in. In the buffet there stood a lighted candle in a silver candle-stick, by which they were directed to the rest of the plate, which as soon as they had taken out, they placed all together upon the carpet, and fell next to rifling Mr. Fenwick's bureau, and took out a great quantity of linen, a lady's lace, the tea equipage, and two silver canisters. Then making it up in a bundle, it was carried to River's lodgings in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane.

All this could not be performed with so little noise as not to disturb the family. Mr. Fenwick himself heard the noise, being awakened by his wife, who had heard it for some time, but it ceasing they fell asleep again until one of the servants came up in the morning, and told his master that the house had been robbed, the plate taken away, and a window in the back parlour left open, about which, as he could observe no marks of violence, he was led to suspect it was opened by somebody in the family; upon which Cornwall and a maid in the house were immediately thought to have a hand in. However, as there was no sort of proof, Mr. Fenwick forbore seizing them at that time, and contented himself with advertizing his plate; which advertisement coming into the hands of a pawnbroker, to whom a part of it had been pledged, he immediately gave notice that it was pawned to him by Rivers. A warrant being upon this obtained for the searching of River's lodging, a note was there found, directed to Thomas Rivers, Glover, in Guy's Court, Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane, in which were these words:

Dear Tom,

Let me see you at seven o'clock to-morrow morning, at the Postern Spring, Tower Hill, be sure.

Joshua Cornwall.

Upon this Cornwall was immediately taken up and Girst readily offered himself an evidence. In a few days after, sessions coming on, Joshua Cornwall and Thomas Rivers were indicted for burglariously breaking the house of Nicholas Fenwick, Esq., and taking thence divers pieces of plate, to the value of eighty-five pounds nineteen shillings, holland shirts to the value of twenty pounds, and other goods of the said Mr. Fenwick, on the 8th day of September, 1730. This

indictment being fully proved, the jury found Thomas Rivers guilty thereof. But being dubious whether Joshua Cornwall, as a servant within the house of Mr. Fenwick, could be properly convicted of burglariously breaking into his said master's house, they found their verdict as to him special; which the judges having considered, they were unanimously of opinion that the crime was in its nature a burglary. Whereupon, at the following sessions at the Old Bailey, the criminal was brought to the bar, and being acquainted with their lordships' opinion, received sentence of death.

Under conviction, he behaved himself with great penitence, said he had not been guilty of many of those atrocious crimes commonly practised by such as come to that fatal end whither his folly had led him. At the place of execution he, with great fervency, justified the character of a young woman who had lived fellow-servant with him at Mr. Fenwick's. He declared, as he was a dying man, that she was not in the least privy to the injury done her master, and that he had no other than an acquaintance with her, without either having, or attempting any criminal conversation with her. Having done this justice, he seemed to die with much composure, in the twenty-second year of his age, on the 23rd of December, 1730.

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## LIVES OF THE CRIMINALS

### VOLUME THREE

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#### **The Life of JOHN TURNER, *alias* CIVIL JOHN, a Highwayman**

One of the most dangerous passions which can enter the breasts of young people, though at the same time it be one of the most common, is the love of finery and a mean and foolish ambition to appear better dressed than becomes their station, in hopes of imposing upon the world as persons of much higher rank than they really are. This inconsiderate, ridiculous pride brings along with it such a numerous train of bad consequences that of necessity it makes the person inflamed by it unhappy and often miserable for life. In the case now before us a was still more fatal by adding a violent and ignominious death.

John Turner was the son of a person in tolerable circumstances, in the county of Cornwall, where he received an education proper for that condition of life in which he was likely to pass through the world. His father was a man of good sense, and of a behaviour much more courteous and genteel than is usual among persons of ordinary condition in a county so remote from London. He was extremely desirous that his son should be like him in this respect, and therefore he continually cautioned him against falling into that rough boorish manner of behaving which is natural to uneducated clowns, and makes them shocking to everybody but themselves. In this respect John was very compliant with his father's temper, and being put out apprentice to a peruke-maker, his obliging carriage endeared him so much, not only to his master and the family but also to the gentlemen on whom, as customers to the shop, he sometimes waited, that they took a peculiar liking to the boy and were continually giving him money as a reward for his diligence and assiduity.

But John's obliging temper took a turn very fatal to himself, as well as very little suspected by his friends and relations. For having been made use of by some young sparks at Exeter (the place where he served his time) to carry messages to their mistresses, he from thence conceived so strong an inclination to become a beau and a gallant that, in order to it, he broke open his master's escritoire and took away a considerable sum of money. With this he came up to London and went to live as a journeyman with an eminent peruke-maker at the Court end of the town. There his easy and obsequious temper made him very agreeable to everybody, and his behaviour was so just and open that nobody in the neighbourhood had a better character than himself. Yet he was far from giving over those extravagancies the earnest desire of committing which had brought him to town; for nobody in his station made so handsome a figure as Mr. Turner.

His amours with the wenches in the neighbourhood were very numerous, though out of a point of honour he was careful enough in endeavouring to conceal them. But as they naturally led him into an expensive way of living, which what he got by his trade could in no degree support, he quickly found himself obliged to take to new methods, and thought none so concise and convenient as going upon the road. This he did for some time without arousing the least suspicion, behaving himself towards those whom he robbed with such gentleness and good manners, putting his hat into the coach and taking what money they thought fit to give him, nay, sometimes returning a part of that, if the dress or aspect of the person gave him room to suspect that their wants were as great as his. From this extraordinary conduct he obtained the name of Civil John, by which he was very well known to the stage coachmen, wagoners, and other such persons who travelled the Western road.

Common fame, which ordinarily multiplies the adventures of men of his profession, circulated a multitude of stories about him which had not the least foundation in fact, and served only to make the poor man more remarkable, and consequently the more easy to be taken; which was, accordingly, the effect of those foolish encomiums which the vulgar bestowed upon so genteel a robber. About six weeks after he had taken to this unfortunate course of life; and while he yet preserved an unstained reputation in the neighbourhood in which he lived, he was apprehended

for a robbery committed on Mr. Air, from whom he took but an inconsiderable sum; yet the fact being clearly proved against him at the next session at the Old Bailey, he was convicted, and having no relations capable of making interest sufficient to obtain a reprieve, he lost all hopes of life. Under sentence he conducted himself with much calmness, penitence, and resignation, confessing the truth of that charge which had been laid against him, acknowledging the justice of the Law in this sentence, and disposing himself to submit to it with much cheerfulness and alacrity.

This great change in his circumstance and manner of living, added to his own uneasy reflections upon those misfortunes into which vanity and ostentation had brought him, soon reduced him by sickness to so weak a state that he was incapable, almost, of coming to chapel alone. Notwithstanding this, he continued to frequent it, some of the people about the prison being so kind as to help him upstairs. As his vices arose rather from the imitation of those fine gentlemen on whom he had waited while a lad, so he did not carry them to that height which most of these unhappy persons are wont to do; on the contrary he was very sober, little addicted to gambling, and never followed the common women of the town. But dress, dancing bouts, and the necessary entertainments for carrying on his amours were the follies which involved him in these expenses, for the supply of which he thus hazarded his soul and forfeited his life.

When the death warrant came down his sickness had brought him so low that Nature seemed inclined to supersede the severity of the Law; but too short a time which intervened between it and its execution, and so he came to suffer a violent death at Tyburn a day or two before, perhaps, he would otherwise have yielded up his breath in his bed. Little could be expected of a person in his weak condition, at the place of execution, where, when he arrived he was utterly unable to stand up. However, with a faint voice he desired the prayers both of the minister who attended them and of the spectators of his execution, which happened on the 20th of November, 1727, in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

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### **The Life of JOHN JOHNSON, a Coiner**

In excuse of taking base measures to procure money there is no plea so often urged as necessity, and the desire of providing for a family otherwise in danger of want. The reason of this is pretty evident, since nothing could be a greater alleviation of such a crime. But the word necessity is so equivocal that it is hard to fix its true meaning, and unless that can be done, it will be as hard to judge of the reasonableness of such an excuse.

John Johnson, the criminal on whose life we are next to cast an eye, was born of a very honest and reputable family in the county of Nottingham, and received in his youth the best education they were capable of giving him. By this he became able to read tolerably and write well enough for that business to which he was bred, viz., a tailor. Throughout his apprenticeship he behaved himself virtuously and industriously, and left his master with the character of a faithful and deserving young man. When his time was out, and he had wrought for some time as a journeyman in the country, the common whim of coming up to London seized him; and after he had spent some time in town in working hard at his trade, he married a wife with whom he lived in good correspondence for many years, with the esteem and respect of all who knew him. But his family increasing and he consequently finding the charge of maintaining them rise higher than formerly, and, what was worse, that all he was capable of doing could not maintain them, he grew very melancholy.

After considering several projects for making his circumstances more easy, he at last pitched upon going into Lincolnshire, as a place where the cheapness of provisions might balance the number of mouths he had to feed. But he had not been long there before he discovered his mistake, for the smallness of wages made everything rather dearer than cheaper, which plunged him into new difficulties, and rendered him incapable of ease or satisfaction. While his wits were thus on the rack, and his invention stretched to the uttermost in order to find out some means or other to recoup his pockets, he unfortunately fell into the company of a man who, under the pretence of being his most zealous friend, became, though perhaps unwittingly, the instrument of his utter ruin. For his appearing ever disconsolate and melancholy gave the countryman an opportunity of prying into the cause of his concern, which he soon discovered to be the narrowness of his circumstances. As we naturally find ease in communicating our afflictions to others, so Johnson was ready enough to inform him of the truth of his affairs, and the man no less assiduous in endeavouring to help him out of these straits into which he had fallen.

At last, his Lincolnshire acquaintance told him there was but one way of recovering his misfortunes and living like a man without labour, to which Johnson began now to have a great aversion, and therefore he eagerly desired to be acquainted with this delightful way of getting on. With a grave face his associate told him that what he was about to propose could not be effected without some risk, but that a man could not expect to live without trouble or without hazard. Johnson said it was true, and desired only to be informed wherein the hazard consisted, as he would make no scruple of running it, for he lacked courage as little as any man.

Upon this his companion opened to him his whole scheme, which consisted in a method of counterfeiting the silver coin to a tolerable degree of likeness. Johnson was easily drawn in, for he thought there could be no speedier way of getting money than making it. His country friend helped him to the necessary implements, and Johnson applied himself with such earnestness to his new occupation that in a very short time he greatly outdid his master, giving the false money

he had made so perfect a similitude to the specie for which he made it that it was impossible to distinguish it by the eye. But thinking it much more hazardous to attempt putting off in the country than it would be in London, and his fellow labourer being of the same opinion, they first went to work and coined a considerable sum according to their method, and they came up to dispose of it, as Johnson had proposed.

By this time misfortune and remorse had taught the poor man whose life we are writing to addict himself too much to drinking, especially to strong liquors, so that the first experiment he made of the practicability of getting rid of his false money was in putting off two sixpences to a distiller for gin, in which he succeeded without being suspected. But going to a shoemaker's and buying there a ready-made pair of shoes, he was seized for attempting to pay the man with two bad half-crowns, which though they looked pretty well to the eye, were nevertheless much too light when they came to be weighed against the metal that it was intended they should pass for.

When carried before a Justice his heart soon failed him and almost as soon as he was asked he revealed the whole truth of the matter, impeaching both the countryman who had taught him and a person with whom they had trusted the secret here in town. However, his confession was of little benefit to him, for at the next sessions he was capitally convicted and from thenceforward cast off all hopes of life. As he was a man who did not lack good natural parts, during the short time he had to live he endeavoured to make his prayer to God for the forgiveness of the many errors of his life, attending also constantly at the time of public devotion. Yet for all this he could not be persuaded that there was any great degree of guilt in what he had done, but imagined on the contrary that he was much more innocent than his fellow malefactors, regretting, however, the heavy misfortune he had brought upon himself and family, two of his children dying during the time of his imprisonment, and his wife and third child coming upon the parish. In which sentiments he continued until the day of his execution, which was on the same with the before-mentioned John Turner, this criminal being then about fifty years of age.

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### **The Lives of JAMES SHERWOOD, GEORGE WEEDON and JOHN HUGHS, Street Robbers and Footpads**

Amongst the many artifices by which vice covers itself from our apprehension, there is no method which it more commonly takes, and yet better succeeds in, than by putting on a mask of virtue and thereby imposing the most flagitious actions upon us as things indifferent, sometimes as things which may gain applause.

This was exactly the case with the persons whose lives we are now about to write, who were all of them young men of tolerable education, but giving way to their vicious inclinations, they associated themselves together for the better carrying on those evil practices by which they associated their extravagances, into which lewd women especially had betrayed them.

James Sherwood, who was the eldest of them, and also went by the name of Hobbs, was the son of but mean parents, who, however, took all the pains that were in their power to educate him in the best manner they were able. When he grew up they put him out apprentice to a waterman, with whom he served his time, and was afterwards a seaman in a man-of-war. When at home he spent his time in the worst company imaginable, viz., idle young men and lewd, infamous women. As he had naturally a good understanding and quick apprehension, he quickly became adroit in every mystery of wickedness to which he addicted himself. However, Justice soon overtook him and his first companions in wickedness; upon which he turned evidence and saved his own life by sacrificing theirs. He was transported soon afterwards, but upon his finding it difficult to live abroad without working (a thing, for which he had an intolerable aversion) he took the first opportunity that offered of returning home again.

When he returned he fell to his old practices, taking up his lodgings at the house of one Sarah Payne, a most infamous woman who was capable of seducing unwary youths for the commission of the greatest villainies, and then ready to betray them to death, either to benefit or secure herself. By hers and Sherwood's means George Weedon was drawn in, a young man of very reputable parents, who had been brought up with the greatest care in the principles of virtue and true religion. It seems, however, that having contracted an acquaintance with a lewd and artful woman, who drew him into an excessive fondness for her, he yielded to the solicitations of Sherwood and his landlady, and took to such courses as they suggested, in order to supply himself with money for the entertainment of that strumpet who was his ruin. It was but a few days before his apprehension that he had been induced to quit the house of his mother, who had ever treated him with the greatest tenderness and affection, and instead thereof had taken lodging with the before-mentioned Payne, who continually solicited him to commit robberies and thefts.

At length John Hughs, *alias* Hews, another young man, joined them. Though bred up carefully to the trade of a shoemaker by his father, who was of the same profession, yet for many years he had addicted himself to picking pockets and such other low kinds of theft, but had never done any great robbery until he fell into the hands of Sherwood and Weedon; with whom he readily agreed to associate himself, and to go with them out into Moorfields and such other places near Town as they thought most convenient in order to waylay and rob passengers, and at other times, when such opportunities did not offer, to break open houses, and to divide their profits equally amongst them. These designs were hardly made before they were put into execution and a very short space elapsed before they had committed many robberies and burglaries, always bringing

the booty home and spending it lewdly and extravagantly in the house of that abandoned monster, Sarah Payne.

It may not be amiss to take notice here how common a thing it is for such wicked old sinners as this woman was, to set up houses of resort for lewd and abandoned women of the town, who, first getting young men into their company on amorous pretences, by degrees bring them on from one wickedness to another, till at last they end their lives at the gallows, and thereby leave these wretches at liberty to bring others to the same miserable fate. These agents to the Prince of Darkness are usually women who have an artful way of flattering and a pleasing deceitfulness in their address. By this means they, without much difficulty, draw in young lads at their first giving way to the current of their lewd inclinations, and before they are aware, involve them in such expenses as necessarily lead to housebreaking or the highway for a supply. When once they have made a step of this kind, by which their lives are placed in the power of those old practitioners in every kind of wickedness, they are from thenceforward treated as slaves and forced to continue, whether they will or no, in a repeated course of the like villainies until they are arrested by the hand of Justice. Then, none so ready to become evidences against them as those abominable wretches by whom they were at first seduced.

Such was the fate that befell these three unhappy young men, of whose courses information being given, they were all apprehended and committed close prisoners to Newgate, and at the next ensuing sessions not a few indictments were found against them. The first indictment they were all three arraigned upon was for felony and burglary in breaking open the house of one William Meak, in the night-time, and taking from thence twelve Gloster cheeses. But the evidence appearing clear only against Sherwood, *alias* Hobbs, he alone was convicted and the other two acquitted. They were then indicted a second time for breaking open the house of Daniel Elvingham, in the night-time, and taking out of it several quantities of brandy and tobacco; upon which both Sherwood and Weedon were, from very full evidence, convicted. On a third indictment for breaking into the house of Elizabeth Cogdal, and taking thence eight pewter dishes and twenty pewter plates, they were all found guilty; Sherwood and Weedon also being a fourth time convicted for a robbery on the highway, which was proved upon them by the testimony of their landlady, Sarah Payne.

Under sentence of death they all testified great sorrow for the offences of their misspent lives. Weedon was of a better temper than the two other, retained a greater sense of the principles of religion upon which he had been brought up in his youth and exceeded his companions in seriousness and steadiness in his devotions. Sherwood had been a much longer proficient in all kinds of wickedness than the other two, having practised several kinds of thefts for nearly eighteen years together, and this had habituated him so much to sin that he showed much less penitence than either of his companions. Hughs had been a thief in a low degree for some years before he fell into the confederacy of Sherwood and Weedon, to which, as he frankly owned, he was drawn by his own previous inclination rather than the persuasions of any of his companions.

As the time of their death approached they seemed much more affected than formerly they had been; in which frame of mind they continued till they suffered, which was on the 12th of February, 1728, Sherwood being in his twenty-sixth year, Hughs in the twenty-third, and Weedon in the twenty-second year of his age.

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### **The Life of MARTIN BELLAMY, a Notorious Thief, Highwayman and Housebreaker**

This criminal was amongst the number of those whom long practice had so hardened in his offences that he took up the humour of glorying in them, even under his confinement, and persisted in it to the hour of his death, drawing up, when under sentence (or at least giving instructions by which it was drawn up) an account of the several street-robberies, burglaries, and other crimes which he had committed, in a style which too plainly showed that nothing in his miserable condition afflicted him but the thought of his ignominious death he was to suffer, not even the reflection of those crimes which had so deservedly brought him to his fate. By trade he was a tailor and a good workman in his business, by which he lived in good credit for some time. It seems he married a woman whose friends, at least, were very honest people, and highly displeased with the villainous course of life he led. Insomuch that upon his being apprehended and sent to Bridewell on suspicion, his wife's brother came to him there in order to know where the prosecutor lived, that, as he said, he might go and make some proposals for making up the affair. Bellamy gave him the best account he could, and the man finding out the person, advised him to prosecute Martin with the utmost severity, in hopes, no doubt, that he should in this way rid his sister of a very bad husband. However, Bellamy was so irritated by the attempt that he would never cohabit with her afterwards, but with implacable hatred pursued her and her family with all the mischiefs he was able.

The methods which he and his gang mostly took in robbing, according to the account which, as I have before said, he has left us of himself, were chiefly these: the gang having met together in the evening used to go, three or four in a company, to visit the shops of those tradesmen who deal in the richest sort of toys<sup>[78]</sup> and other goods that are portable and easily conveyed away. Then one of the company cheapens something or other, making many words with the shopkeeper about the price, thereby giving an opportunity to some of his companions to hand things of value from one to another till they were insensibly vanished, the honest shopkeeper being left to

deplorable the misfortune of having such light-fingered customers find the way to his shop. Another practice of theirs, to the same laudable purpose, was carried on after this manner: three or four of them walked up and down several streets, which by observation they had found fitted for their purpose, and on perceiving things of any value lying in a parlour, they, with an engine contrived for that purpose, suddenly threw up the sash; and notwithstanding there being persons in the room, they would venture to snatch it out and often get clear off before the people who saw them could recover themselves from the surprise. But if there was nobody in the way, then one of their associates, slipping off his shoes, stole softly into the room and handed out whatever was of most value to his companions without doors.

But Bellamy was not only adroit in these ordinary practices, but was also perfectly acquainted with the art and mystery of counterfeiting hands; and as an instance thereof, upon which he much valued himself, he used to relate a trick of that sort which he put upon the late Jonathan Wild, after this manner: having accustomed himself for some time to frequent the levee of that infamous agent of thieves, he became so well acquainted with Jonathan's manner of writing and also with the persons who gave him credit on particular occasions when money was low. Whereupon he took occasion to forge a note from the said Wild to one Wildgoose, servant at an inn, who used to be Jonathan's banker upon emergencies, who, on receipt of the note, paid Bellamy the contents thereof without hesitation. A few days after, Mr. Wild and his correspondent met. The forgery was soon detected and Jonathan immediately gave directions to that infamous band of villains who were always in his pay and under his direction, to leave no means untried for the apprehending Bellamy, who from Wildgoose's description he knew to be the man who had been guilty of the forgery.

In the search after him they were so assiduous that in a very short space they surprised him at a house in Whitefriars, where he was forced to fly up to a garret in order to conceal himself. His pursuers thinking they had now lodged him pretty securely, sent notice of it to their master. But Martin perceiving a long rope lying upon a bed in the room where he hid himself, resolved for once to venture his neck; and having fastened it as well as he could, he slipped down by it into the street, with so great agility that none of his attendants perceived it till he was in the street, by which time he got so much the start of them that they found it but in vain to pursue him, and therefore laid by all thoughts of catching him until another opportunity.

However, the trick he had played them made them so diligent in pursuing him that it was but a very short time before they surrounded him in a brandy-shop in Chancery Lane, seized him and brought him in a coach to the Elephant and Castle alehouse, Fleet Street, from whence they dispatched advice to Jonathan of his apprehension. It happened that that great man was gone to bed when the message arrived with this news; however it was carried up and Jonathan with an air of generosity bid the fellow return and inform his people that he would take Mr. Bellamy's word, and that he might meet him with safety the next morning at his levee. Bellamy, who well knew the temper of the man, failed not to pay his court at the time appointed and adjourning to the Baptist Head tavern in the Old Bailey, after drinking a refreshing bottle, he presented Mr. Wild with five guineas, by way of atonement for the offence which he had committed against him. Jonathan was so well appeased by the intervention of the golden advocates that he promised not only to forgive him, himself, but also to prevail with Mr. Wildgoose to do the same, provided he entered into a bond for the repayment of the ten guineas. This was a condition easily submitted to by Martin in his present circumstances. This danger thus got over, he returned to his old profession without running any further hazard of Jonathan's interruption.

About this time the gang to which he belonged entered upon a new method of housebreaking, which they effected by stealing the keys which fastened the pins in shopkeepers' window-shutters and thereby removing the greatest difficulty they had of getting in. This trade they carried on successfully for a good space; though now and then they miscarried in their attempts, particularly at a goldsmith's shop in Russell Court, where, having got into the shop and being about to remove a show-glass, a man who lay in the shop suddenly started up and presenting a blunderbuss with a great presence of mind told the thieves that he was tender of shedding their blood and therefore advised them to get off as soon as they could. They took his advice and withdrew accordingly, with great confusion. But the same night they had, as Mr. Bellamy expresses it, much better luck at a toy-shop not far from the same place, where, entering the house, they found the maid sitting by the fire. She at first screamed, but they soon made her silent, and then proceeded to carry off the show-glass, with all the boxes that were contained in it.

Not long after this they broke off the padlock from a toy-shop in Swithin's Alley, in Cornhill. Not being able afterwards to enter the house they fell to work next upon the thick timber that supports the shutters, and after labouring at it about an hour, forced it off, whereupon all the shutters dropping down at once into the court, made so great a clatter that they doubted not that all the neighbourhood was alarmed, and thought it would be no ill night's work if, after such an accident, they had the good luck to escape. Upon which they endeavoured to shift, everyone for himself. However, seeing nobody alarmed at the noise of the falling of the shutters and that during two hours' time the watch had never passed that way, they took courage at last: and returned, entered the house, and putting up the most valuable goods, went off without any molestation.

A multitude of robberies of the same kind he confessed, but as they are narrated in the account we have so often mentioned, it would be a kind of imposition on our readers to transcribe those accounts there. Wherefore, in the following articles concerning him, we shall make no use at all

of any that is to be found there.

During the space he led this life he cohabited with one Amy Fowles, who passed for his wife and bore him several children. At last, though he had so often escaped, he was apprehended for a burglary committed on the house of Mr. Holliday, in Bishopsgate Street, and upon very full evidence was convicted at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey. After his commitment to Newgate he entered, it seems, into a treaty with a certain Justice of the Peace for making a full discovery of all his accomplices, which might at that time have contributed very much to the public advantage; but in the interim some person had talked thereof too openly, it came to the ears of one who collected news for a daily paper. This man thereupon went to Bellamy, making the poor fellow believe that he came to him by the direction of some persons in power (a thing not at all unlikely, considering that a proclamation had been issued but very little before for the better encouraging the discovery of and bringing first offenders to justice). And having by this means drawn the poor fellow into a confession of several robberies and burglaries, he digested it, or got somebody to do it for him, into proper paragraphs which were inserted the next day in a newspaper and gave thereby an opportunity to the persons impeached, of making their escape. This rogue, therefore defeated Bellamy of all hopes of pardon and hindered the public from receiving any benefit from his confession. All which enormous villainies were perhaps perpetrated for the sake of a poor crown, the utmost that could be expected by the collector for procuring this extraordinary passage big with so much mischief, and which in its consequences produced little better than a murder, since it is possible that Bellamy's life might have been saved if a right use had been made of his confession.

At his trial he behaved with great impudence and during the time he lay under sentence continued to affect that gaiety which amongst persons of his profession is too often mistaken for bravery and true courage. But when the fatal day approached he, as is common with most of them, sank much in his spirits and had a great deal to do to recover himself so as to be able to read the following paper, which he had written for that purpose and brought with him to the tree, which, as the words of a dying man, I publish verbatim:

A Copy of the paper read by Martin Bellamy at the Place of Execution

Gentlemen, I am brought here to suffer an ignominious death for my having wilfully transgressed against the known laws of God and my country. I fear there are too many here present who come to be witnesses of my untimely end rather out of curiosity than from a sincere intention to take warning by my unhappy fate. You see me here in the very prime of my youth, cut off like an untimely flower in the rigorous season, through my having been too much addicted to a voluptuous and irregular course of life, which has been the occasion of my committing those crimes for which I am now to suffer. As the laws of God as well as of men call upon me to Lay down my life as justly forfeited by my manifold transgressions, I acknowledge the justice of my sentence, patiently submit to the same without any rancour, ill-will or malice to any person whatsoever; hoping through the merits of Christ Jesus (who laid down His life for sinners, and who upon the cross pronounced a pardon for the repenting thief under the agonies of death) to be with Him permitted to partake of that glorious resurrection and immortality He has been so graciously pleased to promise to the sincere penitent. I earnestly exhort and beg of all here present to think seriously of eternity—a long and endless eternity!—in which we are to be rewarded or punished according to our good or evil actions in this world; that you will all take warning by me and refrain from all wilful transgressions and offences. Let a religious disposition prevail upon you, and use your utmost endeavours to forsake and fly from sin. The mercies of God are great, and He can save even at the last moment of life. Yet do not therefore presume too much, lest you provoke Him to cast you off in His anger, and become fearful examples of His wrath and indignation. Let me prevail upon you to forget and forgive me all the offences and injuries I have committed or promoted in action, advice or example; and entreat your prayers for me that the Lord would in mercy look down upon me in the last moment of my life.

His Prayer

Look down in mercy, O God, I beseech Thee, upon me a miserable, lost, and undone sinner. Number not my transgressions nor let my iniquities rise up in judgment against me. Wash me and I shall be clean; purge me and I shall be free from offence. Though my sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow if Thou pleasest but to receive me amongst those whom Thou hast redeemed, that I may sing praises to the Most High and extol Thy Holy Name in the courts of Heaven for ever and ever more. Amen.

He suffered on the 27th of March, 1728, being then about eight-and-twenty years of age.

[78]

Trinkets and such trifles, not children's playthings.



Although the insolency of those street-robbers to whose gang the malefactors we are now speaking of belong be at present too recent a fact to be questioned, yet possibly in future times 'twill be thought an exaggeration of truth to say that even at noon-day, and in the most open places in London, persons were stopped and robbed. The offenders for many months escaped with impunity, until those crimes became so frequent and the terrors of passengers so great that the Government interposed in an extraordinary manner, a royal proclamation being issued offering one hundred pounds reward for apprehending any offender, and also promising pardon to any who submitted and revealed their accomplices. This brought numbers of young rash youths who had engaged in this wicked course of life to a violent and ignominious death.

William Russell was descended from persons of honourable family and unblemished reputation. In his youth he had received a tolerable education, which even in his misfortunes rendered him more civilized than any of his companions. He was a young fellow of tolerable good sense, ready wit, and great courage; he always spoke frankly of the wickedness of his own life and acknowledged that sensual pleasures were only what he aimed at in the course of life he led; yet he had never been able to reap any satisfaction in them, but had been always miserable in his own mind, from the time he pursued those base methods of gaining money. His father being gone over to Ireland, and he left at liberty to pursue what methods he thought best, evil women and bad company soon prevailed with him to fall into those methods which afterwards led him to the gallows.

Robert Crouch, the second of these criminals, was born at Dunstable, of very honest parents who afforded him as good an education as it was in their power to give; and then, upon his own inclination to follow the business of a butcher, bound him to one in Newgate Market, with whom he served his time. But as soon as he was out of it he addicted himself to gaming, drinking and whoring, and all the other vices which are so natural to abandoned young fellows in low life. Dalton, who was an evidence against him, was one of the chief persons of his gang, and specially persuaded Crouch to join with him, though he had very little occasion to fall into such ways of getting money, since his father was a man in very good circumstances, who designed to set his son in his trade in a short time, having not the least suspicion that this melancholy accident would intervene.

William Holden, the third of these unhappy persons, was born of very mean parents, had little education, and had followed no particular trade, but had sometimes gone to sea, and at other times driven a hackney coach; so that throughout the whole course of his life he had been continually plunged in the grossest debaucheries, whereby he became ripe for such practices as he and his associates afterwards went upon.

It does not appear, from the papers that I have, that any of these criminals had followed that infamous course of life for above a year, when Dalton, to save his own life, surrendered and made a confession by which these and the rest of his associates were quickly apprehended and committed dose prisoners to Newgate. At the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey they were all indicted for assaulting one Martha Hide on the highway, and taking from her a broad-cloth coat, value forty shillings; a looking-glass, value thirty shillings; a woman's nightgown; and other goods, to the value of thirty shillings more. To prove this charge James Dalton was produced, who swore that about nine o'clock at night himself and the prisoners overtook the prosecutor, Martha Hide, in Fleet Street; and observing that she had a bundle they resolved to take it from her. In order to accomplish their design they followed her into Lincoln's Inn Fields, where Robert Crouch, *alias* Bob the Butcher, knocked her down and Russell took up the bundle and ran away with it. Upon their opening thereof the looking-glass fell out and was broke all to pieces. The rest of the things they sold to one Sarah Watts, who made it her business to buy stolen goods and kept what in their cant is called a 'lock', that is a place for the receipt of such things. Dalton swore, moreover, that not having carefully examined the things, they were extremely mortified to hear afterwards that there was forty shillings in specie wrapped up in a rag, which the woman that bought them got into the bargain.

Martha Hide, herself, deposed that crossing Lincoln's Inn Fields she was knocked down and the bundle taken from her as Dalton had before related. One Solomon Nicholas deposed that not long after, Russell and Crouch quarrelling between themselves at a brandy-shop, Russell said to his companion, *If you offer to meddle with Nicholas I'll cut the coat off your back, for it's the woman's coat that we knocked down in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and I have as much right to it as you have.* It appeared, also, by another witness, that Crouch pawned an old coat to pay for the altering of this, and after taking off a cloth cape which it had at the time of its being stolen, he caused a velvet one to be sewn on in its room. Mr. Willis, the constable, was the last witness called for by the prosecutor. He swore that at the time that he apprehended the prisoner Russell, he acknowledged that the goods before-mentioned were stolen and sold for one pound two shillings, but said he did not value it, since he should die in the company of such brave fellows.

The jury withdrawing after hearing this evidence, returned soon after and found them guilty, and sentence of death was passed upon them, at one of the fullest sessions which had happened for many years at the Old Bailey, there being twenty-two men and seven women capitally convicted.

As these unhappy men could have little hope of life, considering the nature and notoriety of their offences; they ought certainly to have laid aside all other thoughts and have applied themselves strictly, beseeching pardon of God for their numberless offences against Him. Instead of this, there appeared too much affectation of unconcernedness in all of them, especially in Russell, who, being confined in the same cell with Holden, said to his companion a day or two before his

death, with an air of indifference, *I'll undertake, Will, to procure a coach to carry off our bodies from the place of execution; but I must leave it to the care of your fraternity* (meaning the hackney coachmen) *to prevent their being seized on by the surgeons.* Holden heard all this very gravely, assented to the proposition without altering his countenance or giving any other mark of his concern for that infamous death which shortly they were both to suffer.

Russell also took a certain pleasure in speaking of the state of street-robbing at the time they left the world. He averred that the town was much mistaken in imagining that the king's proclamation had effectually crushed their fraternity, into which opinion they perhaps might be drawn by seeing so many of them perish in so short a time; which, he said, did not lessen their society, but would, notwithstanding that, put all that remained of them upon bolder exploits than ever, to show that they were yet unchanged. In which conjecture he was not very much out. However, he said, gentlemen might now safely walk the streets without fear of having their pockets picked, for that Benjamin Branch, who died the last sessions, and Isaac Ashley, who was to suffer with him, were the two neat masters in that way, and were capable of earning fifteen or sixteen shillings by it in two or three hours' time; sorting the fruits of their industry into several parcels, from the value of sixpence to half a crown apiece as dexterously as any milliner in London.

After the coming out of the death warrant Russell laid aside much of his boldness, appeared with more gravity at prayers and expressed greater sorrow for his misspent life than he had done before. Crouch carried himself very quietly all along, but could not forbear being unseasonably merry and jocose upon several occasions, smiling at chapel and affecting to talk with greater gaiety than became his condition. He himself owned that this was very unbecoming in a person so near an ignominious death, but he said it was in his temper, and he could not help it. He frankly acknowledged the enormity of that course of life which for some years past he had led, acknowledged that on the coming out of the king's proclamation he had resolved on a four years' voyage to sea, but was prevented from putting it in execution by Dalton's information. As the time of their death drew near he became more and more sensible of his miserable condition and the danger there was of losing his soul as well as his body.

William Holden at first denied very strongly his being in any degree guilty of the fact for which he died; but when he heard that Russell had owned it and at the same time confessed that he was concerned in it, thinking it no further use to adhere to that denial he retracted it and acknowledged that he had been a great sinner, and had committed several thefts before that for which he died. In a word, these three, as they had been companions together in wickedness and fellow-sufferers in the punishment which their crimes had drawn upon them, so they appeared to be all of them sensibly touched with sorrow and remorse for that multitude of crimes which they had committed, endeavouring to merit the pardon of God by hearty prayers and a sincere repentance. Russell, however, declared but a day or two before his execution that Dalton, the evidence, had proposed to him to join in that information he gave against their companions, but that he scorned to save his life by so mean a practice as betraying those who had received him into their friendship.

Their deportment at the place of execution was resolute without obstinacy or impenitence, and the last moments of their lives were full of seriousness, without any marks of timorousness or confusion. Russell was about twenty-five, Crouch about twenty, and Holden somewhat more than twenty-eight years of age at the time they suffered, which was on Monday, 20th of May, 1728.

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**The Lives of CHRISTOPHER, *alias* THOMAS RAWLINS; ISAAC ASHLEY, *alias* ALSEBY; JOHN ROUDEN, *alias* HULKS; EDWARD BENSON, *alias* BROWN, *alias* BOYSTON; GEORGE GALE, *alias* KIDDY GEORGE; THOMAS CROWDER; JAMES TOON; JOHN HORNBY; WILLIAM SEFTON; and RICHARD NICHOLS, Thieves, Street-Robbers, Housebreakers, etc.**

Although the several criminals whose lives we are now going to relate do not so well tally with one another, they having been of different gangs and dying for various offences, yet as they were all apprehended in consequence of the before-mentioned proclamation, were street-robbers and most of them not unknown to each other, I thought it would be better to speak of them here all at once rather than divide them into several lives. I have very little to say of any of them worthy the attention of the reader.

To begin, then, with Christopher, *alias* Thomas Rawlins. He was the son of very honest parents here in town, who brought him up as well as their circumstances would permit, and when he grew big enough to go out to a trade put him apprentice to a silversmith with whom he served out his time with tolerable reputation. But being a lad of great gaiety and spirit, having much addicted himself to the company of young fellows of a like disposition, frequented dancing meetings, and taken delight in everything but his business, such inclinations as these easily betrayed him to the commission of the greatest crimes and a certain alertness in his temper made him very acceptable to those debauched young fellows who were his usual companions to such places. Whether he was at first seduced by the persuasions of others to the committing thefts and robberies, or whether those necessities to which their extravagancies had reduced them put him and his associates on taking such measures for filling their purses, is hard to be determined. But certain it is that for some time before his being apprehended he had been very busy in committing such exploits and for his courage and dexterity was looked upon as one of the

chief of the gang.

Isaac Ashley, who was Rawlins's companion, and who went commonly amongst them by the nickname of Black Isaac, was a fellow of a very different cast. His parents were poor people, who had, indeed, taken as much care as was in their power of his education and afterwards provided for him as well as they were able, putting him out to a weaver in Spitalfields. But he made them a very ill return for all their care and tenderness, proving an obstinate, idle and illiterate fellow, willing to do nothing that was either just or reputable, and who, except for his dexterity in pocket-picking was one of the most stupid, incorrigible wretches that ever lived. He followed the practice of petty thieving for a considerable space, but though he got considerably thereby, he lost his money continually at gaming, and so remained always in one state, viz., very poor and very wicked; which is no very uncommon case amongst such sort of miserable people, who lavishly waste what they hazard their souls and throw away their lives to obtain.

John Rouden, *alias* Hulks, the latter being his true name, had the advantage of a very tolerable education, the effects of which were not obliterated by his having been many years addicted to the vilest and most flagitious course of life that can possibly be imagined. The principles with which he had been seasoned in his youth served to render him more tractable and civilized when under his last misfortunes, unto which he fell with the two afore-mentioned malefactors; they being all indicted for assaulting one Mr. Francis Williams on the highway, and taking from him a silver watch value three pounds, two guineas and a moidore,<sup>[79]</sup> on the 28th of February, 1728. The prosecutor deposed that going in a hackney coach, between Wading Street and St. Paul's School he heard the coachman called on to stop; immediately after which a man came up to the side of the coach, presented a pistol and demanded his money. Four more presented themselves at the coach windows, offering their pistols and saying they had no time to lose. One of them thereupon thrust his hand into his fob and took out his money and his watch. Jones next produced the watch to the Court and said he had it from Dalton, who was the third witness called to support the indictment. He deposed that himself, the three prisoners at the bar, and another person not yet taken, were those that attacked the coach; that himself came up first and Rouden afterwards, who took the watch, as himself did the money, Rawlins and he secreting one guinea from their companions and afterwards pawning the watch for two guineas more.

Mr. Willis, the constable, swore that having received information of certain disorderly persons, he thereupon went and apprehended Dalton, the evidence, who, making an ingenious confession, told him of the robbery committed on Mr. Williams and where the prisoners then were; whereupon he went immediately to apprehend them also. Dalton produced a pistol after he was apprehended, and declared that Rawlins had the fellow to it which was loaded with a slug. When they came to the place where the prisoners were, Rawlins and Rouden made an obstinate defence, sword in hand, and were with great difficulty taken, while Ashley hid himself under the bed, in hopes of making his escape in the confusion. Mr. Willis's brother swore to taking a pistol from Rawlins, such as Dalton had described, and which was loaded with a slug.

The prisoners had nothing to say in their defence except flatly denying everything, and averring that they did not so much as know Dalton. But Mr. Wyatt being produced, swore to the contrary of that, affirming that they were very intimate and that they all lodged together at his house. The jury having received their charge from the judge, took but a small time to consider, and then returning, brought in their verdict that they were all guilty; whereupon at the close of the sessions they received sentence with the rest.

Edward Benson was the son of very reputable persons in the City of London, who had taken all due care in providing him a suitable education with respect both to the principles of learning and of religion; and when he was at years of discretion, they put him out apprentice to a silver-wire-drawer. In himself he was a young man of good understanding, of a sweet temper and but too tractable in his disposition, which seems to have been the cause of most of his misfortunes. For during the time of his apprenticeship, being so unlucky as to fall into bad company, he was easily seduced to following their measures; although he was far enough from being naturally debauched, and seemed to have no great vice but his inclination to women, which occasioned his marrying two wives, who notwithstanding lived peaceably and quietly together. The papers I have do not give any distinct account of the manner in which he first came to join in the execrable employment of plundering and robbing in the streets, and therefore it may be presumed he was drawn into it by his companions whom we are next to mention.

George Gale, *alias* Kiddy George, was a perfect boy at the time of his suffering death, and though descended of very honest parents, who no doubt had given him some education in his youth, yet the uninterrupted course of wickedness in which he lived from the time of his being able to distinguish between wrong and right had so perfectly expunged all notions of justice or piety, that never a more stupid or incorrigible creature came into this miserable state. Thomas Neeves<sup>[80]</sup>, who had been their associate in all their villainies, was the person who gave information against him, Benson, and several other malefactors we shall hereafter speak of. Gale, as is common with such people, complained vehemently against the evidence who had undone him. As death approached he shed tears abundantly, but was so very ignorant that he expressed no other marks of penitence for his offences.

Thomas Crowder was a young man of an honest family and of a very good education. His friends had put him out apprentice to a cabinet-maker. Before he was out of his time he thought fit to go to sea, where, for aught appears by our papers, he behaved himself very honestly and industriously. Coming home from a voyage, a little before his death, he was so unfortunate as to

fall into the company of Neeves, the evidence, who, pretending to have money and an inclination to employ it in the Holland trade, prevailed on poor Crowder to attend him three or four days, in which space Neeves was married and had great junkettings with his new wife and her friends. In the midst of this they were all apprehended, and Neeves, with how much truth must be determined at the Last Day, put this unhappy man into his information and gave evidence against him at his trial, when Benson, Gale and this Crowder were indicted for assaulting James Colver on the highway, and taking from him a watch value forty shillings, and five shillings in money. For this offence, chiefly on the oath of Neeves, they were all capitally convicted.

James Toon was another of those unhappy persons who suffered on the oath of Neeves. He had spent his time mostly upon the water, having been a seaman for several years, and after that a bargeman. He was a young man of tolerable good sense, very civil in his behaviour and in nothing resembling those who are ordinarily addicted to robbing and thieving. His parents were persons in tolerable circumstances, and had taken a due care of his education. The particular crime for which he died was assaulting James Flemming, in the company of George Gale and Edward Brown, *alias* Benson, and taking from him, the said Flemming, a silver watch value forty shillings, and two guineas in money, the third of April.

John Hornby had been bred for some time at school, being descended of honest parents, who put him apprentice to a joiner. But being naturally inclined to idleness and vice, in a short time he had occasion to take base and illegal methods to acquire money. His necessities were also increased through foolishly marrying a woman, while he was yet a perfect boy and knew not how to maintain her. Picking pockets was his first resource, and the method of thieving which he always liked best and got most money at; but being of a very easy temper, his companions found it no hard thing to persuade him into taking such other methods of robbing as they persuaded him would be more beneficial, and in this Benson seems to have been one of his chief advisers. In himself, Hornby was good-natured and much less rude and boisterous than some of his companions. He had been but a very short time engaged in the street-robbing practice and did not seem to have courage or boldness sufficient to make himself considerable amongst his companions in those enterprises, which in all probability was the reason that while under confinement they treated him but very indifferently, and sometimes went so far as to give him ill names and blows, which he endured without saying much, and seemed perfectly resigned to the several punishments which his own iniquities had brought upon him. The crime for which he died was a robbery committed on the highway, upon the person of one Edward Ellis, from whom was taken a silver watch, value four pounds, and two guineas in money.

William Sefton was born in Lancashire, and during the life-time of his father received a tolerable education. But on his mother's marrying another husband, Sefton, who had been bred a barber and peruke-maker, finding things not to go to his mind, came up to London. But changing place did not seem to make him much easier, so that after having led an unsettled life for a considerable space, he became at length a common soldier. 'Twill be easily imagined that this choice of his did not much better his fortunes and possibly the company which his military life obliged him to keep served only to increase his courage so far as to enable him to take a purse on the highway; a practice he had pursued with pretty good success a considerable time before he was taken. But being a naming, close fellow, he robbed with so much precaution that he was little suspected until taken up for the offence for which he died, which was for assaulting Henry Bunn on the highway, and taking from him a silver watch, two pieces of foreign gold, and two pounds eleven shillings in money.

Richard Nichols was a man in the middle age of life, of a grave and civil deportment, of good character, and who was a barber and peruke-maker. He had lived by his profession without the least suspicion of his being guilty of any such crime as that for which he died. He was convicted, chiefly on the evidence of Neeves, for feloniously stealing nine silver watches and a gold watch, the property of Andrew Moran and others in the dwelling-house of the said Moran. As there was nothing remarkable in this man's life, and as it did appear that he was not flagrantly guilty of any other vice except drinking and wasting his own money, so it would be needless to dwell longer upon his adventures prior to his condemnation; therefore we shall go on to speak of the behaviour of these criminals while they remained under sentence of death.

Christopher Rawlins seemed to retain much of his old boisterous temper, and though he would bring himself to speak with more decency concerning the great duty of repentance which now alone remained for them to practise, yet in a little time he would fly out into strange and blasphemous expressions, for which being reproved by William Russell, whom we have before mentioned as being under sentence at the same time, he answered, *What does it signify to prepare ourselves, since we have passed through so wicked a life in this world and have now so short a time to remain in it?* He frequently expressed a despair of God's mercy though after the death warrant came down he appeared somewhat more easy, and in a better disposition to offer up his prayers to the Almighty. As to the crimes for which he suffered, he readily and ingenuously confessed them, owning the justice of the sentence which had been passed upon him and expressed this sense of the multitude of offences which he had committed, such as he acknowledged deserved no mercy here, nor, without the interposition of the mercy of God hereafter. Yet in the midst of these expressions of penitence he could not forbear doing something in his old way, and a few days before his execution actually cut the tassels from the pulpit cushion in the chapel.

Ashley was very frank in his confessions of numberless thefts which he had committed in the course of his wicked and licentious life; but he peremptorily denied that he had any concern

whatsoever in the robbery for which he was to die, and this was confirmed by Rawlins and Benson, who said that they, indeed, committed it, but that Ashley was no ways concerned therein. However, as far as his stupid disposition would give him leave, he sometimes expressed great penitence for the deeds which he had committed. Yet the Sunday before his death he stole five or six handkerchiefs at chapel, of which when the Ordinary spoke to him at the place of execution, he only said that it was true, but that he must have something to subsist on.

Rouden acknowledged the justice of his sentence, that he was guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, and behaved in every respect like a true and sincere penitent. Benson showed the same easiness and sweetness of temper which he had always been remarkable for, even to the last moment of his life. He expressed, indeed, much sorrow for his having lived deliberately in a continued course of adultery with two women who both of them averred that they had been lawfully married to him. He frankly confessed his own guilt, and that the sentence of the Law was just, dying, as far as we are able to judge, in a composed and penitent disposition of mind.

George Gale, though he owned he had for some time been a thief, yet he absolutely denied his having any concern in the robberies before mentioned; but he averred that Neeves, knowing his character, took the advantage of putting him in the information, as knowing that he had neither friends nor interest to make his innocence appear. Indeed, Benson did so far confirm what Gale had said that he owned he alone committed the robbery for which he was convicted, and to this they both adhered to their last moments at the place of execution, where Gale wept bitterly, and with all outward tokens of sorrow confessed the multitude of sins he had committed throughout the whole course of his life.

Thomas Crowder persevered even to death in denying any concern with Neeves, further than his being deluded with the hopes of joining with him in a trade to Holland and France; yet the Ordinary tells us in his account of these criminals that he had reason to believe that Crowder, notwithstanding this, was guilty, because a gentleman averred that he had owned as much to him in the chapel the very day he died.

James Toon continued to behave with a uniform submission to the decrees of Providence, absolutely denied his being guilty of the fact for which he was convicted, yet acknowledged that he had led a very sinful life, and therefore looked on it as a great mercy of the Providence of God that he had so much time to reflect and repent in. Hornby wept and lamented grievously for the miseries which he had brought on himself and those who were related to him, said he had for a long time been guilty of illegal practices, but would not acknowledge that he had been guilty of that for which he was condemned.

Sefton appeared under condemnation to have a very just idea of the wretched state he was in, the necessity there was of preventing, by a thorough repentance, a yet more severe judgment than that under which he then lay. He acknowledged the crime for which he died, said he had been drawn to the commission of it by the persuasion of a person whom he named, and at the place of execution declared he died sorry for all his sins and in charity with mankind. He had hardly been turned off a minute before the rope broke and he fell to the ground, but the sheriff's men laying hold on him, he was soon tied up again and so executed in pursuance of his sentence.

Richard Nichols, as he always behaved with great decency and was of a sober, serious and religious disposition, so he constantly affirmed (though without vehemence or any signs of passion) that he knew nothing of the robbery whereof he stood convicted, but that his life was basely sworn away by Neeves the evidence, without the least grounds whatsoever, he having never associated himself with street-robbers or been concerned in any sort of thieving whatever. In this he persisted to the time of his death, repeating it and averring it at the place of execution; and, indeed, there is the greatest reason to believe that he spoke nothing but the truth, because Thomas Neeves, the witness, when he came afterwards to die at Tyburn, did acknowledge that he knew nothing of Nichols, nor had ever seen him before his being committed at the Justice's, and begged that God would pardon his crying sin of perjury and murder in taking the life of an innocent man.

These malefactors suffered on the 20th of May, 1728; Rawlins being twenty-two, Ashley, twenty-six; Rouden, twenty-four; Benson, twenty-four; Gale, seventeen; Crowder, twenty-two; Toon, twenty-five; Hornby, twenty-one; Sefton, twenty-six; and Nichols, forty years of age.

[79]

A Portuguese gold coin current in England, worth about 23s.

[80]

See page [463](#).

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### **The Lives of RICHARD HUGHS and BRYAN MACGUIRE, Highwaymen and Footpads**

Idleness, lewd women and bad company are the sum total of those excuses urged by criminals when they come to be punished, even for the most flagrant offences. With just reason Richard Hughs exclaimed on them all, for from youth upwards he had ever addicted himself to laziness and a dislike to that business to which he was bred, viz., that of a bricklayer. Following loose

women was the thing in which he took most delight, and was probably the occasion of his subsequent misfortunes. The immediate cause of them was his acquaintance with William Sefton before-mentioned, with whom he joined in a confederacy to rob on the highway, a thing to which his necessities in some measure drove him, since he had squandered all he had in the world on those abandoned women with whom he conversed, and had contracted so bad a reputation that he found it hard to be employed in his business.

Into this wretched confederacy entered also the other offender, Bryan Macguire, an Irishman born in the county of Wicklow. He had been bred a sawyer, but was never very well pleased with the trade which required so much hard labour. However, he worked at it some time after he came to England, but some of his countrymen persuading him that it was much easier to live by sharping, a practice they very well understood, he readily fell into their sentiments and soon struck out a new method of cheating, which brought them in more and with less hazard than any of the ways pursued by his associates. The artifice was this: by repeated practice he found a way to pull his tongue so far back into his throat that he really appeared to have none at all, and by going to coffee-houses and other places of public resort for the better sort of people, he, by pretending to be dumb and then opening his mouth and showing them what looked only like the root of a tongue, obtained large charities. He had great success in this cheat for a long time, but at last was discovered by a gentleman's blowing some snuff into his throat, which, by setting him a-coughing, detected the imposture.

Then, being very straitened, he fell in with Sefton and Hughs with whom having cheated and tricked for a little space, they at last came all to an agreement of going together upon the highway and sharing their booty equally amongst them. However, their partnership was of no very long continuance, for in nine or ten days they were all apprehended and brought to condign punishment. Hughs had been a soldier as well as Sefton, and had quitted the Army to go upon the highway, which was a very luckless occasion for him. Being quickly apprehended he was charged with five several capital indictments, to all of which, when he came to be arraigned, he resolutely pleaded guilty; and when admonished by the Court that the crimes with which he was charged were felonies without benefit of clergy, he persisted therein, saying that he would not give the judge nor the gentlemen of the jury unnecessary trouble.

Macguire was indicted on four of the indictments which had been preferred against Hughs, and capitally convicted upon them all. He was no sooner under sentence than he declared himself to be of the communion of the Church of Rome. However, he attended constantly at the chapel, seemed to listen earnestly to what was said there, and made responses very regularly to the several prayers, a thing which Papists very seldom comply with. However, Bryan appeared to be a very reasonable man in this respect, saying that he hoped God would be satisfied with that imperfect atonement which he was able to make for his offences, and would not impute it to him as a sin that he had taken all occasions which offered of presenting his petitions for remission. In this disposition he continued until the day of his execution, when both he and Hughs appeared very composed and penitent, desiring the prayers of those who were witnesses of their death, submitting thereto with all exterior marks of proper resignation, on the 26th day of June, 1728; Hughs being twenty-four and Macguire twenty-eight years of age or thereabouts.

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### **The Life of JAMES HOW, *alias* HARRIS, a notorious Highwayman and Thief**

Though, generally speaking, the old saying holds true that nobody becomes superlatively wicked at once, yet it may be also averred that a long and habitual course of vice at last so hardens the soul that no warnings are sufficient, no dangers so frightful, nor reflections so strong as to overcome lewd inclinations, when their strength has become increased by a long unrestrained indulgence.

The criminal of whom we are now to speak was a native of the town of Windsor, in the county of Berks. His parents were honest people in middling circumstances, who yet took such care of his education that he was fit for any business to which he would have applied himself. But he, on the contrary, continuing to lead a lazy and indolent course of life, sauntering from one place to another, and preferring want and idleness to industry and labour, at last became so burdensome to his relations that with much ado they sent him to sea. There being of a robust constitution and of a bold, daring spirit, he quickly gained some preferment in the ship on board of which he sailed and might possibly have done very well if he had continued at sea for any time, having the good luck to serve on board the admiral's vessel, and to be taken notice of as a sprightly young fellow, capable of coming to good.

But alas! James soon blasted this prospect of good fortune, for no sooner was he on shore than laying aside all the views he had formed of rising in the Navy, he associated himself with some of his old companions. They persuaded him to take a purse, as the shortest and easiest method of supporting those expenses into which his inclinations for sensual pleasures naturally plunged him. He too easily listened to their persuasions and from that time forward he left nothing unstolen upon which he could lay his fingers.

Punishment did not pursue his crimes with a leaden pace; on the contrary, he had scarce offended ere she made him sensible of the offences. Bridewells, prisons, duckings, lashings, and beatings of hemp were made familiar to him by his running through them several times in the space of a few years. At length, as he increased the guilt of his crimes, so he added to the weight

of his sufferings; for after having been at Newgate several times for lesser offences, he was at last committed for a felony, and being convicted thereof, was ordered for transportation. Rightly conceiving that if he was carried into the Plantations he would be obliged to work very hard, which he most dreaded, in order to escape he forged a letter as from a certain man of quality directing that he should be set at liberty in order to serve as a good hand on board of one of his Majesty's ships. His old ill luck pursuing him, the forgery was detected and he was thereupon ordered to remain two years at hard labour in Bridewell; but when he was brought thither, the keeper absolutely refused to have anything to do with him. They knew him of old and said that he was a fellow only fit to make the other criminals who were there unruly, by projecting and putting them into way of making their escape. Upon this he was carried back to Newgate and remained a prisoner for that space of time.

How he came by his liberty again I cannot take upon me to say; all that appears from my papers is that he made a very ill use of it as soon as he obtained it, returning immediately to the commission of those crimes for which he had before forfeited it. At length turning housebreaker he was committed for feloniously stealing five pounds out of the house of John Spence, for which fact, at the sessions following, a bill of indictment was found against him, and he was thereupon arraigned.

At first he insisted that overtures had been made in order to procure discoveries from him, and therefore he desired that he might be admitted an evidence. The Court informed him that they would enter into no altercations with a prisoner at the bar; that he had heard the nature of the charge preferred against him; and that now they could hear nothing from him unless he pleaded guilty or not guilty. He persisted obstinately in his first demand, and in consequence thereof obstinately refused to plead. Whereupon he was told from the Bench that such behaviour was not a proper method to excite the mercy of the Court, that it was not in their power to comply in any degree with what he desired, but that on the contrary they should proceed to pass sentence upon him as a mute, by which he would be subjected to a much greater and more grievous punishment than if he were found guilty of the crime of which he was accused. All this made no impression upon the criminal; he said he could but die, and the manner in which he died was indifferent to him. And so sentence, as is usual in such cases, was pronounced upon him, and he was ordered to be carried back and put into the press. But when he had carried it so far, and found there was no avoiding that cruel fortune which was appointed for such obstinate persons as himself, he desired time till the next morning to consider his plea, which being permitted him, he that time pleaded guilty.

While under sentence of death something very extraordinary occurred in relation to this malefactor. It seems that one Mrs. Dawson had a parcel of plate, consisting of two silver tankards, two silver mugs, a silver cup and a punch ladle, seven pounds sixteen shillings in money, and a great quantity of papers of considerable value, stolen out of her house. She suspected one Eleanor Reddey, and caused her to be apprehended, who thereupon confessed that she opened the door of her mistress's house in the night-time and let in one William Read; that she saw him take away the plate and watched, in the meantime, to observe if anyone came. Upon this confession she herself was convicted, but no evidence appearing against William Read, who was tried with her, he was acquitted.

After she received sentence of death she declared herself absolutely innocent of the fact for which she was to die, affirming that as soon as she was taken up some neighbours persuaded her to make such a confession, and to charge William Read with stealing the things, assuring her that if she did so, she would preserve herself by coming a witness against him. Being a silly timorous creature in herself, and terrified by their suggesting that if she did not take the method they proposed, somebody would infallibly swear against her, she with much ado assented; and being carried before Justice Jackson, made and signed such a confession as is before mentioned.

But How, *alias* Harris, whose life we are now writing, declared that he, himself, robbed Mrs. Dawson, and that he had a considerable quantity of the plate and most of the papers in his power, offering to restore them if the said Mrs. Dawson had interest enough to procure a pardon either for himself or Eleanor Reddey. But the Ordinary assured him that Mrs. Dawson could do no such thing, and at the same time exhorted him to make what restitution was in his power, since otherwise his repentance would remain imperfect and small hope could be given him of his meeting with forgiveness from an offended God. At first this seemed to have little or no weight with the criminal; he expressed himself very civilly when spoken to on that head, but peremptorily refused to do anything towards making satisfaction to Mrs. Dawson, unless she could do something for him or the woman.

But when death approached nearer he began to relent, sent for the Ordinary and told him that, as for the plate, it was indeed out of his power, but for that the papers, he had caused them to be brought in a box which he delivered and desired they might be kept carefully, because he was sensible that they were of great value to their owner.

At the place of execution he seemed desirous only of clearing his wife from any imputation of being concerned with him in any of his villainies and then suffered with much resignation, on the 11th of September, 1728, being near thirty-eight years of age.

Griffith Owen, the first of these unhappy criminals, was the son of very honest parents who had given him a very good education in respect both of letters and religion. When he was grown up they put him out apprentice to a butcher in Newgate Market, with whom he served his time, though not without committing many faults and neglecting his business in a very marked degree, addicting himself too much to idle company, the usual incitements to those crimes for the commission of which he afterwards suffered.

His companion Harris, if Owen were to be believed, first proposed robbing as an expedient to the supply of their pockets, to which he too readily gave way; and having once ventured to attack he never suffered himself nor his companions to cool. For the space of about six weeks, keeping themselves still warm with liquor, they committed five or six robberies, for which at last they were all apprehended. And as they had been companions together in wickedness, so they shared also in imprisonment and death as the consequences of those offences they had committed.

Samuel Harris, though he had received a very tolerable education as to reading and writing, yet he never applied himself to any business, but served bricklayers as a labourer, in company with his fellow-sufferer Medline. But having been all his life addicted to lust and wickedness, he proposed robbing to his companions as the most feasible method of getting money wherewith to support their debauches and the strumpets who used to partake with them at their houses of resort. He confirmed what Owen had said, and acknowledged that during the time they continued their robberies, never any people in the world led more profligate and more uneasy lives than they did; being always engaged in a continual circle of drunkenness, violence and whoredom; while their minds were continually agitated with the fear of being apprehended, so that they never enjoyed peace or quiet from the time of their betaking themselves to this course of life unto the day of their apprehension and coming to the gallows.

Thomas Medline was born more meanly than either of his companions, and had so little care taken of him in his youth, that he could neither read nor write. However, he applied himself to working hard as a labourer to the bricklayers, and got thereby for some time sufficient wherewith to maintain himself and his family. At last, giving himself over to drink, he minded little of what became of his wife and children, and falling unhappily about the same time into the acquaintance of the before-mentioned malefactor Harris, he was easily seduced by him to become a partner in his crimes and addicted himself to the highway.

It was but a very short space that they continued to exercise this their illegal and infamous calling, for venturing to attack one Mr. Barker, on the Ware Road, and not long after Dr. Edward Hulse,<sup>[81]</sup> they were quickly apprehended for those facts, and after remaining some time in Newgate, were brought to their trials at the Old Bailey.

There it was sworn by Mr. Barker, that he observed them drinking at an alehouse at Tottenham, the very evening in which he was robbed; and that apprehending them to be loose and disorderly persons he took more than ordinary notice of their faces; that about a mile from Edmonton church they came up with him, and notwithstanding he told them he knew them, they pulled him off his horse and robbed him of five pounds and sixpence; that returning the next day to the place where he was robbed, he found sevenpence, which he supposed they had dropped in their hurry.

On the second indictment it was desposed by one Mr. Hyatt that he suspected the prisoners, from the description given by Mr. Barker and Doctor Hulse, to be the persons who had robbed them; he thereupon apprehended them upon suspicion, and that Mr. Barker, as soon as he saw them, swore to their faces.

Doctor Hulse deposed that they were the persons who robbed him of his watch and money, and that he had particularly remarked Owen as having a scar on his face. Thomas Bennett, the doctor's coachman, swore that Owen was the man who got upon the coach-box and beat him, and afterwards robbed his master; that not contented therewith, they beat the witness again, knocked out one of his teeth, and broke his own whip about him. Henry Greenwood confirmed this account in general, but could not be positive to any of the faces except that of Owen. The jury, in this proof, without any long stay found them all guilty.

While under sentence of death they all behaved themselves with as much penitence and seeming sorrow for their offences as was ever seen amongst persons in their condition. They attended as often as Divine Worship was celebrated in the chapel, and appeared very desirous of instruction as to those private prayers which they thought necessary to put up to God, when carried back to their several places of confinement.

Harris seemed a little uneasy at the Ordinary's remonstrating with him that he was more guilty than the rest, inasmuch as he first incited them to the falling into those wretched methods by which they brought shame and ruin upon themselves. He answered that there was little difference in their dispositions, having been all of them addicted for many years to the greatest wickedness which men could practise; that his companions were no less ready than he to fall upon such means of supporting themselves in sensual delights. As he averred this to their faces they did not contradict it, but seemed to take shame to themselves and to sorrow alike for the evils they had committed.

They ended their lives at Tyburn, on the 11th of September, 1728, with all outward signs of true repentance; Owen being twenty, Harris twenty-nine, and Medline thirty-nine years of age at the time of their execution.



An eminent Whig doctor who was later appointed physician to George II. He was created a baronet in 1739.

**The Lives of PETER LEVEE, JOHN FEATHERBY, STEPHEN BURNET, *alias* BARNET, *alias* BARNHAM, and THOMAS VAUX, Street-Robbers, Footpads, Thieves, etc.**

In the course of these memoirs I have more than once remarked that a ridiculous spirit of vainglory is often the source of those prodigious mischiefs which are committed by those abandoned persons, who addict themselves to open robberies, and the carrying on, as it were, a declared war against mankind. Theft and rapine may to some appear odd subjects for acquiring glory, and yet it is certain that many, especially of the younger criminals, have been chiefly instigated in their most daring attempts from a vain inclination to be much talked of, in order to which this seemed to them the shortest course. But these observations that I have made will be better illustrated from the following lives, than they could have been any other way.

Peter Levee was descended from honest and reputable parents, who gave him a very good education, and afterwards bound him out apprentice to a silk weaver; but such as the perverse disposition of this unfortunate Lad, such his love of gaming, and such his continual inclination to debauched company, that nothing better could be expected from him than what afterwards befell him. Yet his understanding was very tolerable, he did not want a sufficient share of wit, and in a word his capacity altogether might have enabled him to have lived very well, if his prodigious vices had not prevented it by hurrying him into misfortunes. It was remarkable in this criminal that his long habit of carrying in the detestable trade of stealing, to which he had incurred himself in every shape as much as possible, had given so odd a cast to his visage that it was impossible for a man to look him in the face without immediately guessing him to be a rogue.

While yet a boy, he had been so accustomed to confinement in the Compter, especially in Wood Street, that he had contracted a friendship with all the under-officers in that prison, who treated him with great leniency as often as he came there. Picking pockets, sneaking goods out of shops, snatching them through windows, and such other petty facts, were the employments of his junior years. As he grew bigger, he grew riper in all sorts of villainy, though never a fellow had worse luck in dishonest attempts, for he was always detected, and very frequently had gone through the lesser punishments of the Law, such as whipping and hard labour. At one time he lay four years in Newgate for a fine, and this finished the course of his villainous education, for from the time he got out, he never ceased to practice robbing in the streets, and on the roads to the villages near London, until he and his companions fell into the hands of Justice, and went altogether to their last adventure at Tyburn.

John Featherby, the second of these criminals, had received a greater share of education than any of the rest. His father had been a man of tolerable circumstances, and with great care provided that this young fellow should not be ignorant of anything that might be necessary or convenient for him to know in that business for which he designed him, viz., a coach-painter. But he did not live to see him put apprentice to it, which his mother afterwards took care to do, and consequently he had not the misfortune of seeing him live so scandalous a life, and die so shameful a death.

His understanding was tolerable, but his behaviour so rude, boisterous and shocking that he left no room even for that compassion to which all men are naturally prone when they see persons under sentence of death. The desire of appearing brave and making the figure of a hero in low life was in all probability the occasion of his acting so odd a part, and as he was generally looked upon as their chief by those unfortunate creatures who were of his gang, possibly he put on this ferocity in his manner in order to support his authority, and preserve that respect and superiority of which these wretches are observed to be inexpressibly fond.

Stephen Burnet, *alias* Barnet, *alias* Barnham, which was his true name, was a child when he died, and a thief almost from his cradle. His parents, who were people of worth, sent him to school with a design, doubtless, that he should have acquired some good there; but Stephen made use of that time to visit a master of his own choosing, the celebrated Mr. Jonathan Wild, at whose levy he was a pretty constant attendant and while an infant he was a most assiduous companion and assistant to the famous Blueskin.

My readers may be perhaps inquisitive how an infant of eight years old could in any way assist a person of Blueskin's profession. For their information, then, perhaps for their security, I must inform them that while Blueskin and one of his companions bought a pair of stockings, or two or three pairs of gloves in a large Shop, Stephen used to creep on all fours under the counter, and march off with goods perhaps to the value of ten, twelve, or twenty pounds. But, alas, he was not the youngest of Mr. Wild's scholars. I myself have seen a boy of six years old tried at the Old Bailey for stealing the rings of an oyster women's fingers as she sat asleep by her tub, and after his being acquitted by the compassion of the jury, Jonathan took him from the bar, and carrying him back upon the leads, lifted him up in his arms, and turning to the spectators, said, *Here's a cock of the game for you, of my own breeding up.*

But to return to Barnham. His friends no sooner found out the villainy of his inclinations, but they

took all methods imaginable to wean him from his vices. They corrected him severely; they offered him any encouragements on his showing the least visible sign of amendment, they put him to seven several trades upon liking. But all this was to no purpose, nothing could persuade him to forsake his old trade, which following with indefatigable industry, he made a shift to reach the gallows of an old offender, at almost nineteen years of age.

After he, Featherby, Vaux and Levee became acquainted, they suffered no time to be lost in perpetrating such facts as were most likely to supply them with money, roving abroad almost every night, in quest of adventures and returning very seldom without some considerable prey. Perhaps my readers may be inquisitive as to what became of all this money. Why, really, it was spent in drink, gaming and in whores, three articles which ran so high amongst these knight-errants in low life that Barnham and two more found a way to lavish an hundred and twenty pounds on them in three weeks.

On one of his nocturnal expeditions, in company with Levee and Featherby, they robbed one Mr. Brown, in Dean's Court by St. Paul's Churchyard, of a gold watch and thirteen guineas; upon which the gentleman thought fit, it seems, to offer in the newspapers a reward of five guineas for restoring the watch. Not many days after, he received a penny-post epistle from Mr. Barnham, in which he was told that if he came to a field near Sadler's Wells, and brought the promised reward of five guineas along with him, he should there meet a single person at half an hour after six precisely, who would restore him his watch without doing him any injury whatsoever. At the time appointed the gentleman went thither, found Barnham walking alone, well dressed with a laced hat on, who immediately came up to him, and receiving the five guineas presented him with his watch.

Mr. Brown having no more to do with him, immediately turned round about to go back, upon which Barnham produced a pistol ready cocked from under his coat. *You see*, says he, *it is in my power to rob you again; but I scorn to break my word of honour.* Levee and Featherby, it seems, were posted pretty near and, as they all declared, intended to have shot the gentleman if he had brought anybody with him, or had made the least opposition or noise.

At Kingston assizes he was tried for a robbery committed in Surrey, but for want of sufficient evidence was acquitted, upon which he returned immediately to his old trade. About three months before he was apprehended for the last time, he came into Little Britain (the place where he was born), produced a silver spoon and fifteen shillings in money, declared it to be the effects of that day's exploits, and then climbing up a lamp-post, thrust his head through the iron circle in which in winter time the lamp is placed, declaring to the neighbours who called him and advised him to reform, that within three months he would do something that should bring him to be hanged in the same place. As to the time he was not mistaken, though he was a little out as to the manner and place of his execution, and we mention this fact only to show the amazing wickedness of so young a man, of which we shall hereafter have occasion to say a great deal more.

Thomas Vaux was a fellow of no education at all. Whether he had been bred to any employment or not I am not able to say, but that which he followed was sweeping of chimneys, the profits of which he eked out with thefts, in which he continued undiscovered for a long space of time. In himself he was a fellow void of almost every good quality, disliked even by his own companions for his brutal behaviour which he still kept up even under his misfortunes, and ceased not to behave with an obstinate perverseness even to the last moment of his life.

The fact for which all this gang suffered was for robbing one Mr. Clark, at the corner of Water Lane, in Fleet Street,<sup>[82]</sup> which at their trial, was proved upon them by witnesses in the following manner:

Mr. Clark, the prosecutor, deposed that going in a coach from St. Paul's to the Inner Temple, he saw three or four persons dogging it from a toy-shop at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard; that he scarce lost sight of them until he came to the end of Water Lane, where Barnham and Vaux stopped the coach; he then looked out and saw them very plainly. Levee stepped into the coach, put his hand into his pocket, and tore his breeches down in taking out the things; Featherby all the while holding a pistol to his breast The things they took from him were a silver watch, value four pounds, a diamond ring, three pounds eleven shillings in silver and fourteen guineas.

Then the confessions of Levee and Barnham before Sir William Billers, Knight and Alderman, were read, in which they owned that they committed the robbery on Mr. Clark, and that Featherby and Vaux assisted therein. Sir William also attested that they made the said confession freely and without any promises made, or being threatened in case of refusal. Thomas Wood swore that going to apprehend Featherby and one Cable, in a house in Blue Boar's Head Alley, in Barbican, they both snapped their pistols at him, but that neither of them went off.

Mary Vaux, wife of the prisoner Thomas Vaux, having first excused herself from giving any testimony against her husband, deposed that she saw the rest of the prisoners commit the robbery at the end of Water Lane, and that Levee got into the coach. Upon which evidence taken altogether the jury found them guilty without going out of the Court.

When they received sentence of death, they all behaved themselves very audaciously, except Levee who appeared penitent, and excused himself of the misbehaviour he had been guilty of at his trial. During the time they remained under sentence of death in Newgate, this last mentioned criminal, Levee, appeared truly sensible of that miserable state in which he was. He attended the

public devotion at Chapel with great seriousness, except when his audacious companions pulled him and disturbed him, when he would sometimes smile. As he had passed through the former part of his life without thought or reflection, so he seemed now awakened all at once to a just sense of his sins. In a word, he did every thing which so short a space could admit of, to convince those who saw him that he minded only the great business he had to do, viz., the making of his peace with that God who he had so much offended.

Featherby, as has been said, persisted in that brutal behaviour for which he had been remarkable amongst his gang. At chapel he disturbed the congregation by throwing sticks at a gentleman, laughing and talking to his companions, sometimes insulting and beating those who were near him, and in fine encouraged the rest of his companions to behave in such a manner that the keepers were reduced to the necessity of causing them all four to be chained and nailed down in the old condemned hold, for fear of their committing some murder or other before they died, which they often threatened they would do. There they continued for three or four days, until upon the promise of amendment and behaving better for the future, they were released, brought back again to their respective cells, and at times of public devotion up to chapel.

When the death warrant came down, Featherby pretended to be much more moved than could be expected, seemed in dreadful agonies at the remembrance of his former wicked and impudent behaviour, prayed with great fervency, and said he hoped that God would yet have mercy on him. Barnham continued unmoved to the last. He did, indeed, abstain from ill-language and disturbing people at chapel, but employed his time in his cell, in composing a song to celebrate the glorious actions of himself and his companions. This was work he very much valued himself upon, and sending for the person who usually prints the dying speeches, he desired it might be inserted, but it containing incitements to their companions to go on in the same trade, in the strongest terms he was capable of framing them in, his design was frustrated, and they were not published.

Vaux behaved a little more civilly after their being stapled down in the condemned hold, but throughout the time of his confinement appeared to be a very obstinate and incorrigible fellow. Levee was twenty-four years old; Featherby about the same age; Barnham near nineteen; and Vaux twenty-three, at the time they suffered, being on the 11th of November, 1728, in company with nine other malefactors.

A Paper written by Featherby's own hand, which he delivered to the Ordinary of Newgate in the Chapel immediately before they went to be executed.

As it is my sad misfortune to come to this untimely end, I think it my duty to acknowledge the justice of Almighty God, and that of my country, and I humbly implore pardon of the Divine Goodness, and forgiveness of all that I have injured, or any ways offended. It is a sad reflection upon my spirit that I have had the blessing and advantage of honest and pious parents, whose tender care provided for my education, so that I might have lived to God's glory, their comfort and my own lasting felicity. But I take shame to myself, and humbly acknowledge that by the evil ways I of late followed I neglected my duty to my great Creator, and brought grief to my dear and tender mother. And having thus far, and much more, effended against God and man, I hope and earnestly desire, that no prudent nor charitable person will reflect upon my good mother, or any other friend or relation for my shameful end.

John Featherby

[82]

Now called Whitefriars Street.

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### **The Life of THOMAS NEEVES, Street-Robber and Thief**

There are some persons so amazingly destitute of reason, so exceedingly stupid, and of so sleepy a disposition of mind, that neither advice, nor danger, nor punishment are capable of awaking them; they pass through life in a continual lethargy of wickedness, nor can they be obliged to open their eyes even when at the point of death.

How shocking, how horrid soever such a character may be, certain it is that the criminal Neeves, of whom we are now speaking, deserved no better. His parents, though mean, had not omitted the care of his education so far but that he had learned to read and write, which they thought qualification sufficient for the business in which they intended to breed him, viz., a cane chair-maker, to which employment they put him apprentice. He did not serve out his time with his master, for having got into an acquaintance with some lewd, debauched persons, he, whose inclination from his youth turned that way, went totally into all their measures, and quitting all thoughts of an honest livelihood, thought of nothing but picking and stealing.

He associated himself with a woman of the same calling, who probably furthered him in all his attempts, in consideration of which he married her, and they were both together in Newgate for their several offences. In the former part of this volume<sup>[83]</sup> we have mentioned his becoming a witness against several street-robbers, who were executed upon his evidence; of whom George Gale, *alias* Kiddy George, Thomas Crowder, James Toon, and John Hornby, denied the commission of those particular facts which he swore upon them, and Richard Nichols (who was a

grave sober man) went to death and took it upon his salvation, that he was never concerned either in that act for which he died, or in any other of the same kind during the course of his life.

As the town naturally abhors perjuries which affect men's lives, and are not very well affected towards evidences even when they do not exceed the truth, so the misfortune of Neeves being a second time apprehended, instead of creating pity, gave the public a general satisfaction. At the sessions following his confinement he was indicted for privately stealing out of the shop of Charles Lawrence a corduroy coat value thirteen shillings. In respect of this robbery, the prosecutor deposed that Thomas Neeves, about seven in the evening, came into his shop, he being a salesman, and enquired for a dimity waistcoat; one accordingly was shown him, but they not at all agreeing in the price, Neeves on a sudden turned towards the door, and having with some earnestness cursed the prosecutor, snatched up a coat and ran away. Upon which Mr. Lawrence followed him, crying out, *Stop Thief!* which Neeves himself also bawled out as loud as he could until he was taken. Upon this evidence the jury found him guilty.

Under sentence of death his behaviour was much of a piece with what it was before. As to his confession, he would make none, saying he would give no occasion for books or ballads to be made about him. Even in chapel he behaved himself so rudely that he occasioned great disturbance, and put the keepers under a necessity of treating him with more severity than was usual to persons under his miserable condition. When alone in his cell he expressed great diffidence of the mercy of God, seemed to be in a slate of despair, and though he was often pressed to declare whether depositions he had given against the afore-mentioned street robbers were true or not, he either waived making an answer, or used so much evasion or equivocation that it still remained doubtful whether he swore truth or no.

As his end drew yet nearer, he appeared more and more confused and uneasy, but not a bit more penitent or ready to confess, notwithstanding that several persons, and some of them of distinction had applied to him in the cells and earnestly exhorted him to that purpose. He also drank excessively, though so near his end, and his conscience so loaded with such a weight of horrible offences.

Yet it is very probable that he would have been much more tractable in his temper and ingenuous in his confessions, if he had not been continually visited and kept warm by a certain bad woman he at that time owned for his wife. This wretched creature was employed by some persons who thought themselves in danger if Neeves should once become truly penitent, to keep him full of idle thoughts and delusive promises to the very hour of his death, in which (from the temper of the fellow), they flattered themselves his cowardice would make them safe. In which wicked design both they and she succeeded but too well, for he continued careless, obstinate and impenitent to the last moment of his life, and at the place of execution staggered and was scarce able to stand, bawling out to a man in a coach who was to carry away his body, until the Ordinary reprimanded him and told him he believed he had drunk too much that morning; to which Neeves answered, *No indeed, Sir, I only took a dram.* He then besought him that a Psalm might be sung, which request of his being complied with, he yet could not forbear smiling while they were singing.



AN EXECUTION IN SMITHFIELD MARKET  
(From the *Newgate Calendar*)

The father and wife of Mr. Nichols, the barber so often mentioned, got into the cart and earnestly enquired whether the deposition he had given against him was the truth or not. Neeves, thereupon, with tears in his eyes owned that it was not, and thence fell into a greater agony than he had ever been perceived in before, beseeching God to have mercy on him for shedding innocent blood, into which he had been induced by the persuasion of others, who represented it to him as a means for getting money both for them and him, owning that he never saw Nichols in his life before they were at the justices together. After this he cried two or three times unto God

to forgive him, and so was turned off with the rest on the 27th of February, 1729, being then about twenty-eight years of age.

[83]

See page [445](#).

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## **The Lives of HENRY GAHOGAN and ROBERT BLAKE, Coiners**

Notwithstanding the number of those who have been executed for this offence, yet of late years we have had frequent instances of persons who rather than groan under the burden of poverty or labour hard to get an honest livelihood, have chosen this method of supplying their extravagances and consequently have run their heads into a halter.

Henry Gahogan, an Irishman of mean parents (who had however bestowed so much education upon him that he attained writing a very fair hand), in order to get his bread set up the business of a writing-master in that part of Ireland, where there were few masters to strive against him. Here he behaved for some time so well, that he got the reputation of being an honest industrious young man; but whether business fell off, or that his roving temper could no longer be kept within bounds, the papers I have do not authorise me to determine.

He went upon his travels, and passed through a great part of Europe in the quality, as may be conjectured, of a gentleman's servant, until two or three years before his death, about which time he brought over the art of coining into England, which he had been taught by a countryman of his, as an easy and certain resource whenever his difficulties should straiten him so far as to make its assistance necessary. This happened no very long time after his coming over thence, for in a short time his extravagancies reduced him so much that one of his countrymen thought he did him a great service in recommending him to one Blake, for an usher, which Blake at that time set up to teach young gentlemen to fence, having a school for that purpose near the Temple.

Thither Gahogan came accordingly, and after staying for two days successively, and finding no scholars came, he opened the case to his master that was to have been and told him how easy it was to get money and live well, provided they had but utensils for coining, and soon after he showed him a specimen of his art, which he performed so dexterously that at first sight they promised themselves prodigious matters therefrom. They engaged one Ferris, who formerly had wrote as a clerk to a gentleman of Lincoln's Inn and the Temple, but adventuring to trust another person with that secret, he soon after made a confession and impeached them all. Upon which this Gahogan, Blake and the before-mentioned Ferris, together with two women, came to be tried for this offence on an indictment of high treason.

The evidence was very clear, and notwithstanding the assurance with which Blake and Gahogan behaved at the bar, and the perplexed defence which was made by Ferris (who fancied himself so sure of being acquitted that he directed horses to be hired in order to his going down to a country assizes, there to assist as solicitor for a notorious offender), the jury, after a short stay, brought them in guilty, but acquitted the women, of whom the one was the mother of this Gahogan and the other the mistress or wife of the said Robert Blake, of whom we are next to speak.

He was by birth also of the Kingdom of Ireland, his parents being people of some condition, who gave him a very good education and afterwards put him out apprentice to a linendraper. After he was out of his time he married a woman with some little fortune, by whom he had three children, and after misusing her greatly, went away from her into England. Here he led a loose, debauched life, and subsisted himself, to give it the best phrase, rather upon the ingenuity of his head than the industry of his hands. Here he found means to draw aside a farmer's daughter, to whom he was married, and whom he involved so far in his misfortunes, as to bring her to the bar with himself for high treason, where her marriage was so far of service to her that it excused her from bearing a share in his conviction.

After they were found guilty, Gahogan expressed much penitence and sorrow, acknowledged the heinous offences of which he had been guilty, and expressed particular concern for the ill-usage he had given his poor mother, whom he had often beaten and abused, for whom he was once committed to Bridewell on that score, which effectually ruined what little reputation he had left. Before the day of execution came he was exceedingly poor and destitute, so that he had scarce clothes wherewith to cover him, or food sufficient to preserve that life which was so suddenly to be finished at the gallows. As far as we are able to judge from the man's outward behaviour, he was a sincere and hearty penitent, only it was with great difficulty he forgave the persons concerned in his prosecution, which however at last he declared he did, and passed with great resignation and piety, though by a violent death from this world to another, and we may charitably hope, a better.

As to Blake, his behaviour was not so much of a piece at first, but when he perceived death inevitable, notwithstanding his having procured a reprieve for a week, and thereby escaped dying with his companion Gahogan, the prospect of his approaching dissolution wrought so far upon him that with much seeming penitence he made a frank confession of all his offences, reflecting chiefly on himself for having deserted his wife, and living for so many years with other women. When the week for which he had procured a reprieve was expired, he was carried alone on a hurdle, which is usual in cases of high treason, and being come to the place of execution he stood

up and spoke to those who were present in the following terms:

Good People,

I am brought here justly to suffer death for an offence the nature of which I did not so well comprehend at the time I committed it. I have been the greatest of all sinners, addicted to every kind of lust, and guilty of every manner of crime, excepting that of murder only. You that are assembled here to see the unfortunate exit of an unhappy man, take warning from my fate, and avoid falling into those extravagancies which necessarily bring persons to those straits which have forced me upon taking undue courses for a supply. This is the end proposed by the Law for making me a spectacle, and I pray God with my last breath that you may make that use of it.

After this he betook himself to some private devotions, and then suffered with great constancy and resignation of mind. He was executed on the 31st of March, 1729, being then about thirty-eight years of age. Gahogan died on the 24th of the same month, being then thirty years of age.

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### **The Life of PETER KELLEY, *alias* OWEN, *alias* NISBET, a Murderer**

Whether there be really any gradation in crimes, or whether we do not mistake in supposing the transgression of one Law of God more heinous than that of another, would be a point too difficult and too abstract for us to enter into, but as human nature is more shocked at the shedding of blood than at any other offence, we may be allowed to treat those who are guilty of it as bloody and unnatural men, who besides their losing all respect towards the laws of God, show also a want of that compassion and tenderness which seems incident to the human species.

The unhappy person of whom we are now to speak, was by birth an Irishman, and his true name Mackhuen, but upon his coming over into England he thought fit to change it for Owen, thereby inclining to avoid being taken for any other person than an Englishman. His parents were, it seems, persons so low in the world that they could not afford him any education, so that he was unable either to write or read at the time of his death. However, they put him out apprentice to a weaver, with whom having served his time, he came over to England, and worked for a little time at his trade. But growing idle, and being always inclined to sopping, he chose rather to go errands, or to do anything rather than work any longer.

It seems he played with great dexterity upon two jews' harps at a time, and this serving to entertain people of as loose and idle a disposition as himself, he thereby got a good deal of money, or least drink (which was to him all one, for without it he could not live), and his delight in an alehouse was so great that he seldom cared to be out of it. People in such houses finding they got money by his playing upon the jews' harp, and thereby keeping people longer at the pot than otherwise they were inclined to stay, used to encourage Peter by helping him to errands; but amongst all the persons who were so kind as to supply his necessities, there was one Nisbet, an old joiner in the neighbourhood, who was never weary of doing him kindnesses. Having repeated these often and for a long time together, Kelley at last began to call the old man father, and there seemed to be an inviolable friendship between them, Peter always preserving some respect towards him, though he seemed to have lost it towards everybody else.

One night, however, or rather morning, for it was near two o'clock, Kelley came with many signs of terror and confusion to the watch-house, and there told the constable and attendants that old Nisbet was murdered and lay weltering in his bed and a razor by him. The watch, knowing Peter to be a wild, half-witted drunken fellow, gave little heed to his discourse, and so far they were from crediting it that they turned him out of the watch-house, and bid him get about his business. In the morning old Nisbet's lodgers not hearing him stir at his usual hour, went to the door, and there made a noise in order to awake him. Having no answer upon that, they sent for a proper officer and broke the door open, where they found the old man with his throat cut in a most barbarous fashion, overflowed with the torrent of his own blood, which was yet warm. No sooner did the particulars of this horrid murder begin to make a noise, but the watch calling to mind what Kelley had told them, immediately suspected him for the murder, and caused him quickly to be apprehended and committed to Newgate.

On the trial the strongest circumstances imaginable appeared against him, so much that the jury, without much hesitation, found him guilty, and he, after a pathetic speech from the Bench, of the nature and circumstances of his bloody crime, received sentence of death with the rest. Under conviction he appeared a very stupid creature, though as far as his capacity would give him leave he showed all imaginable signs of penitence and sorrow, and attended with great gravity and devotion at the public service in the chapel, notwithstanding he professed himself to be in the communion of the Church of Rome. He acknowledged the deceased Mr. Nisbet to have been extraordinarily kind and charitable to him, even to as great a degree as if he had been his own child, but as to the murder, he flatly denied his committing it, or his having any knowledge of its being committed; and though he was strongly pressed as to the nature of those circumstances on which the jury had found him guilty, and which were so strong as to persuade all mankind that their verdict was just, yet he continued still in the same mind, protesting his own clearness from that bloody and detestable crime. In this disposition of mind he suffered at Tyburn, being at that time about forty years of age or somewhat under.

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## The Lives of WILLIAM MARPLE and TIMOTHY COTTON, Highwaymen

That violence with which, in this age, young people pursue the gratification of their passions without considering how far they therein violate the laws of God and their country, is the common and natural source of those many and great afflictions which fall upon them; and though they do now always bring them to such exemplary punishment as befel the criminal whose memoirs we have undertaken to transmit to posterity, yet they fail not of making them exceedingly uneasy and grievously unhappy, consequences unavoidably entailed on these destructive pleasures, so contrary to the nature of man's soul, and so derogatory from that excellence to the attainment of which he was created. Although one would imagine these observations must naturally occur at some time or other to the minds of persons who ever think at all concerning the design of their own being yet experience convinces us that they very seldom do, and if they do, they make but very little impression.

William Marple, the first of these criminals, was descended from parents of very tolerable fortune, as well as unblemished reputation. Their care had not only gone so far in providing him with useful and common learning, but had also been careful in bestowing on him an excellent education in schools both in town and country. The use he made of them you will quickly hear, which cannot however be mentioned as a reflection on his unhappy parents, who were as industrious to have him taught good, as he was in pursuing evil.

When he grew to years capable of being put out to business, the unsettled giddiness of his temper sufficiently appeared, for being put out to three several trades at his own request, he could not bring himself to any of them, but went at last to a fourth which was that of a joiner, with whom he stayed a considerable space. But before the expiration of his time he fell in love with a young woman and married her, which coming with other stories to his master's ears, occasioned such difference that they parted.

Marple was prodigiously fond of his new married wife, and what is a pretty rare circumstance in this age, his fondness proved the greatest advantage possible to him, for the young woman being in herself both virtuous and industrious, her temper (as it is natural for us to imitate what we love) made so great an impression upon Marple that from a wild, loose and extravagant young man, he became a sober, diligent and honest workman, labouring hard to get his bread, and living at home with his wife in the greatest tranquility and with the utmost satisfaction. But the agreeable beauty of this scene was soon darkened, or rather totally destroyed, by the death of his wife; for no sooner were the transports of his melancholy over than he returned to his old course of life. And in order to efface effectually that grief which still hung over him, he removed out of town to an adjacent village, where he quickly contracted an intimate acquaintance with a young woman, and thereby almost at once put all thoughts of sorrow and honesty quite out of his head. This creature was of a very different disposition from Marple's late wife. She had no regard for the man, farther than she was able to get money out of him; and provided she had wherewith to buy her fine clothes and keep her in handsome lodgings, she gave herself no trouble how he came by it, and this carriage of hers in a short time put him upon illegal methods of obtaining money.

Who were his first companions in his robberies is not in my power to say; it was generally looked upon that one Rouden seduced him, but Marple declared this to be false, and perhaps the best account that can be given is that he was led to it by his own evil inclinations, and his necessities in which they had brought him. However it were, during the time he practised going upon the road nobody committed more robberies than he himself did, preying alike upon all sorts of people, and taking from the poor what little they had, as well as plundering the rich of what they could much better spare.

In Marylebone Fields he and his companion Cotton met with a poor woman with a basket on her head, who gained her livelihood by selling joints of meat to gentlemen's families. The first thing they did was to search her basket, in which there was a fine leg of mutton, which these gentlemen thought fit to dress and eat next day for dinner. They then commanded her to deliver her money, which she declared was a thing out of her power, because she had none about her; upon which they took her pocket and turned it out, where finding seven shillings, Marple struck and abused the woman for daring to tell him a lie.

Amongst the rest of the acquaintance that Marple picked up, was a young man who had a very rich uncle who, though he was very willing to do anything which might be for the real good of his nephew, did not think it at all reasonable to waste his fortune in the supply of the young man's extravagances. This spark, with another, acquainted Marple how easy a thing it would be to rob the old man of a considerable sum of money. They readily came into the project, and accordingly it was put into execution; Marple and the nephew actually committing the robbery, and the other man standing at the door till they came out. The booty they got was about thirty-six guineas, which they divided into three parts. In a very short time, Marple was apprehended and committed to Newgate for this very fact. However, the old man would not prosecute him, because he would not expose his relation.

Yet this was no warning to Marple who continued his old trade, and committed thirty or forty robberies in a very short space. Drinking was a vice he abhorred, and the chief cause for which he addicted himself to this life of rapine was his associating himself with all sorts of lewd women, amongst whom he became acquainted with the infamous Elizabeth Lion,<sup>[84]</sup> mistress to Jack Shepherd, who grew quickly too impudent and abusive for Marple's conversation, for when he

fell under his misfortunes he declared that she was the vilest and most abominable wretch that ever lived. However, to the immodest, lascivious carriage of this woman, he owed the sudden dislike he took to that sort of cattle; which became so strong that he no longer frequented their company, but married a second wife, a young woman of a handsome person, of a good character, and who, as he said, was totally ignorant of the measures he took for getting money.

Timothy Cotton, the second of these malefactors, was descended of mean, yet honest parents, who in his infancy had not spared to give him a very good education, and bred him to get an honest livelihood to the trade of a poulterer. In this, when he grew up, he was for a time very industrious, and got thereby sufficient to have maintained himself and his family, as well as he could reasonably expect; but happening unluckily to call into the acquaintance and conversation of lewd women, they soon took up so much of his thoughts, his time and his money, that he was obliged to think of easier methods of getting it than those to which hitherto he had applied himself. For it is a truth deducible from uninterrupted experience that a whore is not to be maintained at the same easy expense with a wife. Cotton found this to his cost, for he had not committed above five robberies, of which three were with his companion Marple, who had been his schoolfellow, before he was apprehended.

The first of their exploits, I have already told you, was plundering the poor woman's basket. The second was upon the Hampstead Road, where they stopped the coach and robbed the passengers. Three gentlemen coming by on horseback, Marple presented his pistol, and commanded them to ride off as hard as they could; but the fear with which they were seized made them so far mistake his words as to apprehend he bid them deliver, and so they went very readily to work, putting their hands into their pockets to satisfy his demands. But Marple having no guess of their intention, and perceiving them to stand still, repeated his order to them to ride off, with greater vehemency than before, which as soon as they apprehended they very readily complied with, and rode off as hard as their horses would carry them. A little while after this they robbed one Stout, who was servant to Captain Trevor, of his hat, two pounds of butter, his buckles, five and sixpence in money, and some other trivial things. For this fact they were both apprehended, and at the next sessions at the Old Bailey tried and convicted upon very full evidence.

Under sentence of death Marple appeared with less concern than is usually seen in persons under such unfortunate circumstances. He however confessed a multitude of offences with which he was not charged, as well as that particular crime for which he was convicted. He said he had never any strong inclination to drunkenness or gaming, but that addicting himself to the company and conversation of bad women had been the sole occasion of all his misfortunes. He particularly regretted his want of respect towards his parents, and especially towards his mother, who had given him the best of advice, though he had trifled with and abused it. He said that he often struck and abused those whom he robbed, but not so as to endanger their lives, and therefore he hoped they would forgive him, and join their prayers with his for his forgiveness at the hand of God.

Cotton was more tender and more penitent, expressed great sorrow for his numerous offences, and besought Almighty God to accept of a sincere, though late repentance. They both of them protested that their wives had not anything to do with their affairs, that they never advised them, nor were so much as privy to the offences they had committed. Then both of them suffered with much penitence and resignation, on the 24th of March, 1729, Marple being about thirty, and Cotton near twenty-five years of age.

[\[84\]](#)

See page [182](#).

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### **The Life of JOHN UPTON, a Pirate; including also the history of that sort of people, particularly the crew under Captain Cooper, in the *Night Rambler***

No laws in any civilized nations are more severe than those against piracy, nor are they less severely executed, and the criminals who suffer by them are usually the least pitied, or rather the most detested of all who come to die an ignominious death by the sentence of the Law. Of old they were styled *hostes humani generis*, and the oldest systems we have of particular institutions have treated them with a rigor suitable to their offence. With respect to those who fall into the hands of British justice, it must be remarked that they usually plead as an excuse for what they have done their being forced into pirates' service, and as it is well known that numbers are really forced into crimes they detest, so the lenience of our judicators generally admit whatever proofs are probable in such a case. But where the contrary appears, and the acts of piracy plainly arise from the wicked dispositions of the offenders, the Royal Mercy is less frequently extended to them than to any other sort of criminal whatever.

As to the prisoner of whom we are to speak, John Upton was born at Deptford, of very honest parents who gave him such an education as fitted their station, and that in which they intended to breed him. When grown up to be a sturdy youth, they put him out apprentice to a waterman, with whom he served out his time faithfully, and with a good character. Afterwards he went to sea and served for twenty-eight years together on board a man-of-war, in the posts of either boatswain or quartermaster. Near the place of his birth he married a woman, took a house and



lived very respectably with her during the whole course of her life, but she dying while he was at sea, and finding at his return that his deceased wife had run him greatly in debt, clamours coming from every quarter, and several writs being issued out against him, he quitted the service in the man-of-war, and went immediately in a merchantman to Newfoundland. There by agreement he was discharged from the ship and entered himself for eighteen pounds *per annum* into the service of a planter in that country in order to serve him in fishing and furring, the chief trade of that place; for Newfoundland abounding with excellent harbours, there is no country in the world which affords so large and so plentiful a fishery as this does. However its climate renders it less desirable, it being extremely hot in the summer and as intensely cold in the winter, when the wild beasts roam about in great numbers, and furnish thereby an opportunity to the inhabitants of gaining considerably by falling them, and selling their furs.

Upton having served his year out was discharged from his master, and going to New England, he there, in the month of July, 1725, shipped himself on board the *Perry* merchantman bound for Barbadoes. The ship was livred and loaded again, the captain designing them to sail for England, whereupon Upton desired leave to go on board his Majesty's ship *Lynn*, Captain Cooper. But Captain King absolutely refusing to discharge him in order thereto, on the ninth of November, 1725, he sailed in the aforesaid vessel for England.

On the twelfth of the same month, off Dominica, they were attacked by a pirate sloop called the *Night Rambler*, under the command of one Cooper. The pirate immediately ordered the captain of the *Perry* galley to come on board his ship, which he and four of his men did, and the pirate immediately sent some of his crew on board the *Perry* galley, who effectually made themselves masters thereof, and as Upton said, used him and the rest of the persons they found on board with great inhumanity and baseness, a thing very common amongst those wretches. Upton also insisted that as to himself, one of the pirate's crew ran up to him as soon as they came on board and with a cutlass in his hand, said with an oath, *You old son of a bitch, I know you and you shall go along with us or I'll cut out your liver*, and thereupon fell to beating him fore and aft the deck with his cutlass.

The same evening he was carried on board the pirate sloop, where, according to his journal, three of the pirates attacked him; one with a pistol levelled at his forehead demanded whether he would sign their articles, another with a pistol at his right ear, swore that if he did not they would blow out his brains, while a third held a couple of forks at his breast, and terrified him with the continual apprehensions of having them stabbed into him. Whereupon he told them that he had four young infants in England, to whom he thought it his duty to return, and therefore begged to be excused as having reason to decline their service, as well as a natural dislike to their proceedings. Upon which, he said, he called his captain to take notice that he did not enter voluntarily amongst them. Upon this the pirate said they found out a way to satisfy themselves by signing for him, and this, he constantly averred, was the method of his being taken into the crew of the *Night Rambler*, where he insisted he did nothing but as he was commanded, received no share in the plunder, but lived wholly on the ship's allowance, being treated in all respect as one whom force and not choice had brought amongst them.

But to return to the *Perry* galley, which the pirates carried to the Island of Aruba, a maroon or uninhabited island, or rather sand bank, where they sat the crew ashore and left them for seventeen days without any provision, except that the surgeon of the pirate now and then brought them something in his pocket by stealth. On the tenth of December the pirates saw a sail which proved to be a Dutch sloop, which they took, and on board this Upton and two others who had been forced as well as himself were put, from whence as he said, they made their escape. After abundance of misfortunes and many extraordinary adventures, he got on board his Majesty's ship *Nottingham*, commanded by Captain Charles Cotterel, where he served for two years in the quality of quartermaster. He was then taken up and charged with piracy, upon which he was indicted at an Admiralty sessions held in the month of May, 1729, when the evidence at his trial appeared so strong that after a short stay the jury found him guilty.

But his case having been very differently represented, I fancy my readers will not be displeased if I give them an exact account of the proofs produced against him.

The first witness who was called on the part of the Crown was Mr. Dimmock, who had been chief mate on board the *Perry* galley, and he deposed in the following terms:

On the twelfth of November, 1725, we sailed from Barbadoes on the *Perry* galley bound for England. On the 14th, about noon, we were taken by the *Night Rambler*, pirate sloop, one Cooper commander. Our captain and four men were ordered on board the pirate sloop, part of the pirate's crew coming also on board the *Perry*. Wherein they no sooner entered, but the prisoner at the bar said, *Lads, are ye come? I'm glad to see ye; I have been looking out for ye for a great while*. Whereupon the pirates saluted him very particularly, calling him by his name, and the prisoner was as busy as any of the rest in plundering and stripping the ship on board of which he had served, and the rest who belonged to it, the very next day after being made boatswain of the pirate. The same day I was carried on board the pirate sloop, tied to the gears and received two hundred lashes with a cat o' nine tails which the prisoner Upton had made for that purpose; after which they pickled me, and the prisoner Upton stabbed me in the head near my ear with a knife, insomuch that I could not lay my head upon a pillow for fourteen days, but was forced to support it upon my hand against the table; and when some of

the pirate's crew asked me how I did, upon my answering that I was as bad as a man could be and live, the prisoner, Upton, said *D——n him, give him a second reward.*

It was also further deposed by the same gentleman that at the island of Aruba, the prisoner was very busy in stripping the *Perry* galley of the most useful and valuable parts of her rigging, carrying them on board the pirate, and making use of them there. He had also in his custody several things of value, and particularly wearing apparel, belonging to one Mr. Furnell, a passenger belonging to the said *Perry* galley; and when it was debated amongst the pirates, and afterwards put to the vote, whether the crew of the said galley should have their vessel again or no, John Upton was not only against them, but also proposed burning the said vessel, and tying the captain and mate to one of the masts in order to their being burnt too.

Mr. Eaton, the second mate of the ship, was the next witness called. He confirmed all that had been sworn by Mr. Dimmock, adding that the day they were taken the pirates asked if he would consent to sign their articles, which he refused. Whereupon they put a rope about his neck, and hoisted him up to the yard's arm, so that he totally lost his senses. He recovered them by some of the pirate's crew pricking him in the fleshy parts of his body, while others beat him with the flat of their swords. As soon as they perceived he was a little come to himself they put the former question to him, whether he would sign their articles. He answered, *No*, a second time. One of the crew thereupon snatched up a pistol, and swore he would shoot him through the head; but another of them said, *No, d——n him, that's too honourable a death; he shall be hanged.* Upon this they pulled him up by the rope again, and treated him with many other indignities, and at last in the captain's cabin, pulled a cap over his eyes and clapped a pistol to his head; then he expected nothing but immediate death, a person having almost jabbed his eye out with the muzzle of the pistol, but at last they did let him go. He swore, also, that when the pirates' articles were presented to him to sign, he saw there the name of John Upton, he being well acquainted with his hand.

Mr. Furnell, a passenger in the ship, was the third evidence against the prisoner. He deposed to the same effect with the other two, adding that John Upton was more cruel and barbarous to them than any of the other pirates, insomuch that when they were marooned, and under the greatest necessities for food, Upton said, *D——n them, let them be starved*, and was the most active of all the rest in taking the goods, and whatever he could lay his hands on out of the *Perry* galley.

In his defence the prisoner would fain have suggested that what the witnesses had sworn against him was chiefly occasioned by a malicious spleen they had against him. He asserted that he was forced by the pirates to become one of their number and was so far from concerned with them voluntarily that he proposed to the mate, after they were taken, to regain the ship, urging that there were but thirteen of the pirates on board, and they all drunk, and no less than nine of their own men left there who were all sober; that the mate's heart failed him, and instead of complying with his motion, said, *This is a dangerous thing to speak of; if it should come to the pirates' ears we shall be all murdered*, and therefore entreated the prisoner not to speak of it any more. The mate denied every syllable of this, and so the prisoner's assertions did not weigh at all with the jury. After they had brought in their verdict, Mr. Upton said to those who swore against him, *Lord! What have you three done?*

Under sentence of death he behaved himself with much courage, and yet with great penitence. He denied part of the charge, viz., that he was willingly one of the pirates, but as to the other facts, he confessed them with very little alteration. He averred that the course of his life had been very wicked and debauched, for which he expressed much sorrow, and to the day of his death behaved himself with all outward mark of true repentance. At the place of execution, he was asked whether he had not advised the burning of the *Perry* galley, with Captain King and the chief mate on board. He averred that he did not in any shape whatsoever either propose or agree to an act of such a sort. Then, after some private devotions, he submitted to his sentence, and was turned off on the 16th day of May, 1729, being then about fifty years of age.

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### **The Life of JEPHTHAH BIGG, an Incendiary, and Writer of Threatening Letters**

I have already taken notice in the life of Bryan Smith<sup>[85]</sup> of the Act of Parliament on which the proceedings against these letter-writers are grounded. One would be surprised that after more examples than one of that kind, people should yet be found so foolish as well as wicked as to carry on so desperate an enterprise, in which there is scarce any probability of meeting with success; yet this unfortunate person of whom we are now to speak, who was descended of mean parents, careful however of giving him a very good education, fell upon this project, put into his head by being a little out of business, and so in one moment cancelled all his former honesty and industry, and hazarded a life which soon after became forfeited.

His friends had put him out apprentice to a gunstock maker, to which he served out his time honestly and with a good character. Afterwards he continued to work at his business with several masters and tolerable reputation, until about a year before the time of his death, when he was out of work, by reason he had disobliged two or three persons for whom he had wrought, and had also been guilty of some extravagancies which had brought him into narrow circumstances.

These straits it is to be supposed put him upon the fatal project of writing a letter to Mr. Nathaniel Newman, senior, a man of a very good fortune, threatening him that unless he sent the sum of eighty-five guineas to such a place, he would murder him and his wife, with other bloody and barbarous expressions. This not having its effect, he wrote him a second letter by the penny post, demanding one hundred guineas, with grievous threatenings in case they were not sent. This soon made a very great noise about town, and put Mr. Newman upon all methods possible for detecting the author of these villainous epistles, and as everybody almost looked upon it as a common case, to which any gentleman who is supposed to be rich might be liable, such indefatigable pains were taken that in a short time the whole mystery of iniquity was discovered and Bigg apprehended.

At the next sessions at the Old Bailey he was indicted capitally for this offence, and after the counsel for the prosecutor had fully opened the heinous nature of the crime, Peter Salter was the first witness called to prove it upon the prisoner. He deposed that Jephthah Bigg came to him where he was at work in the Minories, and desired him to go with him, having something to say to him of consequence; whereupon the witness would have gone to the sign of the Ship where he used, but the prisoner would needs go to the Sieve in the Little Minories. There he communicated to him his design, and then prevailed on Salter to go to the Shoulder of Mutton alehouse at Billingsgate, where Bigg directed him to call for drink, and to wait until a porter came to him with a parcel directed to John Harrison, when if he suspected anything, he should come to the prisoner at the King's Head alehouse, on Fish Street Hill. This the evidence performed punctually, whereupon Bigg sent him a second time to the Blackboy, in Goodman's Fields, where a second parcel was left, though of no value. Whereupon Bigg would have had the evidence Salter concerned in a third letter to the same purpose, but Salter declined it and dissuaded him as much as lay in his power, from continuing to venture on such hazardous things. Upon which the prisoner replied, *You need not fear. Nothing can hurt you; my life is in your hands; but if ever you reveal the matter, you shall share the same fate.*

John Long, servant to Mr. Newman, deposed that he delivered two penny post letters to his master on the 20th and 27th of March. Other witnesses swore as to the sending of the parcels, and the jury on the whole, seeing the fact to be well proved against the prisoner, found him guilty.

Under sentence of death at first the poor man behaved himself like one stupid. He pretended that he did not know the offence that he had committed was capital, and afterwards exclaimed against the hardness of the Law which made it so; but some little pains being taken with him in those points, he was soon brought over to acknowledge the justice of his sentence, and the reasonableness of that Statute which enacted it into a capital offence.

As the day of his death drew nigh he was still more and more drowned in stupidity and lost to all thought or concern for this world or that to come, at least as to outward appearance. Some said he was a Roman Catholic, but while the poor wretch retained his senses, he said nothing that could give any ground for a suspicion of that sort. He heard the discourses which the Ordinary made to him, with as much patience as the rest did, and when he visited him in the cell, did not express any uneasiness thereat. Indeed, in the passage to execution, there were two fellows in the cart who would fain have had the minister desist from his duty, urging the same reason, that the criminal was in communion with another Church. The man, himself, seemed stupid and speechless all the way, yet when he was turned off, the reverend Ordinary tells us, he went off the stage crying out aloud, *O Lord! etc.* This seems to me a very indecent way of concluding a dying speech, but as it is that which is generally used, I shall not stay to bestow any further reflections upon it. He died on the 19th of May, 1729, being about twenty-five years of age.

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See page [221](#).

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### **The Life of THOMAS JAMES GRUNDY, a Housebreaker**

When we meet with accounts of persons doubly remarkable for the multitude of their offences and the tenderness of their age, it is almost impossible for us to determine whether we should most pity or detest a mind so preternaturally abandoned to wickedness as to transcend its usual course, and make itself remarkable as a sinner, before taken notice of as a man.

This was exactly the case with the unfortunate criminal whom we are now to mention. He was the son of parents in the lowest circumstances, who yet had strained those circumstances to give him a tolerable education, which he, instead of improving, forgot as fast as it was possible, and seemed solicitous about nothing but out-doing in villainy all his contemporaries of the same unhappy cast. During his junior years he addicted himself continually to picking and stealing whatever he could lay his hands on, and although his father had been exceedingly careful in causing him to be taught his own trade of a weaver, yet he seldom or never worked at it, but went on at this rate, from one crime to another, until he at last arrived at those which brought him to the ignominious end, and thereby rendered him a subject for our memoirs.

At twelve years old, he took up the trade of housebreaking, to which he applied himself very closely, for the last six years of his life. Hampstead, Highgate, Hackney, and other villages round the town were the places which he generally made choice of to play his tricks in, and as people

are much more ingenious in wickedness than ever they are in the pursuit of honest employments, so by degrees he became (even while a boy) the most dexterous housebreaker of his time; insomuch that as is usual amongst those unhappy people, the gang commended him so much, that believing himself some great person, he went on with an air of confidence, in the commission of a multitude of burglaries, in and about the streets of this metropolis.

Young as he was at that time, he plunged himself, as it were with industry, into all manner of lusts, wickedness and illegal pleasures, which, as it wasted all he acquired by the thefts he committed, so it injured his health and damaged his understanding to such a degree that when he came to die, he could scarce be looked on as a rational creature.

The offence which proved fatal to him was the breaking into the house of Mr. Samuel Smith, in the night-time, on the 31st of May, 1729, with an intent to steal. At his trial the prosecutor swore that between the hours of eleven and one of the dock of the night laid in the indictment he was called up by his neighbours, and found that his window was broken open; whereupon, searching about very narrowly, he at last found the prisoner got up the chimney, and landing on the pole whereon the pothooks hung. In his defence the prisoner told the Court that meeting with a person who said he lodged in the prosecutor's house, and it being late, he accepted the man's proposition to lie with him; thereupon his new acquaintance carried him to Mr. Smith's, let him in, and then ran away, so that he had never seen or heard of him since. This relation being every way improbable and ridiculous, the jury very readily found him guilty of the fact, and he with the rest, on the last day of the sessions received sentence of death accordingly.

While he lay in the cells, his behaviour was as stupid in all outward appearance as ever had appeared in any who came to that miserable place. However, he persuaded his companions, of whom we shall speak hereafter, to attempt breaking out and to encourage them told them that there was no brick or free stone wall in the world could keep him in, if he had but a few tools proper for loosening the stones. These were quickly procured, and Grundy put his companions into so proper a method of working, that if a discovery had not been made on the Sunday morning in a very few hours space they would have broken their way into Phoenix Court, and so have undoubtedly got off. But as soon as the keepers came to the knowledge of their design, they removed the three persons concerned in it, into the old condemned hold, and there stapled them down to the ground.

Then this lad began to repent. He wept bitterly, but said it was not so much for the fear of death as the apprehension of his soul being thrown into the pit of destruction and eternal misery. However, by degrees, he recovered a little spirit, confessed all the enormities of his past life, and begged pardon of God, and of the persons whom he had injured. If we were to attempt an account of them, it would not only seem improbable but incredible; and therefore, as there was nothing in them otherwise extraordinary than as they were committed by a lad of his age, we shall not dwell any longer upon them than to inform our readers that with much sorrow, and grievous agonies, he expired at Tyburn, on the 22nd of August, 1729, being about eighteen years old.

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### **The Life of JOSEPH KEMP, a Housebreaker**

We have often, in the course of these lives, observed to our readers that loose women are generally the causes of those misfortunes which first bring men to the commission of felonious crimes, and, as a just consequence thereof, to an ignominious death. It may yet seem strange, how, after so many instances, there are still to be found people so weak as for the sake of the caresses of these strumpets to lavish away their lives, at the same time that they are putting their souls into the greatest hazard. If I may be allowed to offer my conjecture in this case, I should be apt to account for it thus: that in the present age, the depravity of men's morals being greater than ever, they addict themselves so entirely to their lusts and sensual pleasures that having no relish left for more innocent entertainments, they think no price too great to purchase those lewd enjoyments, to which, by a continued series of such actions, they have habituated themselves beyond their own power to retire.

This unfortunate person, Joseph Kemp, was son to people in very mean circumstances, in Holborn, who yet procured him a very good education in a public charity-school. When of age to be put out to employment, his friends made him apply himself to the heads of the parish, who put him out to a glazier, with whom he served out his time with the character of a very honest young man. By that time his parents had thriven pretty well in the world through their own industry, and so, on his setting up a shop, they gave him sixty pounds to begin with. But unfortunately for him, he had ere now seen a woman of the town, on whom he had irretrievably fixed his affections, and was absolutely resolved on living with her, though ever so great ruin should prove the consequence of the purchase.

In pursuance of this unfortunate resolution, he no sooner had received the aforesaid sum, but proposals of marriage were immediately offered to this object of his affections, notwithstanding that he well knew she at that time conversed with two men, styling each of them her husband. However, as Kemp was the most likely to maintain her in idleness and plenty, she, without much trouble, suffered herself to be prevailed on to let him, by a legal matrimony, increase the number of her husbands. This, as it was but probable, was speedily followed by his breaking in his business, and being totally undone, which, though it was a great misfortune, and an evil new to poor Kemp, only reduced the lady to her former manner of living, which was by thieving

whatever she could come at. A little while after, she was ruined even in this business, for being detected, she was committed to Newgate, and was in great danger of lying there for life. Poor Kemp was still as fond of her as ever. He carried her all the money he could get, and lamenting to her that it was not in his power to raise more, she immediately flew into a passion, stormed and swore at him, bid him go and break houses, rob people in the streets, or do anything which would get money, for money she wanted and money she would have. He foolishly complied with her request and having provided himself with the necessary implements for housebreaking, he soon put her in possession of a large quantity of plate, which being converted into money, easily procured her liberty, the consequence of which was that she lavished whatever he brought her upon other men.

Yet even her perfidy could not cure him; he was still as much her slave as ever, and failed not venturing body and soul to procure whatever might give her pleasure. In this unhappy state a considerable space of time was spent, until, for some other thievish exploits of her own, Kemp's wife was apprehended, convicted and transported. One would have thought this might have put an end to his crimes of the same sort, but it seems he was too far plunged into the mire of rapine and debauchery ever to struggle out, so that no sooner was she safely on board the transport vessel but he found out a new mistress to supply her place; as if he had been industrious in destroying his fortune and careful about nothing but arriving as soon as possible at the gallows.

By the time he made his second marriage, which in itself was illegal while the first wife was living, his credit was totally exhausted, his character totally ruined, and no manner of subsistence left but what was purchased at the hazard of his soul and the price of his life; and as housebreaking was now become his sole business, so he pursued it with great eagerness, and for a while with as great success. But it was not long before he was apprehended, and committed close to Newgate for a multitude of charges of this kind against him.

At the following sessions at the Old Bailey, he was indicted for burglariously breaking open the house of Sarah Pickard, and feloniously taking thence thirty-six gold rings and stone rings, three silver watches, several pieces of silver plate, and divers other goods of considerable value. The prosecutrix, Mrs. Pickard, deposed that her house was fast shut between ten and eleven o'clock at night, and found broken open at five of the clock the next morning, and that one Kemp, a person related to the prisoner, found a short strong knife left in the yard, together with an auger, which he knew to belong to the prisoner.

In confirmation of this Mr. Kemp deposed that the prisoner had shown him the knife; Joanna Kemp and Jonathan Auskins deposed likewise to the same thing, and Samuel Gerrard, the constable, swore that when with the two preceding witnesses he went to search the house of the aforesaid prisoner, and found therein several things belonging to Mrs. Pickard, the prisoner then confessed that he committed burglary alone and not by the persuasion or with the assistance of any other person whatsoever.

The prisoner said very little in his own defence, and the jury thereupon, without hesitation, found him guilty; as they did also upon two other indictments, the one for breaking the house of James Wood, and the other for breaking the house of Mrs. Mary Paget, and stealing thence plate to a considerable value; the facts being dearly proved by John Knap, who had been an accomplice, and turned evidence to save himself. His last wife was indicted and tried with him, but acquitted.

Under sentence of death he was seized with a disease which held him for the greater part of the time permitted by Law for him to repent, and by reason of that distemper he was so deaf that he was scarce capable of instruction. However, he appeared to be fully sensible of the great danger he was in, of suffering much more from the just anger of God than that sentence of the Law which his crimes had drawn upon him. He bewailed with much passion and concern that wicked course of life which for many years past he had led, seemed exceedingly grieved at the horror of those reflections, and to mourn with unfeigned penitence his forgetfulness of the duties he owed towards God, and to his neighbours. As the hour of death approached, he resumed somewhat of courage, and at the place of execution died with all outward marks of a repenting sinner.

His wife came up into the cart and took her last adieu of him, in the most tender manner that can be imagined. He died on the 24th of August, 1729, being then in the twenty-fourth year of his age, and left behind him the following paper, which seems to have been what he intended to have said to the people at the time of his death, and therefore we, according to custom, thought it not proper to be omitted in this account.

#### THE PAPER

Good People,

My father and mother brought me up tenderly and honestly, and always gave me good advice, whilst I was under their care. They put me apprentice to a glazier. My master not being so careful of me as he ought to have been, I took to ill courses, and before my time was expired, married a woman that brought me to this untimely end; for she could not live upon what I got at my trade, and out of my over-fondness for her, I did whatever she required, or requested of me. At length she was taken up for some fact, and transported. Then I married a second wife, and she was as good as the other was bad. She would do anything to help to support me that I might not commit any wickedness, but I could not take her advice, but still ran on in my wicked course of life, till I was overtaken by my folly.

For if we think ourselves safe in committing sin, God will certainly find such out, because He is just, and will punish accordingly. This my miserable end, I would have all take warning by, and that they follow not the devices of the world, the snares whereof are apt to lead men into evil courses, unless they endeavour to shun them, and seek the grace of God to assist and enable them for the good of all men, and ask pardon of God for my evil doings, and forgiveness of all whom I have wronged, and particularly the forgiveness of God to those who have sworn away my life. I beg reflections pass not upon my wife, for I declare, whatever wrongs she may have committed, was through my persuasion, of herself being inclinable to good. I would lastly request that the follies and vices which have brought me to this untimely end may not by any means be a cause to afflict my grievous parents, both father and mother, but would have all to consider when ever they are persuaded to any manner of ways, tending to their ruin, they would likewise remember to call upon God to help and assist them, in shunning such, and all other wicked courses. Good people, pray for me, that God may receive me through his mercies, which I trust he will.

Newgate, August 22nd, 1729.

Joseph Kemp

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### **The Life of BENJAMIN WILEMAN, a Highwayman**

Amongst the many other ill consequences of a debauched life and wicked conversation, it may be reckoned, perhaps, no small one that they render men liable to suspicions, imprisonments and even capital punishment, when at the same time, they may be innocent of the particular fact with which they are charged; nor in such a case is the conviction of an innocent person so great a reflection on any, as on themselves having rendered such an accusation probable.

Benjamin Wileman, of whom we are now to speak, was the son of honest parents in the city of Dublin. They gave him a very good education at school, and when he was fit to go out apprentice, his father bred him to his own trade, which was that of a tailor. When he grew weary of that business, he listed himself as a soldier, and in that state of life passed twelve years, a sufficient space of time to acquire those numerous vices which are so ordinary amongst the common sort of men, who betake themselves to a military employment. Then he came over into England and lived here, as he himself said, by working at his own trade; though certain it is, that he led a most debauched and dissolute life, associating himself with those of his countrymen who of all others were the most abandoned in their characters. In fine, in all the associations of his life he seemed to proceed without any other design than that of gratifying his vicious inclinations.

In the midst of this terrible course of folly and wickedness he was apprehended for a highwayman, committed to Newgate, and at the ensuing sessions capitally indicted for two robberies, the one committed on William Hucks, Esq., and the other on William Bridges, Esq. On the first indictment it was deposed by the prosecutor that he believed Wileman to be the person who attacked him. John Doyle, who owned himself to have been an accomplice in the robbery, swore that Wileman and he committed it together, and that he paid Wileman five guineas and a half for his share of the gold watch and other things which were taken from the gentleman. As to the second fact, Mr. Bridges gave evidence that he was robbed on the highway and lost a sword, a hat, a pocket-book and a bank-note for twenty pounds. Doyle gave evidence in this, as in the former case, declaring that Wileman and he committed the fact together.

Then Elizabeth Jones being produced, swore that the same day she met Doyle and Wileman booted and spurred and very dirty in Bedford Row, and that they showed her the bank note, which when shown to her, she deposed to be the same. Arabelle Manning deposed that on the night of the day the robbery was committed, the prisoner Wileman and Doyle gave her a dram at a gin-shop in Drury Lane, and that one of them let fall a paper, and taking it up again, said that the loss of it would have been the loss of twenty pounds.

The prisoner objected to the character of Doyle, Jones and Manning, and called some persons as to his own, but the jury thinking the fact sufficiently proved, found him guilty on both indictments. Under sentence of death, his behaviour was very regular, professing a deep sorrow and repentance for a very loose life which he had led, and at the same time peremptorily denying that he had any hand in, or knew anything of either of those facts which had been sworn against him, and for which he was to die.

Notwithstanding that the most earnest entreaties were made use of to induce him to a plain and sincere confession, yet he continued always to assert his innocence as to thieving, letting fall sharp and invidious expressions against the evidence of Doyle whom he charged with swearing against him only to preserve another guilty person from punishment, whom Wileman intended to prosecute and had it in his power to convict. The effects of his former good education were very serviceable to him in this his great and last misfortune, for he seemed to have very just notions of those duties which were incumbent upon him in his miserable state; therefore, especially towards the latter part of his time, he appeared gravely at chapel and prayed fervently in his cell until the boy James Grundy, whom we have mentioned before, put it in to his head to make his escape; for the attempting which they were all carried (as we have said before) into the old condemned hold and there stapled down to the ground.

As there is no courage so reasonable as that which is founded on Christian principles, so neither constitutional bravery nor that resolution which arises either from custom, from vanity, or from other false maxims preserves that steady firmness at the approach of death which gives true quiet and peace of mind in the last moments of life, taking away through the certainty of belief, those terrors which are otherwise too strong for the mind, and which human nature is unable to resist. Wileman's conduct under his misfortunes, fully verified this observation in its strongest sense; he only retained just notions of religion and this enabled him to support his affliction after a very different manner from that in which it affected his two companions; or as it had done himself before, from a just contemplation of the mercy of God, and the merits of his Saviour, he had brought himself to a right idea of the importance of his soul, and thereby took himself off from the superfluous consideration of this world and stifled those uneasy sensations with which men are naturally startled at the approach of death. Yet he did not in all this time alter a jot in his confession, but asserted calmly that he was innocent, and that Doyle had perjured himself in order to take away his life.

At the place of execution his wife came to him, embraced him with great tenderness, and all he said there in relation to the world was that he hoped nobody would reflect upon her for the misfortune which had befallen him, and then, with great piety and resignation in the midst of fervent ejaculations, yielded up his last breath at Tyburn, at the same time with the malefactor before mentioned, being at the time of his decease about forty-three years of age.

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### **The Life of JAMES CLUFF, a Murderer, in which is contained a concise account of the nature of Appeals**

To curb our vicious inclinations and to restrain those passions from the sudden transports of which cruel and irreparable mischiefs are done, is without doubt the best end of all instructions; and for my own part, I cannot help thinking that this very book may contribute as much to this purpose as any other that has been published for a long time. That vices are foul in their nature is certainly true, and that they are fatal in their consequences, those who, without consideration pursue them, feel. There are few who will take time to convince themselves of the first, but no man can be so blind as to mistake the latter after the perusal of these memoirs, in which I have been particularly careful to describe the several roads by which our lusts lead us to destruction; and have fixed up Tyburn as a beacon to warn several men from indulging themselves in sensual pleasures.

This unfortunate person we are now going to give the public an account of was the son of very honest people who kept a public-house in Clare Market. They were careful in sending him to school, and having taught him there to read and write etc., sufficiently to qualify him for business, then put him apprentice to the Swan Tavern near the Tower. There he served his time carefully and with a good character, nor did his parents omit in instructing him in the grounds of the Christian religion, of which having a tolerable understanding he attained a just knowledge, and preserved a tolerable remembrance unto the time of his unhappy death.

After he was out of his time, he served as a drawer at several public houses, and behaved himself civilly and honestly without any reflections either on his temper or his honesty until he came to Mr. Payne's, who kept the Green Lettuce, a public house in High Holborn, where the accident fell out which cost him his life.

It seems there lived with him as a fellow servant, one Mary Green, whom some suggested he had an affection for; but whether that were so or not, did not very clearly appear, but on the contrary it was proved that they had many janglings and quarrels together, in which Cluff had sometimes struck her. However it was, on the 11th of April, 1729, Mary Green being at dinner in a box by herself, Cluff came in and went into the box to her, where he had not continued above four or five minutes before he called to his mistress, who was walking up and down, *Madam, pray come here*. By this time the maid was dead of a wound in her thigh, which pierced the femoral artery. There was a noise heard before the man himself came out, and the wench was dead before her mistress came in.

However, Cluff was immediately apprehended, and at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey he was indicted for the murder of Mary Green, by giving her a mortal wound in the right thigh, of the breadth of one inch, and of the depth of five inches, of which she instantly died. He was a second time indicted upon the coroner's inquest for the said offence, and also a third time upon the Statute of Stabbing. However the evidence not being clear enough to satisfy the jury, on his trial he was acquitted by them all. But this not at all satisfying the relations of the deceased Mary Green, her brother William Green brought an appeal against him, which is a kind of proceeding which has occasioned several popular errors to take rise. Therefore it may not be improper to say something concerning it for the better information of our readers.

Appeals are of two sorts, viz., such as are brought by an innocent person, and such as are brought by an offender confessing himself guilty, who is commonly called an approver. An innocent person's appeal is the party's private action, prosecuting also for the Crown, in respect of the offence against the public, and such a prosecution may be either by writ or by bill. As to the writ of appeal, it is an original issuing out of Chancery and remarkable in the Court of King's Bench only. Bills of Appeal are more common and contain in them the nature both of a writ and a declaration, and they may be received by commissioners of gaol delivery or justices of assize.

Those which are in use at present in capital cases are four, viz., Appeals of Death, of Larceny, of Rape and of Arson. The first is both the most common and that of which we are particularly to speak. It is to be brought by the wife or heir of the person deceased, unless they be guilty of the murder, and then the heir may have an appeal against the wife, or if he be accused the next heir may have it against him. The appellant must be heir general to the deceased, and his heir male (for by *Magna Charta* a woman cannot have an appeal of death for any but her husband) and in the appeal also it must be set forth how the appellant is heir unto the deceased. As to the time in which an appeal may be brought, it is by the Statute of Gloucester<sup>[86]</sup> restrained within a year and a day from the time of the deed done. There is great nicety in all the proceedings on appeals of death and everything must be set forth with the greatest exactness imaginable. The appellant hath also the liberty of pleading as many pleas, or to speak more properly, to take issue on as many points as he thinks fit. He is tried by a jury, and on his being found guilty, the appellant hath an order for his execution settled by the Court; but when the appellee is acquitted, the appellant is chargeable with damages on such a prosecution, provided there appear to have been no just cause for the commencement thereof.

But to return to the case of Cluff, which led us into this discourse. The evidence at his trial upon the appeal was, as to its substance thus. Mrs. Diana Payne, at the Green Lettuce in Holborn, deposed that the prisoner James Cluff and the deceased Mary Green were both of them her servants; that about a quarter of an hour before Mary Green died, she saw the prisoner carry out a pot of drink; that while she was walking in the tap-house with her child in her arms, she saw Mary Green go down into the cellar and bring up two pints of drink, one for a customer and another for herself, which she carried into a box where she was at dinner; that about four or five minutes before the accident happened, Cluff came in, and went to the box to the deceased, and in about four minutes cried out, *Madam, pray come hither*; that the witness thereupon went to the door of the box and saw the deceased on her backside on the floor, and the prisoner held her up by the shoulders, while the blood ran from her in a stream; that on seeing her, she said to the prisoner, *James, what have you done?* To which he answered, *Nothing, Madam*. Whereupon this evidence enquired whether he had seen her do anything to herself, he replied, *No*, the deceased at that time neither speaking nor stirring, but looking as if she were dead. However, the prisoner at that time said he saw her have a knife in her hand in the cellar, and the witness being prodigiously affrighted called her husband and ran for an apothecary.

Mr. John Payne, husband of the first witness, deposed to the same purpose as his wife, adding that no struggling was heard when the blows were given and that she had no knife in her hand when she came out of the cellar; that in the morning between nine and ten o'clock, a young man came in, who, as he was informed, had been formerly a sweetheart of the deceased; that this person drank a pint of drink and smoked a pipe, the deceased sitting by him some little time, during which as he believed the stranger kissed her; at which, as they stood before the bar, he observed the prisoner's countenance alter, as if he were out of humour at somewhat, although he could not say that he had ever heard of courtship between them; adding, that when the prisoner went into the box where the deceased was at dinner, he did take notice of his throwing the door after him with an unusual violence.

Mr. Saunders, who happened that day to dine at Mr. Payne's house, confirmed all the former evidence, deposing moreover, than when Mr. Payne gave the prisoner some harsh language, the prisoner replied, *Sir, I am as innocent as the child is at my mistress's breast*; that the prisoner also pretended the deceased took a knife in her hand when she went into the cellar, upon which this evidence and Mr. Payne went down, and found not a drop of blood all the way. Mr. Saunders also deposed that the prisoner was out of the way when the deceased went to draw drink, and that they saw no knife in her hand.

Mr. Cox, the surgeon, deposed that he saw the deceased lying upon her back, amid a vast stream of blood which had issued from her; that upon the table among other knives he had found one amongst them which was a little bloody and answered exactly to the cut, it going through her apron, a stuff petticoat and a strong coarse shift. The wound was in her thigh, going obliquely upwards, and therefore, as he thought, could not have been given by the deceased herself. The knife, too, was as he said, laid farther than the deceased could have carried it after the receipt of the wound, which being in the femoral artery must be mortal in a minute, or a minute and a half at most. He observed, also, that under her chin and about her left ear there seemed to have been some violence used, so as to have caused a stagnation of the blood. This deposition was confirmed by another surgeon and apothecary, and also in most of its material circumstances by a surgeon who looked on her on behalf of the prisoner.

Cluff asked very few questions, and Mr. Daldwin being called for the appellant, swore that at nine o'clock in the morning he was at Mr. Payne's and saw the prisoner and the deceased quarrelling, that he looked maliciously and was an ill-natured fellow. Here the counsel of the appeal rested their proof, and the prisoner made no other defence than absolutely denying the fact. After his counsel had said what they thought proper on the nature and circumstances that had been sworn against him, the jury withdrew, and after a short stay brought in the prisoner guilty.

During the space he was confined, between their verdict and his death, he behaved with a calmness very rare to be met with. He attended the public devotion of the chapel very gravely and devoutly, behaved quietly and patiently in his cell, never expressed either fear or uneasiness at his approaching death, nor ever let fall a warm expression against his prosecutors, but on the contrary always spoke well of them, and prayed heartily for them. When pressed, by the ministers who attended him, not to pass into the other world with a lie in his mouth, but to declare



sincerely and candidly how Mary Green came by her death, he at first looked a little confused, but at last seeming to recollect himself, he said, *Gentlemen, I know it is my duty to give glory unto God, and to take shame unto myself for those sins I have committed in my passage through this life. I therefore readily acknowledge that my offences have been black in their nature, and many in number; but for the particular crime I am to suffer death as the punishment of it, I know no more of it than the child that is unborn, nor am I able to say in what manner she came by her death.* And in this he continued to persist unto the time of his death, appearing to be very easy under his sufferings and did not change countenance when he was told the day was fixed for his execution, as it is ordinarily observed the other malefactors do.

As he passed through Holborn to the place of execution, he desired the cart might stop at his master's house, which accordingly it did. Cluff thereupon called for a pint of wine and desired to speak with Mr. Payne. Accordingly he came out, and then he addressed himself to him in these words. *Sir, you are not insensible that I am going to suffer an ignominious death for what I declare I am not guilty of, as I am to appear before my Great Judge in a few moments, to answer for all my past sins. I hope you and my good mistress will pray for my poor soul. I pray God bless you and all your family.* Then he spoke to somebody to bid the carman go on. It was remarkable that he spoke this with great composedness and seeming cheerfulness.

At the place of execution he did not lose anything of that cheerful sedateness which he had preserved under the course of his misfortunes, but made the responses regular to the prayers in the cart and standing up, addressed himself in these words to the multitude. *Good People, I die for a fact I did not commit. I have never ceased to pray for my prosecutors most heartily, ever since I have been under sentence. I wish all men well. My sins have been great, but I hope for God's mercy through the merits of Jesus Christ.* Then a Psalm was sung at his own request. Afterwards, overhearing somebody say that his mistress was in a coach hard by his execution, he could not be satisfied until somebody went to search and coming back assured him she was not there. As the cart was going away he spoke again to the people saying, *I beg of you to pray for my departing soul. I wish I was as free from all other sins as I am of this for which I am now going to suffer.*

He desired of his friends that his body might be carried to Hand Alley in Holborn, and from thence to St. Andrew's Church, to lie in the grave with his brother. He suffered on the 25th of July, 1719, being then about thirty-two years of age.

[86]

Passed by a Parliament held at Gloucester in 1278 and dealing with actions at law.

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### **The Life of JOHN DYER, a most notorious thief, highwayman and housebreaker**

My readers cannot but remember the mention often made of this criminal, in the former volumes. He was, at the time of his death, one of the oldest offenders in England, and as he was at some pains to digest his own story that is, the series of his villainies into writing, so what we take from thence, will at once be authentic and entertaining to our readers.

He was born of honest and mean parents at Salisbury, who took care, however, to bestow on him a very tolerable education, and when he grew up, put him out apprentice to a shoemaker, where he soon made a beginning in those pernicious practices to which he so assiduously afterwards addicted himself. The first thing he did, was robbing a chandler's chop at Collinburn, in the county of Wilts, of the money box, in which was thirty shillings, and got clear off. Some time after, his master sending him on a Sunday to a village just by, to get twelve pennyworth of halfpence at a chandler's shop, Dyer finding nobody at home, cut the bar of the window, got in thereat, and rifled the house. The booty he found did not amount to above three half-crowns, but he added to that the taking away what currants and raisins there were in the shop, which piece of covetousness had well-nigh cost him his life, for being suspected and charged with the fact, he had only time to hide the money. Having searched him in vain, they turned some of the plums out of his coat pocket, but he readily averring that he bought them at Andover Market, there being nobody who could falsify it, he escaped for that time.

His matter shortly after sending him with five pounds to buy leather, Dyer picking up a companion, as wicked as himself, he persuaded him to join in a story of his being robbed of the aforesaid sum of money, which, upon his return, he told his master, and the boy vouching it firmly, they were believed. Some small space from this, being sent amongst his master's customers to receive some money, he picked up about three pounds, and then went off immediately for Salisbury, where he became acquainted with an idle young woman; which bringing him once more into necessity, he went one day into the market to see what he might be able to lay hands on. There he observed a young woman to receive money, and watching her out of town, he took an opportunity to knock her down, robbing her, and dragging her into a wood, where he lay with her, and then bound her fast to a tree.

From thence he went to a village in Hampshire, where he wrought journey-work at his trade; and getting acquainted with a young woman, he lodged at her mother's house, where he soon got the daughter with child, and persuaded her to rob the old woman, and go with him to Bristol. There they lived together profusely until all the money was spent, and then she and her child went back

to her mother, who received them very gladly. Dyer did not think fit to return, but went to make his mother a visit at Salisbury, where he continued not long before he took an opportunity of robbing her of fifty pounds, and thence marched off to Bristol, where he gamed most of the money away. Then he retired to a town in Wiltshire, where cohabiting with a widow women, they found means to get so good credit as to take the town in (as Mr. Dyer expressed it) for thirty pounds. Then packing up they marched off to a place at a considerable distance, where Dyer entered into partnership with a collier, being to advance fifty pounds, thirty of which he paid down and the rest was to pay monthly; but before the first payment became due the collier broke, and his partner, Dyer, thereupon thought it convenient to remove to some other place.

He pitched, therefore, upon the city of Hereford, where he worked honestly for a space, until being in company one night with a higgler, he heard the man say he should go to a place called Ross to buy fowls. Dyer answered that he did not care if he went with him, and in their journey, taking the advantage of a proper place he stopped his companion and robbed him. The man gave him two shillings out of his pocket, but Dyer suspecting he must have some more money to buy fowls with, searched the hampers and took out twelve pounds. Taking the man's horse also, he rode it forty miles outright, after which he went to Marlborough in Wiltshire, and stayed there a fortnight. But venturing to steal a silver mug, he was for that fact apprehended and committed close prisoner there, in order to be tried for it next assizes, but before that time, he found a weak place in the prison, and breaking it made his escape.

From thence he went to an aunt's house, about seven or eight miles from Salisbury, where he stayed until her husband grew so uneasy that he was obliged to take his leave. He travelled then to a sister of his, and meeting there with an old schoolfellow and relation, he quickly persuaded the lad to become as bad as himself, drawing him in to rob his mother of fifty shillings, with which small stock they two were set up for their old trade of gaming. But the robbery they had committed was quickly detected. However, Dyer so well tutored his associate that the boy could neither by threats nor promises be brought to own it, yet their denials had not the least weight with their relations. They were thoroughly convinced of their being guilty, and therefore were determined that they should be punished, for which purpose they carried them before a neighbouring Justice of Peace, who committed them to Bridewell to hard labour.

As Dyer could not endure imprisonment, especially when hard labour was added to it, so he very speedily contrived a method to free himself and his companion from their fetters, which was by leaping down the house of office,<sup>[87]</sup> which a few days afterwards they did and got clear off.

These various difficulties and narrow escapes seemed to make no other impression upon Dyer than to give him a greater liking than ever to such sort of villainous enterprises. He stole as many horses out of New Forest as came to three-score pounds, and afterwards setting up for a highwayman, committed a multitude of facts in that neighbourhood, which he has with great care related in the account he published of his life. Amongst the rest he stripped a poor maid-servant, who was just come out of a place, of all the money she had, viz., a gold ring, and a box of clothes, and so left her without either necessaries or money. At Winchester he disposed of the clothes and linen which he took from the poor woman. At an alehouse in High Street he fell into company with a lace-man, from whom he learned, by some little conversation, that he was going to Amesbury Fair in Wiltshire. Dyer told him he was going thither too, and so along they journeyed together. When they arrived there, they put up their horses at the sign of the Chopping Knife, and while the lace-man went out to take a stand to sell his goods in, Dyer demanded the box of lace of the landlord, as if he had been the man's partner; then calling for his horse, while the landlord's back was turned, he rode clear off from them all.

On the Plain, going towards Devizes, he overtook a Scotch pedlar. Dyer it seems knew him, and called him by his name, asking him if he had any good handkerchiefs, upon which the poor man let down the pack off his back and showed him several. Dyer told him, after looking over the goods, that he did not want to buy anything, but must have what he pleased for nothing. The Scotchman, upon that, put himself in a posture of defence, but Dyer drawing his pistols on him soon obliged him to yield, and tied him with some of his own cloth fast to the post of a wall. He then went and rifled the pack, taking thence nine pounds odd in money, a great parcel of hair, which he sold afterwards for eight pounds, six dozen handkerchiefs, and a quantity of muslin. Then he released the pedlar again, and bid him go and take care of the rest of his pack, Mr. Dyer being then in some hurry to look out for another booty.

A very small time after our plunderer met with an old shepherd, who had sold a good parcel of sheep. Dyer attacked him with his hanger and the old man, though he had nothing but his stick, made a very good defence. However, at last he was overcome and lost seventy-two pounds which he had taken at the market. Dyer being by this time full of money, he thought fit to go to Dorchester in Wilts, where by the usual course of his extravagances, he lessened it in a very short time; and then persuading a poor butcher of the town, who had broke, to become his companion, he soon taught him from being unfortunate to become wicked. They agreed very well together (as Mr. Dyer says) until he caught his new partner endeavouring to cheat him as well as he had taught him to rob other people. But after some hard words the butcher confessed the fact, and promised to be honest to him for the future; which being all that Dyer wanted, a new agreement was made, and they went to work again in their old occupation.

The first exploit they went upon afterwards was at Woodbury Hill Fair, in Dorsetshire, where as soon as the fair was over, Mr. Dyer, in his merry style, tells us their fair began, for observing a cheeseman who received about fourscore pounds, they watched him so narrowly that about a

mile from the fair they attacked him and bid him deliver. With a heavy heart the old man suffered himself to be rifled, though he had paid away a far greater part of the money, and had not above twelve pounds about him, yet he sighed as if he would have broken his heart at the loss, while Dyer and his companion were as much out of humour at the disappointment and gave him several smart lashes with their whips, telling him that he should never pay money when gentlemen waited to receive it.

A small time after this robbery they committed another upon a hop-merchant, who was riding with his wife. They searched him very carefully for money, but could find none, until Dyer beginning to curse and swear and threatening to kill him, his wife cried out, *For Heaven's sake, do not murder my husband and I'll tell you where his money is.* Accordingly, she declared it was in his boots, upon which Dyer cut them off his legs and found fifty guineas therein, then taking their leave of the merchant and his wife, Dyer very gratefully thanked her for her good office. From thence they went down to Sherbourne, and each of them having got a mistress, they lived there very merrily for a considerable space, living in full enjoyment of those gross sensualities in which they alone reaped satisfaction at the expense of such honest people as they had before plundered.

Here they had intelligence of a certain grazier who was going down into the country to buy lean beasts, upon which they followed him and robbed him of all the money he had, which was about fourscore-and-ten pounds. So large a sum proved only a fund for extravagance, a use to which these men put all the money they laid their hands on. Hampshire being so lucky a place, Dyer and his comrade went next to Ringwood, where the butcher fell sick, and lay for some time, until their money was almost consumed. But then growing well again, Dyer took him down to Bath, where they robbed the stage-coaches from Bath to London, and as they returned from London to Bath again, until the road became so dangerous that they hired persons to guard them for the future; and notwithstanding they so often practised this villainy, they never were in danger but once, when a gentleman fired a blunderbuss at them but missed them both, whereupon they robbed the coach, and afterwards whipped him severely with their horse whips.

Their next expedition was to Hungerford, where they stayed about two months, in which time Dyer made a match for the butcher with a widow woman of his own trade; but just as they were going to be married, somebody discovered both his and the butcher's occupation, and thereupon obliged them to quit Hungerford, and to take their road to Newbury, with more precipitation than they were wont to do. In the road to Reading they robbed a tallow-chandler, and then galloped to Reading, where they had like to have been taken by the information of the Bath coachman; but they being pretty well mounted and riding hard night and day got safe down to Exeter in Devonshire, where, as the securest method, they agreed to part by consent. The butcher went back to Devonshire again, and Dyer must needs go to visit his friends at Salisbury, and then after a short stay with them set out for London.

The fear he was under of being discovered if he came into the direct road made him take a roundabout way in his journey, and thereby put it in his power to rob four Oxford scholars; from two of them he took their watches and their money, but though he searched the other two very diligently could find nothing, upon which he rode away with the booty he had taken. But the two whom he had robbed quickly called him back again, and told him their companions had money, if he had but wit enough to find it. Whereupon Dyer began to examine the first very strictly, and found his money put under his buttons, and his watch thrust into his breeches. On search of the second, he discovered his money put up in the cape of his coat, but his watch he had hustled to one of his companions, who held it out, which as soon as Dyer saw he took it away. It is surprising that men should be possessed with so odd a spirit that because they have lost all themselves, they must needs have others plundered into the bargain. However, Dyer thought it a good job, and with the help of this money he came up to London.

When he arrived here, he worked honestly for some time at his trade, with a very noted shoemaker upon Ludgate Hill. Soon after, he removed to a lodging in Leather Lane, and worked there for twelve months. At last he got into the company of a common woman of the town, and she very quickly brought him into his old condition, for being much in debt and often arrested, Dyer, who was at present very fond of her, was obliged to bail her or get her bailed. Hearing that he had a legacy of ten pounds a year in an Exchequer Annuity, she would never let him alone until he had disposed of it, which at last he did, for about fourscore pounds. The first thing that was done after the receipt of the sum of money was to clothe madam in Monmouth Street, in an handsome suit of blue flowered satin, with everything agreeable thereto. On their return home the man of the house where they lodged flew into a great passion, said he'd never suffer her to wear such fine clothes unless he was paid what was due to him. Mr. Dyer in his memoirs gives us this story, dressed out with abundance of oaths and such like decoration, which we will venture to leave out, and relate the adventure, as it gives a very good idea of such sort of houses, otherwise in his own language.

The bawd, while her husband was swearing, took Mr. Dyer upstairs, and there with a wheedling tone asked him if Moll should not bring them a quartern of brandy to drink his and his spouse's health, but before Dyer could give her an answer, she issued a positive command herself, whereupon up comes Moll and the quartern. The mistress poured out half of it into one glass which she drank off to the health of Mr. and Mrs. Dyer, adding with great complaisance. *Well, indeed your Alice is a fine woman when she's dressed. I love to see a handsome woman with all my heart. Come, Moll, fill t'other quartern, and bid Mrs. Dyer come to her spouse; and d'ye hear, tell my husband that Mrs. Dyer desires to drink a glass of brandy with him.*

On this message up comes the husband, and clapping down by him took him by the hand, with an abundance of seeming courtesy, said, *Pray, Mr. Dyer, don't let you and I fall out. I may, in my passion, have let fall some provoking words to your wife, but I can't help it, 'tis my way, and I really want money so that it almost makes me mad. I'll tell you what; your spouse, Mr. Dyer, owes me almost nine pounds, now if you'll give me five guineas, I'll give you a receipt in full.* Upon which our cully of a robber, thinking to save so much money, paid it him down, and madam seemed to be highly pleased.

As soon as this was over and the receipt given, his lady said to Dyer, *Come my dear, we'll go and take a walk and see Mrs. Sheldon.* Thither they went. No sooner were they in the house, but after the first compliments were passed, Mrs. Sheldon said, *We were just talking of you when you came in, Mr. Dyer, and of that small matter your spouse owes us.* Says Dyer, *How much is it?* But two-and-forty shillings, says Mrs. Sheldon. Upon which the fool took the money out of his pocket and paid it. A little while after this, Dyer's mistress thought fit to quarrel with one of her female acquaintances whom she had made her confidante, by which means the story came out that she was not a penny in debt either to her landlord or Mrs. Sheldon, but that she wanted money and was resolved to make hay while the sun shone.

One would have thought that a fellow so versed in villainy, and so given up to all sorts of debauchery, would have immediately discarded a woman who showed him such tricks, but on the contrary he grew fonder of her, removed her to another lodging, and lavished all he had on her. But as a new misfortune, one morning early a man knocked at the door, which he taking to be one of her gallants, went in his shirt to the window. The man enquired whether one Mrs. Davis was there, upon which Dyer's mistress in a great agony, said, *O, la, John, it's my husband come from sea, what shall I do?* Upon this, Dyer hustled on his clothes and went downstairs to another harlot, and by there until his first lady and her husband came downstairs.

However, it was not long before the seaman had an account of Dyer's familiarity with his wife, and thereupon thinking to get money out of him brought his action against him; but Dyer got himself bailed, and soon after arrested him for meat, drink and lodging for his wife for several months, for which he lay in the Compter for a considerable time, and at last was obliged to give Dyer ten pounds to make it up.

At last, when money ran low, Dyer's love on a sudden went all out. He dismissed his mistress and not finding another quickly to his mind, took up a sudden resolution to marry and live honest. It was not long before he prevailed on an honest woman, and accordingly they were joined together in wedlock. Dyer thereupon provided himself with a cobbler's stall in Leather Lane, worked hard and lived well. But as his inclinations were always dishonest, he could not long confine himself to honesty and labour, but in a short space meeting with a young man in the neighbourhood, who was very uneasy in his circumstances, and on ill terms with his friends, and very much disordered in his mind on account of the misfortunes under which he laboured, Dyer began immediately to cast eyes upon him as one who would make him a fit companion.

It seems the other had exactly the same thoughts, and one day as they were walking together in the fields, says the stranger to him, *I'll tell you what; if you knew how affairs stand with me, you would advise me. I must either go upon the highway, or into gaol. That's a hard choice,* replied Dyer; *but did you ever do anything of that kind?* No, said the other, *indeed, not hitherto.* Well, then, says his tutor again, *have you any pistols?* No, replied he, *but I intend to pawn my watch and buy some.* The bargain was soon made between them. One night they robbed a man by the Old Spa,<sup>[88]</sup> the same night they robbed another by Sadler's Wells. Two or three days after, they robbed a chariot, and took from persons in it thirty pounds. The young practitioner in thieving thought this a rare quick way of getting money and therefore followed it very industriously in the company of his assistant. In Lincoln's Inn Fields they were hard put to it, for after they had committed a robbery, abundance of watchmen gathered about them, whom they suffered to advance very near them, but then firing two or three pistols over their heads they all ran, and suffered the robbers to go which way they would. A multitude of other facts they committed, until Dyer got into that gang who robbed on Blackheath, of whom we have given some account.

It is observable that Dyer, in his own narrative, gives not the least account of his turning evidence and hanging a great number of his associates, many of whom, as has been said in the former volume,<sup>[89]</sup> charged him with having first drawn them into the commission of crimes and then betrayed them. It seems this was among the circumstances of his life which did not afford him any mirth, a thing to which throughout the course of his memoirs he is egregiously addicted. However it was, I must inform my reader that he remained for near seven years a prisoner in Newgate after his being an evidence, until at last he found means to get discharged at the same time with one Abraham Dumbleton, who was his companion in his future exploits, and suffered with him at the same time. When they were at the bar, in order to their being discharged out of Newgate, the Recorder, with his usual humanity, represented to them the danger there was of their coming to a bad end, in case they should be set at liberty and get again into the company of their old comrades who might seduce them to their former practices, and thereby become the means of their suffering a violent and ignominious death; advising them at the same time rather to submit to a voluntary transportation, whereby they would gain a passage into a new country, inhabited by Englishmen, where they might live honestly without dread of those reproaches to which they would be ever liable here. But they insisting upon their discharge and promising to live very honestly for the future, their request was complied with, and they were set at liberty.

One of the first crimes committed by Dyer afterwards was robbing a victualler coming over

Bloomsbury Market,<sup>[90]</sup> between one and two o'clock in the morning, and from whom, having thrown him down and stopped his mouth, they took his silver watch, seventeen shillings in money, two plain rings, and the buckles out of his shoes. They robbed another man in the Tottenham Court Road coming to town, tied him and then took from him two-and-forty shillings. Dyer also happening to be one day a little cleaner and better dressed than ordinary, was taken notice of in Lincoln's Inn Fields by one of those abominable, unnatural wretches who addict themselves to sodomy. He pretended to know him at first, and desired him to step to the tavern with him and drink a glass of wine, which the other readily complied with. In the tavern, Dyer took notice that the gentleman had a good diamond ring upon his finger, and then suddenly taking notice of a hackney-coach which drove by with a single gentleman in it, he pretended it was a friend of his and that he needs must go down and speak a word with him. Under pretence of doing which, he went clear off with the diamond ring. Two or three days after, he met the same person with a man in years, and of some consideration. Upon his asking Dyer how he came to go off in that manner from the tavern, he, who was accustomed to such salutations, gave him a rough answer, and the spark fearing a worse accusation might be alleged against himself, thought fit to go off without making any more words about it.

I am not able to say how long after, but certainly it could be no very considerable space before he and Dumbleton robbed Mr. Bradley, in Kirby Street, by Hatton Garden, of his hat and wig, at the same time trampling on him, beating him, and using him in the most cruel manner imaginable, as was sworn by Mr. Bradley upon their trial. However, by affrighting the watch with their pistols, they got off safe and a night or two after broke open a linen-draper's shop, and took out a large parcel of linen. For these two facts they were shortly after apprehended, and on very full evidence convicted at the Old Bailey.

Under sentence of death, Dyer said he was sorry for his offences, but spoke of them in a manner that showed he had but a slight sense of those heinous crimes in which he had continued so long. His narrative that he left behind him, and which was published the day before his execution, is a manifest proof of the ludicrous terms which those unhappy creatures affect in the relation of their own adventures. However, it becomes us not to judge concerning the sentiments of a person who in his last moments professed himself a penitent. Instead of doing which, we shall produce the speech he made at the place of execution.

Good People,

I desire all young men to take warning by my ignominious death, and to forsake evil company, especially lewd women, who have been the chief cause of my unhappy fate. I hope, and make it my earnest request that nobody will be so ill a Christian as to reflect on my aged parents, who took an early care to instruct me, and brought me up a member, though a very unworthy one, of the Church of England. I hope my misfortunes will be a warning to all youth, especially some whom I wish well; I will not name them, but hope, if they see this, they will take it to themselves. I die in charity with all men, forgiving and hoping to be forgiven myself, through the merits of my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

He died on the 21st of November, 1729, being thirty-one years of age.

[87]

This may mean that they dropped themselves into the cess-pit and made their way out through another opening.

[88]

Spa Fields, Clerkenwell, was a notorious spot for footpads.

[89]

See pages [121](#), [122](#).

[90]

This was at the south-west corner of Bloomsbury Square.

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### **The Lives of WILLIAM ROGERS, a Thief; WILLIAM SIMPSON, a Horse-dealer; and ROBERT OLIVER, *alias* WILLIAM JOHNSON, a Thief**

The first of these persons was descended from very mean parents, who had, however, given him a tolerable education, so far as to qualify him by reading and writing for any ordinary kind of business, to which they intended to breed him on his coming to a fit age. They put him out apprentice to a shoemaker, with whom he lived out his time, with the approbation of his master and all who knew him. Afterwards he married a wife and worked for some time honestly as a journeyman at his trade, being exceedingly fond of his new wife. But she being a woman who liked living in a better state than he could afford by what he gained at his work, and he being desirous to live more at home, and yet maintain her plentifully too, at last came to picking and thieving; and being detected in stealing some shoes out of a shop, he was for that crime transported.

In Maryland and Virginia he continued some time working at his trade with masters there, who gave him great encouragement, so that he might have lived very happily there, if he had not been desirous of coming to England. His mind ran continually on his wife. It was for her sake that he at first had fallen into these practices, and to enjoy her conversation was almost the only thing which tempted him to return home.

On his arrival here, it was no doubt with the greatest uneasiness that he heard his wife, as soon as ever he went abroad, cohabited with another man and could never afterwards be brought to see him, or give him any assistance, no not when he was under his last and great misfortunes. Her unkindness afflicted the unhappy man so much that he grew careless of his safety, and thereby became speedily apprehended, and was tried for his offence in returning before the time was expired; and the fact being clear he was at once convicted.

Under sentence of death, he seemed to deplore nothing so much as the unkindness of his wife, who would not so much as afford him one visit, when he had hazarded, and even sacrificed his life to visit her. He confessed that he had been guilty of that crime for which he had formerly been transported, but denied that he lived in such a course of wickedness and debauchery as most malefactors do. On the contrary, he said he was heartily sorry for his sins, and hoped that God would accept his imperfect repentance.

William Simpson was a young man of very good parents in Gloucestershire, who had taken care to educate him carefully, both in the knowledge of letters and of true religion, and they then put him out apprentice to a tailor; but not liking that employment, he did not follow it, but lived with a relation of his who was a great farmer in the country. There, it seems, he stole a black gelding to the value of ten pounds, for which he was quickly apprehended and committed to prison, and upon very full evidence convicted. The unhappy youth said that nothing but idleness and an aversion to any employment were the causes of his committing an act of such a nature, so contrary to the principles in which he had been instructed, and to which he was not tempted by ill-company, or driven to by any straits. Under sentence of death he behaved with great modesty, penitence and civility, was desirous of being instructed and did everything that could be expected from a man in his miserable condition.

Robert Oliver, *alias* William Johnson, was born of parents of tolerable circumstances in Yorkshire, they bred him at school, and afterwards bound him apprentice to a tallow-chandler. After he was out of his time, he got somehow or other into the service of Mrs. North, where he robbed one Joseph Heppworth of seven-and-forty guineas. As soon as he had done it, he went to Moorgate and gave two-and-twenty of them for a horse, upon which he rode down into his own country, where he exchanged it for another horse, getting four guineas to boot. But the person who had lost the money being indefatigable, and imagining that he might have gone down into his own country, followed him thither, and after some time seized him and got him confined in Beverley gaol. But it seems he found a way to make his escape from thence, and so getting to London, skulked up and down here for some time, until at last he was discovered and committed to Newgate and at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey was tried and convicted for the aforesaid offence.

Under sentence he behaved himself stupidly, not seeming to have a just concern for the offence which he had committed. He was sullen, would say very little, did not deny the crime for which he died, but yet did not seem to have that compunction which might have been expected from a man in his sad condition.

At the place of execution Rogers said little; Simpson acknowledged lewd women had been his ruin; Robert Oliver acknowledged that he had been a vicious, unruly, young man, who had hearkened to no advice, but addicted to nothing but the accomplishment of his vices. They were all desirous of prayers, and after they were celebrated they submitted to their deaths very patiently; and with pious ejaculations, they were executed on the 21st of November, 1739, Rogers being forty years of age, Simpson nineteen, and Oliver twenty-two.

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## The Life of JAMES DRUMMOND

Folly and wickedness, as it were, naturally lead men to poverty, shame and misfortunes, but when such miseries overtake persons who lived soberly and in all outward appearance honestly, it is apt to create wonder at first, and afterwards to excite compassion.

The unhappy man of whom we are now speaking was the son of a sailor, who brought him when but a boy of three years of age up to London, and then dying, left him to the care of his mother, who was too poor to give him any education. However, he went to sea, and being a young man ingenious enough in himself, and very tractable in his temper, he soon became a tolerable proficient in the practical part of navigation. This recommended him to pretty constant business, whereby he got enough to maintain himself and his family handsomely enough, if he had thought fit to have employed it that way; which for a considerable space of time he did, keeping up a very good reputation in the neighbourhood where he lived, and serving with a fair character on board several men-of-war, going up the Baltic with squadrons sent thither to preserve the Swedish coast from being insulted by the Moscovites.

After his return, he served on board the fleet which destroyed that of the Spaniards in Sicily. He was afterwards coxswain in the Admiral, when they served in the Mediterranean, and on the coast of Spain, but coming home at last and being weary of going to sea, he took up the trade of

selling china and some small goods about the country; in which he got so established a character that the gentlemen with whom he chiefly dealt would have trusted him a hundred pounds on his word, and never anything gave a greater shock to his neighbours and acquaintances than the news of his being apprehended for a highwayman. However, it seems he had been engaged to that course by his brother, notwithstanding that till then he had lived not only honestly, but with tolerable sentiments of religion.

The method in which he was drawn to turn robber on a sudden was thus. On the 19th of October, 1729, his brother came to him as he was working on the outside of a ship on the other side of the water, and invited him to go out with him to a public house, to which at first he was very unwilling; but at last suffering himself to be prevailed upon, he and his brother went together to a house not far distant, where they drank to a higher pitch than James Drummond had ever done before. His brother all along insinuated how advantageous a trade the highway was, owning he had followed nothing else for some years past, and saying there was not the least hazard run in it, at the same time advising his brother to quit labouring hard, and to take to it, too. James was now grown so drunk that he hardly knew what he did, so that after much persuasion he got up behind his brother upon the same horse, but was afterwards set down, it being judged by both of them to be better to rob on foot, while he who was well armed and well mounted might be able to defend them both. Having come to this fatal agreement, they immediately set about those enterprises which they had consulted together.

The first robbery they committed was upon Mr. William Isgrig, from whom they took sixteen guineas, seven half-guineas, three broad pieces, one moidore, twenty shillings in silver, and a watch value two pounds. Not satisfied with this the same night they attacked one Mr. Wakeling, on the same road, and took from him a silver watch, and three or four shillings in money, though not without much resistance, Mr. Wakeling having drawn his sword and defended himself for a considerable time; but perceiving one of the rogues to be a footpad, he followed him so closely, and made such an outcry to the watch, that after a long pursuit and a sharp struggle with him, they took James Drummond prisoner. His brother after firing a pistol or two, rode off as fast as he could. At the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey he was indicted for both offences and upon very full and dear evidence convicted.

It was impossible to describe the agonies which this unhappy man suffered while under sentence of death, the sense of his own condition, the reflection on his former character, unsullied and untainted amongst his whole neighbourhood, the consideration of leaving a wife and five small children behind him, with small provision for their support, and what was worse exposed to the reflection of the world on the score of an unhappy father, scandalous in the last actions of his life, and ignominious in his death. However, returning to his former principles of piety and religion, he comforted himself under the weight of all his misfortunes, by leaning on the mercy of God, praying fervently to Him to grant him patience and protection under those dreadful evils which he suffered. He acknowledged all to be exactly true which was deposed against him at his trial, confessed the justice of his sentence, and prepared to undergo it with as much submission and resignation as was possible, and indeed perhaps no criminal ever behaved with more penitence than he did. He died on Monday, the 22nd of December, 1729, being then forty years of age.

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### **The Lives of WILLIAM CAUSTIN and GEOFFREY YOUNGER, Footpads**

The first of these unhappy men, William Caustin, was born somewhere in the country, but the particular place is not mentioned in any papers I have before me. Neither am I able to say of what condition his parents were, yet whether poor or rich they afforded him a very tolerable education, and when he was grown big enough to be put out apprentice, bound him to a barber, to whom he served out his time with remarkable fidelity. When out of his time he married a wife and set up for himself; yet whether through inevitable misfortunes, or for want of good management, I cannot say, but he failed in a very short time after, and so was reduced to be a journeyman again. However, his character remained so unblemished that he was never out of business, nor ill-treated by any masters where he worked. On the contrary, he was caressed wherever he came, and treated with as much civility as if he had been a relation to those whom he had served.

His wife unfortunately falling sick upon his hand, he became thereby thrown out of business, and in that time falling into ill company, their repeated solicitations prevailed with him to go for once upon the highway, which accordingly he did, and committed, in company with Geoffrey Younger and the evidence, a robbery on William Bowman, taking from him a guinea and thirteen shillings, for which he was very quickly after apprehended, and the fact being plainly and fully proved, he was convicted, it being the only fact he ever committed.

Geoffrey Younger, his companion, was descended of very honest creditable parents in Northamptonshire. There he was put apprentice to a baker, to whom he served his time out very honestly and faithfully. Afterwards he came up to London, and lived here for seven years as a journeyman, in as good a reputation as it was possible for a young man to have. But having by that time got a good quantity of clothes, and about ten pounds in his pockets, he began to think himself too good to work, and unfortunately falling into the company of some idle debauched persons of both sexes, they soon led him into a road of ruin. Amongst these was one Bradley, a fellow of his own business, whose company of all others, he most affected. This fellow having addicted himself to the pursuit of the most scandalous vices, easily drew in Younger to go with

him to a house where gamesters resorted and advising him to venture his money, Younger was good enough to take his advice, and so was bubbled out of every farthing of his money.

Surprised and confounded at this extraordinary turn, which had reduced him to indigence in a moment, he did nothing but lament his own hard fortune, and curse his indiscretion for coming to such a place. Bradley endeavoured to cheer him, telling him he would yet put him in a way to get money, and thereupon proposed going with him upon the highway; in order to encourage him to which, he told him that at such a place they should meet with a man who had fourscore pounds about him. So after abundance of arguments, Younger yielded, and out they went. From that time forwards he gave a loose to all his brutal inclinations, associated himself with nobody but common whores and thieves, spent his time in gaming, when not engaged in a worse employment, and never, after his acquaintance with Bradley, thought of doing anything either just or honest. But his course was of no very long continuance, for having committed four or five robberies, the last of which was in the company of William Caustin, they were both apprehended, and as has been said, upon very full evidence convicted.

Under sentence of death they both of them blamed Bradley the evidence, as the person who had drawn them first to the commission of those crimes for which they were now to answer with their lives. Caustin's wife died while he was under sentence, and he thereby lost what little comfort he had under his afflictions. However, he endeavoured to compose himself the best he could, to suffer that judgment which the Law had pronounced upon him, and which he himself acknowledged to be just. Younger, on the other hand, was exceedingly timorous and so terribly affrighted at the approach of death that he scarce retained his senses. He confessed very freely the enormities of his former life; said that a more dissolute person than himself never lived; cried out against the evidence Bradley, as the author of his misfortunes; charged him with having painfully endeavoured to seduce him. But in the midst of this he wept bitterly, and showed a great terror at the approach of his execution than was seen amongst any of the rest who suffered with him, his countenance being so much altered, that it was hardly possible for anybody to know him, who had been acquainted with him before, insomuch that he looked for many weeks before his execution like a person who had been already dead and buried.

As the day of dissolution approached, it was hoped that he would recover more courage, but instead of that he became so terribly frightened that he could scarce speak, or show any signs of life when he was brought to Tyburn. However, there he did gather spirits a little, and spoke to the crowd to take warning by him, and avoid coming to that fatal place. He said that he had been guilty of but five robberies in all his life; said he forgave his prosecutors and the evidence who swore against him; and in this disposition they both died at the same time with the malefactors before mentioned, Caustin being thirty-six years of age, and Younger about thirty-four.

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### **The Lives of HENRY KNOWLAND and THOMAS WESTWOOD, Footpads**

Henry Knowland was the son of a father of the same name who was a butcher. He received tolerably good education at school, and was brought up by his father to his own business; but he was of a lewd disposition, continually running after whores, keeping lewd company, gaming and drinking until he was able neither to stand nor go. He married his first cousin, who had formerly been the wife of Neeves, the evidence. It seems this very Knowland had been put into Whitechapel gaol upon her swearing a robbery against him for taking a gold chain off her neck, but that affair being accommodated, he a little after married her, which was perhaps no small cause of his future ruin.

He was always dishonest in his principles, and ready to lay hold of any money without ever thinking of paying it again. At Smithfield he used to be very dextrous in cheating country graziers of their cattle. The method by which he did it was generally thus. Taking advantage of a countryman whom he saw looked unacquainted with things, he struck a bargain as soon as possible, and for any price he pleased, for his goods; then stepping in to drink a mug and receive the money, Knowland had an accomplice already planted, who coming hastily into the room told him with a submissive air that a gentleman at such a place desired to speak with him. Upon this he, arising in a hurry, tells the countryman he would return immediately and pay him his money, while the attendant in the meanwhile drove off with the beast; and so the poor man was left without hopes of seeing either the money or bullock and perhaps ruined into the bargain for being obliged to pay his master for the beast that was lost.

Thomas Westwood, the second of these offenders, was a man descended of very mean parents, who either had it not in their power, or were so careless as to afford him little or no education. He himself, also, was a stupid, obstinate fellow, who never took any pains to attain the least degree of knowledge, but contented himself with living like a beast, in a continual round of eating and drinking and sleeping. By trade he was a sawyer, and when he wanted business in his trade, which, as the Ordinary tells us, he often did bring a poor purblind creature, he either sold sawdust about town, or else practised as a bailiffs follower, a profession which led him into yet greater debaucheries and extravagancies than otherwise possible he might have ever fallen into.

Knowland and he were apprehended on suspicion for being robbers, and were tried at the Old Bailey on four indictments, all said to have been committed on the same day, viz., on the 23rd of November, 1729. The first was for assaulting John Molton in an open field, putting him in fear, and taking from him four shillings; the second was for assaulting Mary Butler and taking from her sixpence in money; the third was for assaulting Nicholas Butler, and taking from him half a



guinea and one shilling; the fourth was for assaulting Anne Nailor, and taking from her three and sixpence in money.

The prosecutors on all these indictments swore positively to the prisoners' faces. Mr. Butler was desperately wounded (the Ordinary says he was mortally wounded) but through God's grace recovered. In their defence they called a great number of people to prove them in other places at the time those robberies were committed, which they positively swore, but the jury giving credit to the prosecutors' evidence, they were both found guilty. However, they absolutely denied the crimes to the last suffering at Tyburn with great marks of sorrow and loud exclamations to God to have mercy on their souls, the 28th of February, 1730. Knowland being twenty-four years of age, and Westwood twenty-seven, at the time of their deaths.

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### **The Life of JOHN EVERETT, a Highwayman**

This unfortunate man, who, in the course of his life, made some noise in the world, was the son of honest and reputable parents at Hitchen, in Hertfordshire. They gave their son all the education necessary to qualify him for such business as he thought proper to put him to, which was that of a salesman; but before his time was expired he went over to Flanders, and served in the late War there, in several sieges and battles; where he behaved so well as to be preferred to the post of a serjeant in the Honourable General How's regiment of foot. But returning to England upon the peace, and being quartered at Worcester he there purchased his discharge.

Coming up to London he betook himself, for bread, to the office of a bailiff in Whitechapel Court, in which station he continued for about seven years until he fell into misfortunes, chiefly through the means of one C—th. To shelter himself from a gaol, which threatened him at that time, he was forced to go into the Foot Guards, where he served in the company commanded by the right Honourable the Earl of Albemarle; but unluckily for him, having commenced an acquaintance with Richard Bird at the aforesaid Mr. C—th's, Bird told him he perceived they were much in a case, that is, they both wanted money, and that therefore looking upon him (Everett) to be a man who could be trusted, he would propose to him an easy method for supply. This method was neither better nor worse than robbing on the highway.

To this proposition Everett readily agreeing, they immediately joined, provided proper utensils for their co-partnership, and soon after practised their trade with great success in the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Surrey and Kent, particularly robbing the Dartford coach, from the passengers of which they took a portmanteau, wherein was contained jewels, money and valuable goods to a very great amount. But spending as fast as they got it, they were never the better for the multitude of facts they committed, but were in a continual necessity of hazarding body and soul for a very precarious subsistence.

A short time after, they robbed the Woodford stage-coach and found in it only one passenger worth plundering. From him they took a gold watch and some silver, but the gentleman expressing a great concern at the loss of his watch, they told him if he would promise faithfully to send such a sum of money to such a place, they would let him have it again. On Hounslow Heath they attacked two officers of the army, who were well mounted and guarded with servants armed with blunderbusses. They took their gold watches and money from them, though the officers endeavoured to resist, but they forced them to submit to the well-known doctrine of passive obedience before they acquitted them. The watches (pursuant to a treaty they made with them on the spot) were afterwards left at Young Man's Coffee House, Charing Cross, where the owners had them again on payment of twenty guineas, as stipulated in the said treaty between the parties.

Another robbery they committed was on Squire Amlow (of Bream's Buildings, Chancery Lane), in Epsom Lane, turning up to Epsom. When he was attacked he drew a sword and made several passes at them as he sat in an open chaise; but notwithstanding his resolution in opposing them, they by force took two guineas, a silver watch, and his silver-hilted sword, and some parchment writings of a considerable value. On his submission and request for his writings, they accordingly delivered them up, let him pass and helped him to his watch again, being in the hands of Mr. Corket, a pawnbroker in Houndsditch. They also took opportunities to rob all the butchers and higlers from Epping Forest to Woodford, particularly one old woman, who wore a high crowned hat of her mother's as she said, which hat they took and searched, and out of the lining of it found three pounds and delivered her the hat again. On Acton Common they also met two chariots with gentlemen and ladies in them and robbed them in money, watches and other things to the value of forty pounds.

My readers, from these instances, must have a tolerable notion of Everett's humour, it may prove entertaining, therefore, to give them a specimen of his own manner of relating his adventures, and therefore I insert the following ones in his own words.

Soon after our last achievement, my old comrade Dick Bird, and I, stopped a coach in the evening on Hounslow Heath, in which (amongst other passengers) were two precise, but courageous Quakers, who had the assurance to call us Sons of Violence; and refusing to comply with our reasonable demands jumped out of the coach to give us battle. Whereupon we began a sharp engagement, and showed them the arm of flesh was too strong for the Spirit, which seemed to move very powerful within them. After a short contest (though we never offered

to fire, for I ever abhorred barbarity, or the more heinous sin of murder) through the cowardly persuasions of their fellow-travellers they submitted, though sore against their inclinations. As they were stout fellows and men every inch of them, we scorned to abuse them, and contented ourselves with rifling them of the little Mammon of unrighteousness which they had about them, which amounted to about thirty or forty shillings and their watches. The rest in the coach, whose hearts were sunk into their breeches, Dick fleeced without the least resistance.

There was one circumstance of this affair which created a little diversion, and therefore with my readers leave, I will relate it. The Precisions for the most part, though they are plain in their dress, wear the best of commodities, and though a smart toupee<sup>[91]</sup> is an abomination, yet a bob-wig, or a natural of six or seven guineas' price, is a modest covering allowed by the saints. One of the prigs was well furnished in this particular, and flattering myself it would become me, I resolved to make it lawful plunder. Without any further ceremony, therefore, than alleging exchange was no robbery, I napped his poll, and dressed him immediately in masquerade with an old tie-wig, which I had the day before purchased of an antiquated Chelsea pensioner for half-a-crown. The other company, though in doleful dumps for the loss of the coriander seed, could not forbear grinning at the merry metamorphosis, for our Quaker now looked more like a devil than saint. As companions in distress ever alleviate its weight, they invited him with a general laugh into their leathern convenience again, wished us a goodnight, and hoped they should have no farther molestation on the road. We gave then the watch-word, and assured them they should not, then tipped the honest coachman a shilling to drink our healths, and brushed off the ground.

About a week or ten days later, my brother Dick and I projected a new scheme more nimble than the former, to take a purse without the charge of horse hire. Millington Common was determined to be the scene of action. We sauntered for some time upon the green and suffered several to pass by without the least molestation, but at last we espied two gentlemen well-mounted coming towards us, who we imagined might be able to replenish our empty purses, so we prepared for an attack. After the usual salutation, I stopped the foremost and demanded his cash, his watch and other appurtenances thereunto belonging, and assured him I was a brother of an honourable but numerous family; that to work I had no inclination and to beg I was ashamed, and that I had at present no other way for a livelihood, if such a demand at first view ought appear a little immodest or unreasonable, I hoped he would excuse it, as necessity and not choice was the fatal inducement.

My brother Dick was as rhetorical in his apologies with the hindermost, whom he dismounted. We used them with more good manners and humanity than the common pads, who act for the most part rather like Turks and Jews than Christians, in such enterprises, to the eternal scandal of the profession. We contented ourselves with what silver and little gold they had about them, which to about three or four pounds, and their gold watches, one of which, as well I remember, was of Tompion's make, and which I afterwards pawned for five guineas to a fellow that the week after broke, and ran away with it, so that I had not the opportunity of restoring it again to the proper owner, for which I heartily beg his pardon. As we must own the gentlemen behaved well and came unto our measures without the least resistance, so they must do us the justice to acknowledge that we treated them as such and neither disrobed nor abused them. We thought it, however, common prudence to cut the girths of their horses' saddles, and secure their bridles for fear of a pursuit.

Thus flushed again with success, we made the best of our way to Brentford, and there took the ferry; but Fortune, though she is fair, yet she is a fickle mistress, her smiles are often false and very precarious. Before we had got ashore, we heard the persons had got scent of us, and our triumph had like to have ended in captivity. When we were three parts over, and out of danger of drowning, we told the ferrymen our distress, gave them ten shillings, and obliged them to throw their oars into the Thames. The agreeable reward and the fears of being thrown in themselves in case of a denial, made them readily consent. In we plunged after them, and soon made the shore. Though we looked like Hob just drawn out of the well, those that saw us only imagined it was a drunken frolic. Our expeditious flight soon dried our clothes, and without catching the least cold, we both arrived safe that night at London.

We congratulated each other, you may imagine on our happy and narrow escape, and solaced ourselves after the fatigue of the day, with a mistress and a bottle.

I have copied these pages from Mr. Everett's book that my readers might have a clear and just idea of those notions which these unhappy men entertain of the life they lead, and hope they may be of some use in giving such youths as are too apt to be taken with their low kind of jests, a just abhorrence of committing villainy, merely to divert the mob, and make themselves the sole topic of discourse in alehouses and cellars.

But to return to Everett. He was taken up on suspicion and committed to New Prison, where he continued three years, behaving himself so well in the prison that the justices ordered him his liberty, and he was thereupon made turnkey of that place. In this post he continued to act so honestly that he got a tolerable reputation, taking the Red Lion alehouse, in Turnmill Street, Cow Cross, in order to live the better; resigning his place as turnkey as soon as he was settled in it.

He who succeeded him was a footman to the Duchess of Newcastle's and not being very well acquainted with the nature of his new office, he was very industrious to prevail with Everett to return to his former condition, and accept the key from him. Promises and entreaties were not long made in vain. Everett was sensible there was money to be got,<sup>[92]</sup> and therefore, upon the fair promises of the new keeper, became turnkey again. But when he had shown his master the art of governing such a territory as his was; when he had instructed him in the secrets of raising money, and shown him the methods of managing the several sorts of prisoners that were committed to its care, his superior quickly gave him to understand that he had now done all he wanted, and the next kind office would be to quit this place; for it is with those sort of people as with some in a higher station, though they at first caress men who are better acquainted with affairs than themselves, in order to improve their own knowledge, yet no sooner do they think themselves qualified to go on without their assistance, but they grow uneasy at such services, and are never quiet until they are rid of men whose abilities are their greatest faults.

A little after Everett was turned out to make room for the keeper's brother, he had the additional misfortune to keep an account with a person who too hastily demanded his money, and John, not being able to pay it, therefore upon arrested him, and threw him into gaol. He quickly turned himself over to the Fleet, where he first took the rules, and then got into the Thistle and Crown Alehouse, in the Old Bailey. There he lived for a while and afterwards took the Cock in the same place, where he lived for three years with an indifferent reputation, until he was prevailed on to take the Fleet Cellar<sup>[93]</sup>, and became very busy in the execution of the then Warden's project, until the committee of the House of Commons thought fit to commit both of them to Newgate.

This effectually undid him, for while he was a prisoner there, the brewer made a seizure of his whole stock of beer, to the value of three hundred pounds, and this it was, as he himself said, which posted him out upon the highway again. Whether we may depend upon those protestations he had made that he should never otherwise have gone upon the road again, but have lived and died free, at least from that sort of wickedness which indeed he had reason to dislike, since he had saved his life by impeaching Bird his companion, who was hanged at Chelmsford at the assizes held there for the County of Essex. When he had once taken this resolution in his head, it was not long before he equipped himself with necessaries for his employment.

The first robbery he committed was upon a lady in a chariot, and the lady desiring that he would put up his pistol for fear of frightening a child of six years old in the coach with her, he did so, and took from her a guinea and some silver, without touching her gold watch, or any other valuable things that she had about her. He had scarce committed the robbery, before the lady's husband and another gentleman and his company came up, and the accident being related to them, they immediately pursued him as hard as their horses could gallop; and came so close up with him, that he was hardly got into the Globe Tavern, in Hatton Garden, and sent away his horse, before they passed by the door. As soon as he thought they were out of sight, he slipped away with all the precaution he was able, and got into a little blind alehouse in Holborn, where he had scarce lit a pipe, and called for a tankard of drink, before he perceived both the gentlemen looking very earnestly about, though he now looked upon himself as out of all danger.

It was a very short time after, that he committed the last fact, which was the robbing of Mrs. Manley<sup>[94]</sup>, and a lady, who was in a chariot with her, a black boy being behind in the coach. He got safe enough off and into town, after this robbery; but how it was I cannot tell, his neighbours suspected him, and talked of him as a highwayman, and reported very confidently that he was taken up, as it seems he was, but was discharged again for want of evidence. He was speedily seized again, and being committed to Newgate, was brought to his trial at the Old Bailey for the said fact.

Mrs. Ellis deposed that the prisoner was the person who robbed the coach, and that she observed him follow it when they came out of town. Mrs. Manley deposed also to his being the person who robbed them, and William Coffee, a negro boy, who was behind the coach, swore positively to his face. Several men who were present at his being apprehended, swore that he had a pistol, dagger, six bullets, a flint and powder horn about him, under a red rug coat.

His defence was very trivial, and the jury upon a short consultation, found him guilty. Under sentence of death, he behaved very indifferently, sometimes appearing tolerably cool, at others in a grievous passion, especially at the keepers, if they refused him such liberties as he thought fit to ask. When he was first condemned, he flattered himself with hopes of life, if it were possible for him to prevail on the ladies whom he had robbed to petition in his favour; in order to induce them to which, he wrote the following letter, though to no purpose, for the death warrant came down suddenly and he was included with the before-mentioned prisoners.

#### THE LETTER

Madam,

I crave leave, with all humility and respect, to address you and Madam Ellis, and with the utmost submission and concern, do humbly beg your pardons for the

fears and surprise my misfortunes reduced me to put you and the children into, whose cries moved so much compassion in me that I had not power to pursue with any rigour my desperate designs, which your ladyship must have perceived by the consternation I was struck into on a sudden. My sole intention was, if I could have got £50 to settle myself in a public house, and to take up an honest course of life, and do own at best it is a very heinous crime. Yet, madam, you will recollect after what manner I treated you, and at the same time consider the methods taken by others on the like occasion. This necessity I was drove to, by adhering to a certain master I lately served, and to obey his wicked and pernicious commands, in following his wicked and pernicious counsels, brought me to poverty, and consequently to this unhappy state I now labour under, and was become almost as much as himself, the scorn and hatred of mankind. I say, madam, if you will be so good as to consider all these unhappy circumstances, and that necessity admits of no contradiction, they will, I am persuaded, inspire compassion in generous souls (a character you both deservedly bear); and as a fellow-creature, I beg mercy at your ladyship's hands, by signing a petition to the Recorder for me, to the end, he may be induced to make a favourable report, and thereby move his most sacred Majesty to clemency, by the sentence to some other corporal punishment, and shall dedicate the rest of my days in praying for both your happiness and prosperity in this world, and eternal felicity and bliss in that to come, and crave leave, with due deference, madam, to subscribe myself,

Your ladyship's most devoted,

Afflicted humble servant,

John Everett

The Ordinary of Newgate, in the account he has given of this prisoner, has drawn as bad a character as he is able, and in order to it, has gathered together all the ill-terms he could think of, even though some of them are contrary to one another. The truth is, that the fellow in himself had abundance of ill-qualities, with some good ones, and especially good nature of which he had a very large share. Lewd women were what brought him to his ruin, for to their company he continually addicted himself, and with his low intrigues amongst them is the book I have mentioned stuffed from one end to the other.

As to religion, it is certain he had very little of it before he was confined, so it is not very likely that he should make any great proficiency while he remained there. He was careless, indeed, under his misfortunes, but did not give himself up to any loose or profane expressions, but on the contrary attended at Chapel with decency at least, if not with devotion.

Some attempts were made to save his life, by engaging him to make discoveries in an affair of high concern, but all was ineffectual, and he suffered on the 20th of February, 1729-30, with less apprehension than might have been expected from a man under his unhappy circumstances. The executioner, to put the prisoner sooner out of his pain, jumped upon his shoulders, and thereby broke the rope, but he was soon tied up again, and there remained until the rest were cut down.

At the time of his execution, he was forty-four years of age or thereabouts.

[91]

This was a small wig covering only the top of the head; a bob-wig was short and tied at the back with a large bow; a natural was a large, full wig, in which the hair was made to look like natural locks.

[92]

The scandalous system of bleeding prisoners for every little necessity and comfort made gaoloring a very profitable trade.

[93]

That is, managed the sale of liquor in the Fleet.

[94]

Author of *The New Atlantis* and sundry political pamphlets and libels, plays and novels.

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## **The Lives of ROBERT DRUMMOND, a Highwayman and FERDINANDO SHRIMPTON, a Highwayman and Murderer**

Robert Drummond was the brother of James Drummond, whom we have before mentioned. He had formerly dealt in hardwares, and thereby lived with some reputation in the town of

Sunderland, nobody ever dreaming that he went upon the highway for money. But it was not long that he continued even to put this mask upon his villainy, but on the contrary gave way to his wild and debauched temper, and committed a thousand extravagancies, which soon created suspicions, and occasioned his being apprehended on suspicion of a robbery. This clearly being made out at the ensuing assizes, he was thereupon convicted, pardoned, and transported. But he soon found a way to return into England, and grew one of the most daring and mischievous robbers that ever infested the road.

The multitude of his robberies made his person so well known that it is wonderful he should so long escape, especially considering the roughness and cruelty of his temper, he never using anybody well, firing upon any who attempted to ride away from him, and beating and abusing those who submitted to him. He drew in, as has been said before, his brother James, and deserting him when pursued and in danger, he was the occasion of his death. It was also suspected that Shrimpton and he were the persons who committed those robberies for which Knowland and Westwood were executed. However it were, he continued for a considerable space after the two Shrimptons and he robbed together, committing sometimes nine or ten robberies in one night, until they were all three apprehended, and William Shrimpton became an evidence against them.

Ferdinando Shrimpton, the other malefactor, was a person well educated, though his father was one of the greatest highwaymen in England. He [the father] lived at Bristol, and behaved in outward appearance so well that he was never suspected, but unluckily one evening some constables coming into an inn hastily to apprehend another person, his guilty heart making him afraid that they were come in search of nobody but himself, he thereupon immediately drew a pistol and shot one of them dead, for which murder being convicted, he readily confessed his former offences, and after his execution for the aforesaid crime, was hung in chains.

As for this unhappy man, his son, he had been bred to no trade, but after his father's death served as a foot-soldier in the Guards and eked out his pay by taking the same steps which his father had done before him. Never any fellow was of a bolder and of a more audacious spirit than he, and after he had once associated himself with Drummond, they quickly forced William Shrimpton, who was Ferdinando's cousin, to commit one or two facts with him, and afterwards he would never suffer him to be quiet.

On Hounslow Heath, it seems, Shrimpton robbed a man of a horse, a silver watch and some money. The man applied himself to Shrimpton when he was apprehended, begging that he would find a way to help him to his horse again. Shrimpton promised he would, and for a guinea was as good as his word, though the gelding was worth fifteen pounds; but for his watch, nothing either was, or as they pretended could be, told about it. But that was only for fear of disobliging the pawnbroker where they had sent it, for Shrimpton afterwards, upon the owner's thirty-four shillings by his wife, had it again, though Ferdinando was very much disobliged that he received but half a crown for his trouble.

Drummond, he and his cousin being seized, William turned evidence against them, and at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, Shrimpton being indicted for the murder of Simon Prebent, Mr. Tyson's coachman, and Robert Drummond for aiding and abetting, and assisting him, they were both upon full evidence convicted, as they were also convicted for a robbery on the highway, on Mr. Tyson, after the death of the coachman. They were a third time indicted together for assaulting Robert Furnel on the highway, taking from him a watch of great value, a guinea and a half, some silver and a whip, together with some other things of value. They were also indicted afresh for assaulting Jonathan Cockhoofs on the highway, taking from him a bay gelding, value nine pounds, several roasting pigs and pieces of pork, etc.; of all which they were found guilty, the fact being as clear and as strong against them as possible.

Under sentence of death, they behaved themselves with great obstinacy and resolution, refused to give any account of their crimes, but in general would say that they were great and notorious offenders. As to the fact committed by Knowland and Westwood, they would not positively say it was done by them, though they could not deny it. Only when pressed upon it, Drummond would say in a passion, *What, would you have us take upon us all the robberies that were committed in the country?* This was all that could be got from him, even when he was at the point to die and the wife of Knowland earnestly begged that he would tell the truth, as he was now entering into another world, and the owning or not owning of those facts could no ways prejudice them.

As to the barbarous murder committed upon Mr. Tyson's coachman, it did not seem to make the least impression upon their spirits. Shrimpton, by whose hands the man was killed, never appeared one whit more uneasy when the sermon on murder was peculiarly preached on his account, but on the contrary talked and jested with his companions as he was wont to do. In a word more hardened, obstinate and impenitent wretches were never seen; for as they were wanting in all principles of religion, so they were void even of humanity and good nature. They valued blood no more than they did water, but were ready to shed the first with as little concern as they spilt the latter. Inured in wickedness and rapine, old in years and covered in offences, they yielded their last breaths at Tyburn, with very little sign of contrition or repentance, on the 17th of February, 1730, Drummond being about fifty, and Shrimpton about thirty years of age.

Though the many instances we have, of late years, had of amazing wickednesses committed by lads one would scarce believe were capable of executing, much less of contriving schemes so full of ginning and of guilt, ought in a great measure to prevent our being surprised at anything of the same kind, let it be committed by ever such a stripling, yet I confess it was not without wonder that I perused the papers relating to this unfortunate young man—so strong an instance of a great capacity for mischief at the same time that he never once evidenced either care or ability in succeeding in an honest way. On the contrary, he was assiduous only to attain as much money as might put him on the road of debauchery, and then stupidly gave himself up to squandering it in the gratification of his lusts, until indigence brought to rack his inventions again, and his second attempt proving abortive, brought him to the gallows.

He was born of honest parents, who took care enough in his education to qualify him for the business of a shoemaker, for which they designed him, and to which they put him apprentice. He had not served above three years of his time, before he robbed his master of a very considerable sum of money. The man having a respect for his family, put him away without prosecuting him. His father took him home, but, however, reproaching him very often for the villainous facts he had committed, he went away from him and lay about the town, intending to take the first opportunity that offered of stealing a good booty, and march off into the country.

At last, after consulting with himself for some time, he fixed upon a banker's shop in Lombard Street, within two doors of the church of St. Edmund the King, thinking with himself that if once he could get into that shop, he should make himself at a blow. In order to it he got into the church overnight and stayed there until morning, when, just as it began to grow light, he steered downstairs into the shop, having got over the top of Mr. Jenkin's house, and watching his opportunity, laid hold of a single bag and slipped out of doors with it. The booty was indeed a large one, for it happened that what he took was all gold, which was upwards of eight hundred guineas. This put it in his power to show himself in that state of life which he most admired, for sending for a tailor he had two or three suits of fine clothes made, bought a couple of geldings, hired a footman in livery to attend him, and thus equipped set out for the horse races at Newmarket.

Women and gaming very soon reduced the bulk of his gold and in six or seven months, finding his pockets very low, he returned to London to replenish himself. The good success he before had in robbing a banker, and his knowing nobody was so likely to furnish him with ready money, put him upon making the like attempt at Mr. Hoare's, into whose house he got and endeavoured to conceal himself as conveniently as he could for that purpose. But being detected and apprehended on the roof of the house, whither he had fled to avoid pursuit, he was committed to Newgate, and at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, was tried for burglary, and convicted.

Under sentence of death he behaved with great mildness and civility. He confessed his having been as great a sinner as his years would give him leave, addicted to whoring, drunkenness, gaming and having quite obliterated all the religious principles which his former education had instilled into him. However, he endeavoured to retrieve as much as possible the knowledge of his duty, and to fulfil it by praying to Almighty God for the forgiveness of his many offences; and in this disposition of mind he departed this life, on the 17th of February, 1730, being about nineteen years of age.

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### **The Life of STEPHEN DOWDALE, a Thief**

This unfortunate man was the son of parents in good circumstances in the Kingdom of Ireland, who were very careful of giving him the best education they were capable of, both as to letters and as to the principles of the Christian religion. Yet from some hope they had of his succeeding in a military way, they chose rather to let him serve in the army than breed him to any particular trade. It seems he behaved so well in the regiment of dragoons in which he served, that his officers advanced him to the post of sergeant, and just as the Peace was concluded, he had hopes of being made a quartermaster. But the regiment then being broke, his hopes were all dissipated, and he thrown into the world to shift for himself as well as he could.

In Ireland he remained with his friends some years, but finding by degrees that their kindness cooled, and that it would be impossible for him to subsist much longer upon the bounty of his relations, he thereupon resolved to come over at once to England and endeavour to live here by his wits. The gaming tables were the places where he chiefly resorted, but finding that fortune was a mistress not to be depended upon he resolved to take some more certain method of living, and for that purpose associated himself with ten or a dozen knights of the road. He continued his practices without the least suspicion for a very considerable time, in all which he appeared one of the greatest beaux at the other end of the town.

But growing uneasy in the midst of that seeming gaiety in which he lived, and being under some apprehensions that one or more of his companions was meditating means of making peace with the government at the expense of his life, he resolved to prevent them; and thereupon surrendered himself of his own accord into the hands of a constable, and gave the best information he was able against all his confederates. But however it was, most of them had previous knowledge of the warrants issued against them, and thereby made their escapes. Others who were apprehended were acquitted by the jury, notwithstanding this evidence against them, so that the public not being likely to reap any benefit by his discovery, some people thought proper to turn his own confession upon himself. Accordingly, at the next Sessions at the Old

Bailey, he was indicted for feloniously stealing a gold watch value twenty pounds, out of the house of Thomas Martin, on the 30th of August preceding the indictment. He was also indicted a second time for feloniously stealing a diamond ring out of the shop of John Tribble, on the 25th of August. Both these facts were in the information he had made, and therefore the proof was dear and direct against him, and beyond his power to avoid by any defence.

Under sentence of death he behaved himself with great resignation, seemed to be very penitent for those numerous offences he had committed, though now and then he let fell expressions which showed that he thought himself hardly dealt with by those who had received his confession. However, what with fear and concern, and what with the moistness of the place wherein he was confined, he fell into a grievous distemper, which quickly increased into a high fever, which affected his senses, and shortly after took away his life, just as a very worthy gentleman in the commission for the peace for Middlesex had procured his life, which was thus ended by the course of Nature though in the cells of Newgate, he being then in the forty-fourth year of his age. He died on the 5th of April, 1730.

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### **The Life of ABRAHAM ISRAEL, a Jew**

As it is a very ordinary case for fiction to be imposed on the world for truth, so it sometimes happens that truth hath such extraordinary circumstances attending it, as well nigh bring it to pass for fiction. The adventures of this unhappy man, who was a Hebrew by nation, have something in them strange, and which excite pity; for a man must be wanting in humanity who can look upon a young person endowed with the natural advantage of a good genius, lightened by the acquired accomplishments of learning, fall of a sudden from an honest and reputable behaviour into debauchery, wickedness and rapine, methods that lead to certain destruction, and as it were to drag men to violent and shameful deaths.

This unfortunate person, Abraham Israel, was born of parents of the Hebrew nation, of good character and in good circumstances, at Presburg, in the kingdom of Hungary. They were exceedingly desirous of giving their son a good education, and therefore sent him to study in the Jewish College at Prague, in Bohemia, where they allowed him about two hundred pounds Stirling a year. He improved under the tuition of the rabbis there to a great degree, insomuch that he was admired by them as a prodigy of learning. His behaviour in every other way being unblamable, and therefore not spending above half what his father sent him, he distributed the rest among the indigent scholars there, of all nations and religions. As a mark of his early and polite genius, we have thought proper to entertain our readers with a short description of the city of Prague, which he wrote in the German tongue, and which on this occasion we have ventured to translate into English.

Prague is the capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, which, as if protected by nature, is encompassed round with high mountains. Throughout all Europe there is no soil in general more fertile or better adapted to the plough. The fruits there are excellent and great quantities of fowl are plentiful almost to excess, the cattle are large and excellent. In fine nothing is poor, wretched or miserable there except the people, who are slaves to their lords, and never enjoy even the fruits of their own hard labour. But to return to Prague, it is a city situated on a hill, part of it stretching down the plain, having the river Muldau running through it. The buildings are of so large extent that this city is divided into three, and by some into four cities. The old city lies on the east of the river, is exceedingly populous, and houses in that quarter fair, but old-fashioned. Here is the quarter assigned unto our nation (i.e., the Jews) where we enjoy greater privileges and are treated with more lenity than in any other part of Germany. The heads of our people deal to very great advantage in jewels and precious stones dug out of the Bohemian mines. The lesser town on the other side of the river is more beautiful in its building than the old town, has fine gardens and stately palaces, among which there is the famous one of Count Wallenstein, the magnificence of which, may be the better guessed from our knowing that a hundred houses were pulled down to make room for it. Its hall is thought one of the finest in all Europe, its gardens are wonderfully stately, and the stables which he built here for his horses are almost beyond description, marble pillars parted the standing of each horse from another. The racks were of polished steel, and their mangers of the finest marble, and over the head of each stand was placed the figure of each horse, as large as the life. This famous man who was the greatest captain of his time, after having built this sumptuous palace, re-established the Emperor's power, almost utterly broken by the Swedes, growing at last too powerful for a subject, or as the Germans say, endeavouring to make himself master of the Kingdom of Bohemia, he was, if not by the command, at least by the connivance of the Emperor Ferdinand, privately assassinated in the city of Egra, in the year 1634, by certain Irish officers, in whom he reposed the greatest confidence. Since his time Prague has seen no greater powerful persons among her countrymen; on the contrary, the inhabitants now in general are poor, their habits mean, the Hebrew nation being obliged, both men and women, to wear a particular garb. Its streets are dirty, and nothing but the Imperial Palace preserves anything of its ancient grandeur; the same fate hath befallen the other Bohemian cities, and thus in a land of Paradise the people live like slaves.

When at the age of thirteen, the unfortunate Abraham was recalled by his father from college, at his return home, every one was surprised at that prodigious knowledge which he had acquired while at Prague. Those of their nation who resided at Presburg desired Abraham's father that his son might, according to the custom of the Hebrews, read in the synagogue, which accordingly he did with great and deserved applause. His relations, and the rich Jews of the town, loaded him the next day with valuable presents, in order to show their veneration for the religion and learning of their ancestors; but these encouragements being heaped on a vain and ambitious temper, were the ruin of a youth hitherto virtuous in his conduct and passionately fond of learning. For growing on a sudden conceited with his own abilities, puffed up with the vanity of having excelled his equals, he began to addict himself to acquire higher accomplishments, grew fond of music, delighted in dancing-schools, would needs be taught fencing and riding, and from the studies preparative to making a grave rabbi, jumped all of a sudden to the qualities necessary to finish a Jewish fop.

His relations soon showed by the alteration of their conduct how little they approved of his new state of life, but that signified nothing to him, he still went on at his old rate; until at last perceiving his parents would do nothing for him, he went with an idle woman to Amsterdam. There he was uneasy, not knowing what course of life to take, but at last submitted to wearing a livery, and got into service. He behaved himself amongst the Spanish Jews so well that they gave him a recommendation to Baron Swaffo in England, upon which he came over thither, and entered into his service. He recommended him to Mr. Jacob Mendez da Costa, where he stayed for some time, with a good character as a diligent servant. From him he went to Mr. Villareal on College Hill. It seems that while he continued at the Hague, he fell in love with a young woman there, who continually ran in his head after his coming over hither. As soon, therefore, as he got money enough, he went over to the Hague, on purpose to make her a visit. When he came there, he found she was gone, which made him very uneasy, yet he resolved not to go to Amsterdam, whither he heard she went from the Hague.

However, it was not long before she was thrown in his way, for upon his coming over again to London, where he got into the service of Mr. Jacob Mendez da Costa, he heard at a barber's shop of a young maid just brought over from Holland who was then at her uncle's in St. Mary Axe, not knowing where to get a place. Upon enquiring her name, he found it to be his old acquaintance and mistress at the Hague. It was not long before he turned out the cook at the place where he lived, and brought her home in her place.

For a while she behaved like an honest and industrious servant, but one night as Abraham went to bed, he saw her opening an escrutoire with a knife, which she said she could at any time do. Abraham at first forbid her, but she by her endearments, quickly brought him over to her party, insomuch that after having lain with her, he consented to rummage the escrutoire. In it they found diamond rings and other jewels to a very great value. The wench said to him, holding up a fine diamond ring, *Abraham, you might take this, and it would prove the making of us both.* But the fellow would not listen to her. However, they agreed to take five guineas, which when they had done, they went to bed together according to custom.

Sometime after they begged a holiday and going out borrowed some more money from the same bank, but staying out all night she lost her place, whereupon she went back to her uncle's, and afterwards got a place in Winchester Street. There Abraham visited her, and suspecting that she was with child, asked her very gravely and kindly whether it were so or not? She said, *No*, and pretended to want money, upon which he turned back and gave her a guinea. Some time after he came to see her again, asked her the same question, and had the same answer, yet in a few hours after she caused him to be apprehended by the parish officers, the expenses whereof cost him five guineas immediately, and he was obliged to deposit fourteen guineas more as a security that he would indemnify the parish.

This threw him out of his place, and though he got into another, and behaved well in it, yet going into the service of Mr. John Mendez da Costa, he became there so uneasy on account of his child, and some other troublesome affairs, that he ventured on stealing eight silver spoons, five silver forks, two pair of silver canisters, a diamond ring value two hundred and fifty pounds, a pair of diamond ear-rings worth ninety pounds, three diamond buckles, and other goods of a great value. For this fact he was prosecuted, and on very full evidence convicted.

Under sentence of death, the Ordinary informs us that he appeared to be better acquainted with Hebrew than is common amongst Jews. He came up to the chapel rather for the air than for devotion. However, he one day sung part of a Psalm. His hatred against his prosecutor was strong and unconquerable, for when the minister told him it was his duty to forgive him, he said he did not know whether it was or no according to their law, and sometimes said that Heaven might deal with the same justice by him hereafter, as he had been dealt with here.

As the time of his death approached, he grew graver, and read more constantly in those books he had in Hebrew characters of his own religion. However, he wrote a letter to the gentleman he robbed in very harsh terms, and applied to him some of the imprecations of the hundred and ninth Psalm. At the place of execution he had two men with him, who were muttering something or other in his ear. He had a little Hebrew prayer-book in his hand, and read in it. When being again persuaded to forgive his prosecutor, he at last, in a faint voice, answered that he did, and then submitted to his fate at Tyburn, on the 12th of May, 1730, being then about twenty-two years of age. He had several relations who had a great deal of money in England, and they took care of his body.



## The Life of EBENEZER ELLISON, a Notorious Irish Thief

With respect to this malefactor I have nothing to acquaint the world with but what is taken from his own speech which was printed at Dublin, and said to be published there by his own desire for the common good. It made a great noise there then, and may perhaps serve to entertain you now, wherefore I proceed to give it you in his own words.

I am now going to suffer the just punishment of my crimes, prescribed by the Law of God and my country. I know it is the constant custom that those who come to this place should have speeches made for them, and cried about in their own hearing as they are carried to execution; and truly they are such speeches that although our fraternity be an ignorant illiterate people, they would make a man ashamed to have such nonsense and false English charged upon him, even when he is going to the gallows. They contain a pretended account of our birth and family, of the facts for which we are to die, of our sincere repentance, and a declaration of our religion. I cannot expect to avoid the same treatment with my predecessors. However, having an education one or two degrees better than those of my rank and profession, ever since my commitment I have been considering what might be proper for me to deliver upon this occasion.

And first, I cannot say from the bottom of my heart that I am truly sorry for the offence I have given to God and the world; but I am very much so for the bad success of my villainies, in bringing me to this untimely end; for it is plainly evident, that after having some time ago obtained a pardon from the Crown, I again took up my old trade. My evil habits were so rooted in me, and I was grown unfit for any other kind of employment; and therefore, although in compliance with my friends I resolved to go to the gallows after the usual manner, kneeling with a book in my hand and my eyes lift up, yet I shall feel no more devotion in my heart than I observed in some of my comrades, who have been drunk among common whores the very night before their execution. I can say further from my own knowledge, that two of my own fraternity, after they had been hanged and wonderfully came to life, and made their escapes, as it sometimes happens, proved afterwards the wickedest rogues I ever knew, and so continued until they were hanged again for good and all; and yet they had the impudence at both times they went up to the gallows to smite their breasts and lift up their eyes to Heaven all the way.

Secondly, from the knowledge I have of my own wicked disposition, and that of my comrades, I give it as my opinion that nothing can be more unfortunate to the public than the mercy of Government in even pardoning and transporting us, unless we betray one another, as we never fail to do if we are sure to be well paid, and then a pardon may do good. By the same rule, it is better to have but one fox in a farm than three or four, but we generally make a shift to return after being transported, and are ten times greater rogues than before, and much more cunning. Besides, I know it by experience, that some hopes we have of finding mercy when we are tried, or after we are condemned, is always a great encouragement to us.

Thirdly, nothing is more dangerous to idle young fellows than the company of those odious common whores we frequent, and of which this town is full. These wretches put us upon all mischief to feed their lust and extravagance. They are ten times more bloody and cruel than men. Their advice is always not to spare us if we are pursued, they get drunk with us, and are common to us all, and yet if they can get anything by it, are sore to be our betrayers.

Now, as I am a dying man, something I have done which may be of good use to the public, I have left with an honest man and indeed the only honest man I ever was acquainted with—the names of all my wicked brethren, the present places of abode, with a short account of the chief crimes they have committed in many of which I have been their accomplice, and heard the rest from their own mouths. I have likewise set down the names of those we call our setters, of the wicked houses we frequent, and of those who receive and buy our stolen goods. I have solemnly charged this honest man, and have received his promise upon oath, that whenever he hears of any to be tried for robbing or housebreaking, he will look into his list, and he if finds the name there of the thief concerned, to send the whole paper to the Government. Of this I here give my companions fair and public warning, and I hope they will take it.

In the paper above-mentioned, which I left with my friend, I have also set down the names of the several gentlemen whom we have robbed in Dublin streets for three years past. I have told the circumstances of those robberies, and shown plainly that nothing but the want of common courage was the cause of their misfortunes. I have therefore desired my friends that whenever any gentleman happens to be robbed in the streets, he will get the relation printed and published with the first letters of those gentlemen's names, who by their want of bravery

are likely to be the cause of all the mischief of that kind, which may happen for the future. I cannot leave the world without a short description of that kind of life which I have led for some years past and is exactly the same with the rest of our wicked brethren.

Although we are generally so corrupted from our childhood as to have no sense of goodness, yet something heavy always hangs about us. I know not what it is, that we are never easy until we are half drunk among our whores and companions, nor sleep sound, unless we drink longer than we can stand. If we go abroad in the day, a wise man would easily find us to be rogues by our faces, we have such suspicious, fearful and constrained countenances, often turning back and sneaking through narrow lanes and alleys. I have never failed of knowing a brother thief by his looks, though I never saw him before. Every man amongst us keeps his particular whore, who is however common to us all when we have a mind to change. When we have got a booty, if it be money, we divide it equally among our companions, and soon squander it on our vices in those houses that receive us, for the master and mistress and very tapster go snacks, and besides make us pay treble reckonings. If our plunder be plate, watches, rings, snuff-boxes and the like, we have customers in all quarters of the town to take them off. I have seen a tankard sold, worth fifteen pounds to a fellow in — Street, for twenty shillings, and a gold watch for thirty. I have set down his name, and that of several others in the paper already mentioned. We have setters watching in corners, and by dead walls, to give us notice when a gentleman goes by, especially if he be anything in drink. I believe in my conscience, that if an account were made of a thousand pounds in stolen goods, considering the low rates we sell them at, the bribes we must give for concealment, the extortions of alehouse reckonings, and other necessary charges there would not remain fifty pounds clear to be divided among the robbers, and out of this we must find clothes for whores, besides treating them from morning until night, who in requital award us with nothing but treachery and the pox, for when our money is gone, they are every moment threatening to inform against us, if we will not get out to look for more. If anything in this world be like Hell, as I have heard it described by our clergy, the truest picture of it must be in the back room of one of our alehouses at midnight, where a crew of robbers and their whores are met together after a booty, and are beginning to grow drunk, from that time until they are past their senses, in such a continued horrible noise of cursing, blasphemy, lewdness, scurrility, and brutish behaviour, such roaring and confusion, such a clatter of mugs and pots at each other's heads, that Bedlam in comparison is a sober and orderly place. At last they all tumble from their stools and benches, and sleep away the rest of the night, and generally the landlord or his wife, or some other whore, who has a stronger head than the rest, picks their pockets before they awake. The misfortune is, that we can never be easy until we are drunk, and our drunkenness constantly exposes us to be more easily betrayed and taken.

This is a short picture of the life I have led, which is more miserable than that of the poorest labourer who works for fourpence a day; and yet custom is so strong that I am confident, if I could make escape at the foot of the gallows, I should be following the same course this very evening. Upon the whole, we ought to be looked upon as the common enemies of mankind, whose interest it is to root us out like worms, and other mischievous vermin, against which no fair play is required. If I have done service to men in what I have said, I shall hope to have done service to God, and that will be better than a silly speech made by me full of whining and canting, which I utterly despise, and have never been used to yet such a one I expect to have my ears tormented with as I am passing along the streets.

Good people, fare ye well; bad as I am, I leave many worse behind me, and I hope you shall see me die like a man, though a death contrary.

E. E.

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### **The Life of JAMES DALTON, a Thief**

The character of this criminal is already so infamous, and his crimes so notorious that I may spare myself any introductory observation which I have made use of as to most of the rest with respect to his birth. He was so unfortunate as to have the gallows hereditary to his family, his father, who was by birth an Irishman, and in the late Wars in Flanders a sergeant, coming over here was indicted and hanged for a street robbery. After his death, Dalton's mother married a butcher, who, not long before Dalton's death, was transported, and she herself for a like crime shared in the same punishment.

This unhappy young man himself went between his father's legs in the cart when he made his fatal exit at Tyburn. It has, indeed, remained a doubt whether Dalton the father were a downright thief or not; his own friends say that he was only a cheat, and one of the most dexterous sharpers at cards in England. It seems he fell in with some people of his own profession, who thought he

got their money too much easily, and therefore made bold to fix him with a downright robbery.

As for James Dalton the younger, from his infancy he was a thief and deserved the gallows almost as soon as he wore breeches. He began his pranks with robbing the maid where he went to school. By eleven years old he got himself into the company of Fulsom and Field, who were evidences against Jonathan Wild and Blueskin, and in their company committed villainies of every denomination, such as picking pockets, snatching hats and wigs, breaking open shops, filching bundles at dusk of the evening. All the money they got by these practices was spent among the common women of the town, whose company they frequented. Then the Old Bailey and Smithfield Cloisters became the place of their resort, from whence they carried away goods to a considerable quantity, sold them at under-rates, and squandered away the money upon strumpets.

Towards Smithfield and the narrow lanes and allies about it, are the chief houses of entertainment for such people, where they are promiscuously admitted, men or women, and have places every way fitted for both concealing and entertainment. The man and woman of the house frequently take their commodities off their hand at low prices, and the women who frequent these sort of places help them off with what trifling sums of money they receive; for though they are utterly devoid of education, yet dinning and flattery are so perfectly practised by them, that these bewitched young robbers make no scruple of venturing soul and body to acquire wherewith to purchase their favours, which are frequently attended with circumstances that would send them rotten to their graves, if the gallows did not intercept and take them before they are got half way. But it happened that Field was apprehended, and to save himself immediately made an information against his companions, named Dalton and Fulsom, whereupon they were obliged to be very cautious and durst venture out only in the night. It happened that in Broad Street, St. Giles's they met about twelve o'clock at night a captain in the Foot-Guards. Dalton commanded the gentleman to surrender, but persons of his cloth seldom parting with their money so peaceably, there happened a skirmish, in which Fulsom knocked him down, and afterwards they rifled him, taking some silver and a leaden shilling out of his pocket, together with a pocket book, which had some bank notes in it, and therefore was burnt by them for fear it should betray them. But in this fact, Dalton, who had not even honesty enough for a thief, cheated his companion of seven guineas and a watch.

The woman to whom they sold their stolen goods was one Hannah Britton, who, upon Lambert's being committed to New Prison, was named in his information, taken up and committed to Newgate. At the sessions after she was convicted for that offence, and thereupon whipped from Holborn Bars to St. Giles's Pound; which proceeding so affrighted Dalton that he resolved for a time to retire out of London.

Thereupon he and one of his companions went down to Bristol, to see what they could make at the Fair. But they were not over-lucky in their country expedition, for they were apprehended for breaking a shop open, and tried at the assizes; but the witness not being able to swear directly to their persons, they were acquitted through the defect of evidence. As soon as they were out of prison, Dalton returned to London as speedily as he was able, where joining himself with the remainder of the old gang, shortly after his arrival they broke open a toy-shop near Holborn Bars, and carried off eight hundred pounds worth of goods, with a pretty large sum in ready money. Of the goods they did not make above two hundred and fifty pounds, and for the ready money, which was about twenty pounds, they shared it amongst them.

Dalton about that time frequenting a house near Golden Lane, found doxies there to help him off with it, and reduced him to the necessity of making t'other large stride in the way to Tyburn. Not long after, therefore, he committed a robbery in the road to Islington, for which being taken up he brought three who personated a doctor, apothecary and surgeon at his trial, who swore that the time the robbery was said to have been committed he was sick and even at the point of death, upon which he was acquitted.

But as this was a narrow escape, so his liberty was of no long continuance, for his companion Fulsom, being apprehended for a felony, to save himself, made an information against his comrades, and amongst the rest named Dalton, and gave so exact an account of his haunts that he was quickly after apprehended, and at the ensuing sessions convicted and ordered for transportation.

At sea a great storm arising, they were glad to call up such of the criminals as they thought might be of use towards managing the ship, amongst whom was James Dalton, who no sooner was upon deck but he was contriving to make the crew mutiny and seize the ship. In a very little time he brought enough of them to be of his mind in order to execute their intent, and accordingly got the fire-arms and made themselves masters of the ship, and obliged the men to navigate her to a little port near Cape Finisterre, in Spain, where they robbed the ship of about a hundred pounds, and then went on shore and travelled by land to Vigo. They were scarce got thither before the ship arrived, and the captain charged them with the piracy they had committed; but from the lenity of the Spanish Government, they quickly got released, without giving the captain any satisfaction. The Governor, when they were discharged from their confinement, gave them a pass in which, after reciting their names, he styled them all English thieves, which putting them in no small fright, they resolved to prevent its doing them a mischief, committed it to the flames, and then ran the hazard of travelling the country without one. This, accordingly, they did, until they met with a Dutch ship, the master of which readily gave them a passage to Amsterdam, from whence Dalton and two or three more, found means to get over again to England, and came up to

London.

On their arrival here they fell to robbing with such fury that the streets were hardly safe when the sun was set; but Dalton apprehending that this trade would not last long, resolved to make a country expedition, in order to get out of the way. Thereupon down he went again to his old city of refuge, Bristol. There he did not continue long before he was apprehended for breaking open a linen-draper's shop but the burglary not being clearly proved, the jury found him guilty of the felony only, whereupon he was once more transported to Virginia.

He did not continue long in that plantation before growing weary of labour, he thought fit to threaten his master, so that the man was glad to discharge him, and thought himself happy of getting rid of such a servant. Upon which Dalton soon found out one Whalebone, a fellow of a like disposition with himself; and they went about stealing boats and negroes, running away with them and selling them in other colonies. At last Dalton met with a ship which carried him for England. By the way he was pressed on board the *Hampshire* man-of-war, in which he was a spectator of the last siege of Gibraltar.<sup>[95]</sup>

On his return he received his wages and lived on it for a little time. Then he with Benjamin Branch and William Field, took to snatching of pockets. At last they took Christopher Rawlins into their society and in a few months' time they three snatched five hundred pockets. Amongst the rest Dalton cut off one from a woman's side at St. Andrew's, Holborn, for which Branch being in company was taken and executed, although Dalton and Rawlins did all they could to have made up the affair with the prosecutor but in vain. This trade therefore being at an end, he and his companion Rawlins fell next to robbing coaches in the streets, and being once more apprehended, he found himself under a necessity of making an information against his companions, six or seven of whom were executed upon his evidence. He also received ten guineas to swear against Nichols the peruke-maker, but after he received the money, his conscience checked him, and though he did not return it, yet he absolutely refused to give any evidence against him. But Neeves, who had been taken into the same plot, went through with it, and as has been said before, hanged him for a fact which he never committed.<sup>[96]</sup>

A multitude of wives Dalton married during his life, and many of them were alive at the time of his decease, four of them coming at once to see him in Newgate when under his last misfortune, and appearing at that time to be very friendly together. He had not been long out of Newgate before he fell to his old practices, and a few sessions after was apprehended, and tried for stopping the coach of an eminent physician with an intent to rob it. For this he was sentenced to a fine and imprisonment, which upon insulting the court was ordered to be in one of the condemned cells in Newgate. But he did not remain long there, being the very next sessions brought to his trial on an indictment for robbing John Waller in a certain field or open place near the highway, putting him in fear of his life, and taking from him twenty-five handkerchiefs, value four pounds, five ducats value forty-eight shillings, two guineas, a three guilder piece, a French pistol, and five shillings in silver, on the 22nd of November, 1729. The prosecutor deposed, that being a Holland trader, the prisoner met with him as he was drinking at the Adam and Eve at Pancras, in his return from Hampstead, where he had sold some goods, and received a little money; that Dalton perceiving it grow dark, desired to walk to town with him, and that they had a link with them, which Dalton put out in the fields, and then knocked him down, beat him and abused him, and then robbed him of the things mentioned in the indictment; and that he threatened to blow his brains out if he made any noise or called for help. He swore also to a pistol which had been produced against Dalton on a former trial.

In his defence the prisoner insisted peremptorily upon his innocence, charged the prosecutor with being a common affidavit man, and a fellow of as bad if not worse character than himself. However, in order to falsify some circumstances which he had deposed against him, Dalton called three witnesses, Charles North, Edward Brumfield, and John Mitchell, who were all prisoners in Newgate, but were permitted by the Court to come down. Some of them contradicted the prosecutor as to a gingham waistcoat which he had sworn Dalton wore in Newgate. They swore also to the prosecutor's visiting Dalton there, and owing that he never damaged him a farthing in his life. But the jury on the whole found him guilty, and he received sentence of death.

As he had little reason to hope for pardon, so he never deluded himself with false expectations about it, but applied himself, as diligently as he was able, to repent of those manifold sins and offences which he had committed. He confessed very frankly the manifold crimes and horrid enormities in which he had involved himself. He seemed to be very sensible of that dreadful state into which his own wickedness had plunged him. He behaved himself gravely when at public prayers at the chapel, and applied himself with great diligence to praying and singing of Psalms when in his cell; but as to the particular crime of which he was convicted, that he absolutely denied from first to last, with the strongest asseverations that not one word of all the prosecutor's evidence was true, and indeed there has since appeared great likelihood that he spoke nothing but the truth.

For this Waller going on in the same fact after the death of Dalton, became an evidence against many others, sometimes in one country by one name, by and by in another country by another name. In Cambridgeshire, particularly, he convicted two men for a robbery whose lives were saved by means of the Clerk of the Peace entertaining some suspicion of this Mr. Waller's veracity. But as practices of this sort, though they may continue undiscovered for some time, rarely escape for good and all, so Waller's fate came home to him at last; for a worthy magistrate suspecting the truth of an information which he gave before him by another name, and he coming

afterwards and owning his true name to be Waller, he was apprehended for the perjury contained in the said examination, and committed to Newgate, and at the next sessions at the Old Bailey received sentence for this offence to stand in the pillory near the Seven Dials. He had scarce been exalted above five minutes, before the mob knocked him on the head, for which fact Andrew Dalton, who did it to revenge the death of his brother, the criminal of whom we are now speaking, together with one Richard Griffith, at the time I am now writing, are under sentence of death.

But to return to James Dalton, he continued to behave uniformly and penitently all the time he lay under conviction, and as the friends and relations of Nichols applied themselves to him about clearing the innocence of their deceased friend, he said that Neeves himself actually committed the fact, which he swore upon the person they mentioned, and that he was entirely innocent of whatever was laid to his charge.

When the bellman came to repeat the verses, which he always does the night before the malefactors are to die, Dalton illuminated his cell with six candles. In his passage to the place of execution he appeared very cheerful. When he arrived there, having once more denied in the most solemn manner the fact for which he was to suffer, he yielded up his breath at Tyburn, the 13th of May, 1730, being then somewhat above thirty years of age.



#### HIGHWAY ROBBERY OF HIS MAJESTY'S MAIL

Two waylaid postboys are being bound back to back, while one of the highwaymen carries off the mail-bag  
(From the *Annals of Newgate*)

[95]

On Feb. 22, 1727, when the Spaniards attacked with 20,000 men and were repulsed with a loss of 5,000. The English lost 300.

[96]

See page [463](#).

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### **The Life of HUGH HOUGHTON, *alias* AWTON, *alias* NORTON, who robbed the Bristol Mail**

This unfortunate person was the son of honest and reputable people of Lancaster, who took care to give him a very good education, sufficient to have fitted him for any trade whatever. Afterwards they bound him out apprentice to a wine-cooper, to whom he served out his time very carefully and honestly, and appeared in his temper and disposition to be a civil, good-natured young man. For some time after his coming out of his time, he followed his trade of a wine-cooper, but being pressed on board a man-of-war, during the French War in the late Queen's time, he behaved himself so well on board that he acquired the goodwill of all his officers, attained to the degree of a midshipman, and was afterwards gunner's mate, receiving also a title to five pound *per annum*, out of the Pension Chest at Chatham.

After this he came to London, married a wife and was a housekeeper in town; and for his better support got himself into the Horse Guards, where he served with reputation, until some small time before his death, when some clothes of value being taken away, and he being strongly suspected on that score was dismissed the service, whereby he fell into great difficulties for want of money.

It seems that for many months before his death he had frequented the house of one Mr. Marlow,

and was indebted to him for a considerable sum of money, but one day he came and discharged it, having for that purpose changed a twenty pound bank-note at a brewer's not far distant. But the Bristol mail happening about that time to be robbed, and the bank-note, after various circulations, being discovered to be one of those taken out of it, Houghton was thereupon seized and committed, being at the next sessions brought to his trial at the Old Bailey for the fact, when the course of the evidence appeared against him as follows. He was arraigned on an indictment for dealing from Stephen Crouches, on the King's highway, after putting him in fear, a sorrel gelding value five pounds, the property of Thomas Ostwich, a mail value four pounds, and fifty leather bags, value five pounds, the property of our Sovereign Lord the King, on the first of March, 1730.

Stephen Crouches deposed that on the day laid in the indictment, he was going with the Bristol and Gloucester mail, being near Knightsbridge, a man of the prisoner's size, who spoke like him, came out of the gateway and bid him stand; that he laid the horse to the farther side of a field, commanded him to show him the Bristol bag, which he took and went off with the horse, leaving this evidence bound with his hands behind him, threatening to murder him in case he made the least noise.

Daniel Burton deposed that the prisoner Houghton had more than once proposed to him the robbing of the Bristol mail, and upon his refusing to be concerned in it, would then have had him rob their landlady, Mrs. Marlow, which when her husband came to know, he turned him out of doors.

The next witness that was called was Mr. Marlow, who deposed that on the 2nd of March, the prisoner Houghton paid him five pounds which was owing to him, having changed for that purpose a bank-note of twenty pounds at Mr. Broadhead's the brewer. Then the note itself was produced, which had been paid by Mr. Broadhead to Mr. King, a factor, and by him to Mr. Dictorine's man, in Thames Street, and by him again to the servant of Messrs. Knight and Jackson, by whom it was brought into Court, an endorsement being upon it not to be paid till the fifth of May. But Mr. Marlow being asked as to his being acquainted by Burton with the prisoner's attempts to persuade him to robbing the Bristol mail, and afterwards robbing his house, Mr. Marlow answered that he did not remember he had ever been told such a thing, but that he did indeed know the prisoner together with one Masa, was for scandalous practices turned out of the Guards.

William Burligh deposed that he took out of the prisoner's pocket a pocket-book in which was several notes, which pocket-book the prisoner said he took up in Covent Garden. Mr. Langley, the Turnkey of Newgate, deposed that after he was committed to his custody, he searched his pocket and found therein three bank-notes of Mr. Hoare, which he gave to Mr. Archer. Mr. Archer deposed that he did receive such notes, which were so taken as had been before sworn by Mr. Langley.

There were some other persons produced who swore to some slips of leather which were found in Houghton's lodgings, and which were believed to be cut out of the bag which were taken from the Bristol Mail. The prisoner in his defence said he believed there was a trap laid for him and exclaimed against Burton. Two women positively deposed that Houghton all that night was not out of his lodgings. But the jury notwithstanding that, gave so much credit to the evidence offered for the King, that they found him guilty.

Under sentence of death, he said that he had hitherto lived free from most of those enormous vices into which criminals are usually plunged, who came to his unhappy fate. He said that through the course of his life he had always been a good husband, a loving parent, and had provided carefully for his family; that he had served the Government twelve years by land, and twelve years by sea, and in all that time never had any reflection upon him until the unhappy accident in the Guards, which he said he was not guilty of, and had been since confessed by another man.

As to the fact for which he was to die, he said that the same day the mail was robbed (which was on a Sunday morning) at six or seven o'clock he found a bundle of papers which he took up, and perceived them to be a parcel taken out of the Bristol mail, and therefore having perused them carefully, and taken out of them such as he judged proper, he being at that time out of business and in great want, put up the rest of them in a sheet of paper, directed to the Post Master General, and laid them down in the box-house at Lincoln's Inn Fields, being afraid to go with them to the office, because a great reward was offered for the robber. And that he, having changed a twenty-pound bank-note, paid five pounds of it away to his landlord, Mr. Marlow. He reflected also very severely on the evidence given against him by Mr. Burton, which he said was the very reverse of the truth. Burton having often solicited him to go upon the highway as the shortest method of easing his misfortunes and bringing them both money.

As he persisted in averring the confession he made to be the truth, it was objected to him that it was a story, the most improbable in the world, that when a man had hazarded his life to rob the Bristol mail, he should then throw away all the booty, and leave it in such a place as Covent Garden, for any stranger to take up as he came by; yet neither this nor anything else that could be said to him had so much weight as to move him to a free confession of his guilt, but on the contrary, he gave greater and more evident signs of a sullen, morose and reserved disposition, spoke little, desired not to be interrupted, made general confessions of his sins, pleased himself with high conceits of the Divine Mercy, and endeavoured as much as possible to avoid conferences with anybody, and especially declined speaking of that offence for which he was to

die.

When he first came to Newgate, the keepers had, it seems, a strong apprehension that he would attempt something against his own life, and upon this suspicion they were very careful of him, and enjoined a barber who shaved him in prison to be so, lest he should take that occasion to cut his throat. Yet nothing of this happened until the day of his execution, when the keepers coming to him in the morning, found him praying very devoutly in his cell; but about twenty minutes after, going thither again, they perceived he had fastened his sword belt which he wore always about him to the grate of the window which looked out of his cell, to the end of which he tied his handkerchief, and having then adjusted that about his neck, he strangled himself with it, and was dead when the keepers opened the doors to look in.

The Ordinary makes this remark upon his exit, that it is to be feared he was a hypocrite and that little of what he said can be believed. For my part, I am far from taking upon me either to enter into the breasts of men or pretend to set bounds to the mercy of God, and therefore without any further remarks, shall conclude his life with informing my readers that at the time he put an end to his own being, he was about forty-eight years of age, and a man in his person and behaviour very unlikely to have been such a one as it is to be feared (notwithstanding all his denials) he really was.

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### **The Life of JOHN DOYLE, a Highwayman**

When once men have plunged themselves so far into sensual pleasures as to lose all sense of any other delight than that arises from the gratification of the senses, there is no great cause of wonder if they addict themselves to illegal methods of gaining wherewith to purchase such enjoyments; since the want of virtue easily draws on the loss of all other principles, nor can it be hoped from a man who has delivered himself over to the dominion of these vices that he should stop short at the lawful means of obtaining money by which alone he can be enabled to possess them.

Common women are usually the first bane of those unhappy persons who forfeit their lives to the Law as the just punishment of their offences; these women, I say, are so far from having the least concern whether their paramours run any unhappy courses to obtain the sums necessary to supply their mutual extravagance, that on the contrary they are ever ready, by oblique hints and insinuations, to put them upon such dangerous exploits which as they are sure to reap the fruits of, so sometimes when they grow weary of them, they find it an easy method to get rid of them and at the same time put money in their own pockets. Yet so blind are these unhappy wretches, that although such things fall out yearly, yet they are never to be warned, but run into the snare with as much readiness as if they were going unto the possession of certain and lasting happiness.

But to come to the adventures of the unhappy person whose life we are going to relate. John Doyle was born in the town of Carrough, in Ireland, and of very honest parents who gave him as good education as could be expected in that country, instructing him in writing and accounts, and made some progress in Latin. When he was fit for a trade, his friends agreed to put him out, and not thinking they should find a master good enough for him in a country place, they sent him to Dublin, and bound him to a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler in St. Thomas's Street, whom he faithfully served seven years, and his master gave him a good character. Being out of his time, his master prevailed with him to work journey-work for him, which he did for nine months; but having got acquainted by that time with some of the town ladies and pretending to his friends that he was in hopes of better business, his friends remitted him fifty pounds to help him forward.

He lived well while that money lasted, but when it was almost spent, he knew not what to turn himself to, for working did not agree with him. He took a resolution to come to England, and on the 19th of April, 1715, he came over in a packet-boat. Having no more money left than three pounds ten shillings, and not seeing which way he could get a further supply unless he went to work, which he could not endure, he resolved to rob on the highway; and to fit him for it, he bought a pair of pistols at West Chester which cost him forty shillings. He continued in that city till the Chester coach was to go for London. At four miles distant from the town he attacked it, and robbed four passengers that were in it of fourteen pounds, six shillings and ninepence, two silver watches and a mourning ring, which was the first attempt of that kind that ever he made in his life; then he went off a by-way undiscovered.

Having got a pretty good booty, he travelled across the country to Shrewsbury, and having stayed there about two days, he happened to meet a man that had been formerly a collector on the road, who had a horse to sell. He bought the horse for seven guineas, though indeed it was worth twenty, as it proved afterwards; no man soever was master of a better bred horse for the highway. He was not willing to stay long at Shrewsbury, so he went from thence and going along the country, met two ladies in a small chaise, with only one servant and a pair of horses. He robbed them of a purse with twenty-nine half guineas, nine shillings in silver and twopence brass, and two gold watches. The servant who rode by had a case of pistols which he took from him, and then made off undiscovered. His horse at that time was much better acquainted with coming up to a coach door than he was. Sometime afterwards he passed across the country, and came to Newbury, in Berkshire, where he remained for about fourteen days, during which time he was very reserved and kept no company. But growing weary, he departed from that place the same morning that the Newbury coach was to set out for London: and when it was about five miles

distant from the town of Newbury, he came up to the coach door, and making a ceremony, as became a man of business, demanded their all, which they very readily consented to deliver, which proved to be about twenty-nine pounds in money, a silver watch, a plain wedding ring, a tortoiseshell snuff box, and a very good whip.

There was also a family ring which a gentleman begged very hard for, whereupon by his earnest application he gave it back, and the man assured him he would never appear against him. He was a man of honour, for he happened to meet him some time after at the Rummer and Horseshoe in Drury Lane, where he treated Doyle handsomely, and showed him the ring, and withal declared that he would not be his enemy on any account whatsoever.

Doyle being at this time a young beginner, thought what he got for the preceding time to be very well, and in a few days after this arrived at Windsor, where he stayed one night, and there being a gentleman's family bound for London, that lay that night at the Mermaid Inn in the town, he changed his lodging and removed to the inn; and having stayed there that night, he minded where they put their valuable baggage up. The next morning he paid his reckoning and came away, and got about four miles out of the town before them; then coming up and making the usual ceremony, he demanded their money, watches and rings. The gentleman in the coach pulled out a blunderbuss, but Doyle soon quelled him by clapping a pistol to his nose, telling him that if he stirred hand or foot he was a dead man. Then he made him give his blunderbuss first, then his money which was fifty guineas, fifteen shillings in silver, and five-pence in brass, a woman's gold watch and a pocket book in which were seven bank-notes, which the gentleman said he took that day in order to pay his servants' wages. After this he made the best of his way to London and got into James's Street, Westminster, where he drank a pint of wine, and then crossed over to Lambeth, and put up his horse at the Red Lion Inn, and stayed there that night.

The next morning he came to the Coach and Horses in Old Palace Yard, Westminster, where he dined, and about seven at night departed from thence and went to the Phoenix gaming-house in the Haymarket, to which place, he said, he believed a great many owe their ruin. He remained some time at the Phoenix, and seeing them gaming hard, he had a mind to have a touch at it; when coming into the ring he took the box in his turn, and in about thirty minutes lost thirty-seven pounds, which broke him. But having some watches about him, he went immediately to the Three Bowls in Market Lane, St. James, and pawned a gold watch for sixteen guineas; and returning back to the Phoenix went to gaming a second time, and in less than an hour recovered his money and forty-three pounds more. And seeing an acquaintance there he took him to the Cardigan's Head tavern, Charing Cross, and made merry. That night he lay at the White Bear in Piccadilly, and stayed there until the next evening, after which, having paid his reckoning, he went to Lambeth to his landlord who had his horse in his care, and remained there that night. The next morning he went away having discharged the house.

Having then a pretty sum of money about him, he had an inclination to see the country of Kent, and accordingly went that day to Greenwich, and put up his horse while he went to see the Hospital; and having baited the horse he parted from thence, and going over Blackheath, he happened to meet a gentleman, who proved to be Sir Gregory Page. Doyle took what money he had about him, which was about seventy guineas in a green purse, a watch, two gold seals and eighteen pence in silver. That night he rode away to Maidstone, and from thence to Canterbury.

In a few days he returned to London, and was for a long time silent, even for about six months, and never robbed or made an attempt to rob any man, but kept his horse in a very good order, and commonly went in an afternoon to Hampstead, sometimes to Richmond, or to Hackney. In short, he knew all the roads about London in less than six months as well as any man in England. His money beginning now to grow short, not having turned out so long, and the keeping his horse on the other hand being costly, he resolved that his horse should pay for his own keeping, and turned out one evening and robbed a Jew of seventy-five pounds, and of his and his lady's watches, a gold box and some silver, and returned to town undiscovered. The next day Doyle went Brentford way, and coming to Turnham Green stayed some time at the Pack Horse, where he saw two Quakers on horseback. He rode gently after them till they got to Hounslow Heath, where he secured what money they had, which was something above a hundred pounds. They begged hard for some money back, when he gave them a guinea, taking from them their spurs and whips, and at some distance threw them away. Those two men, as he found some days after by the papers, were two meal factors that were going to High Wycombe market in Buckinghamshire, to buy either wheat or flour.

This last being a pretty good booty, he had a mind afterwards to go for Ireland and accordingly set out for his journey thither. He took shipping at King's Road near Bristol, on board a small vessel bound to Waterford, where he arrived and stayed at the Eagle in Waterford three days, and from thence went directly to Dublin. Doyle was not long in Dublin before he became acquainted with his wife, whom he courted for some time and was extravagant in spending his money on her. He also soon got acquainted with one N. B., a man now alive, and they turned out together. None was able to stand against them, for they had everything that came in their way, and in plain terms, there was not a man that carried money about him, within eight miles of Dublin, but if they met him they were sure to get what he had.

Being grown so wicked Doyle was at length taken for a robber and committed to Newgate, then kept by one Mr. Hawkins, who used him so barbarously that he wished himself out of his hands. Accordingly he got his irons off and broke out of the gaol. Hawkins knowing all the bums<sup>[97]</sup> in Dublin, sent them up and down the city to take him, but to no purpose. However, they rooted him



fairly out of that neighbourhood.

Then he returned to Waterford, where he appointed his wife and friend should meet him, which they did; and in about four hours after he came there he found them out, and there being a ship bound for Bristol, he sent them on board, agreed with the captain and went himself on board the same night. They hoisted their sails and got down to the Passage near Waterford, but the wind proving contrary, they were obliged to return back, and then concluded it was determined for Doyle to be taken; which he had been had he kept on board, but he luckily got on shore, when it was agreed to go to Cork. There they met with an honest cock of a landlord, and he kept himself very private, making the poor man believe that his companion and he were two that were raising men for the Chevalier's<sup>[98]</sup> service, and that their keeping so private proceeded from a fear of being discovered. The poor man had then a double regard for them, he being a lover in his heart of ——. Doyle then sent his wife to seek for a ship; but Hawkins having pursued him from Dublin, happened to see her, and dogged her to the ship where she went on board, sending officers to search, for he was sure he should find him there. He was mistaken, but they took his poor wife up to see if they could make her discover where he was, and ordered a strong guard to bring her to Cork gaol. A boat was provided to bring her on shore, but she telling the men some plausible stories that her husband was not the man they represented him to be, one of the watermen having stripped off his clothes in order to row, and there being a great many honest fellows in the boat, they assisted her in putting on waterman's clothes, which as soon as done, she fairly got away from them, and came and acquainted Doyle that Hawkins was in town, and how she had been in danger. They then concluded on leaving Cork, hired horses that night, and came to a place called Mallow, within ten miles of Cork. The next day they travelled to Limerick, where Doyle bought a horse, bridle, etc., and went towards Galloway, and in all his journey round about got but two prizes, which did not amount to above fifteen pounds.

Sometime after, his wife was transported, which gave him a great deal of concern, and he could not be in any way content without her. So getting some money together he went to Virginia, and having arrived there soon met with her, having had intelligence where to enquire for her. The first house he came into was one William Dalton's, who had some days before bought the late noted James Dalton,<sup>[99]</sup> who was then his servant, whom he very often used to send along with Doyle in his boat to put him on board a ship. Then he thought it his best way to buy his wife's liberty, which he did, paying fifteen pounds for it.

He had then a considerable deal of money about him, and removed from that part of the country where she was known and went to New York. Being arrived there he soon got acquainted with some of his countrymen, with whom he had used to go a-hunting and to the horse races; so he spent some time in seeing the country. By chance he came to hear of a namesake of his, that lived in an island a little distant from New York, and being willing to see any of his name, he sent for him, and according to Doyle's request, he wrote to him that he would come the next day, which he did, and proved to be his uncle. The old man was overjoyed to see Doyle, and carried him home with him, where he stayed a long time, and spent a great deal of money.

His uncle was very much affronted at Doyle's ill-treatment of the natives, whom he severely beat, insomuch that the whole place was afraid of him, and all intended to join and take the Law of him. Soon after he departed from New York and went to Boston, where he remained some time, and at length he resolved within himself to settle and work at his trade, thinking it better to do so than to spend all his money, and be obliged to return to England or Ireland without a penny in his pocket. He did so, and having agreed with a master he went to work, and was very saving and frugal.

He remained with that man till by his wife's industry he had got, including what was his own, about two hundred pounds English money. Then he advised his wife to go for Ireland in the first ship that was bound that way, laying all her money out to twenty pounds, and shipped the goods which he had brought on board for her account. She then went to Ireland and Doyle for England, promising to go over to her as soon as he could get some money, for he had then an inclination to leave off his old trade of collecting.

Being arrived at London, he met with a certain person with whom he joined, and as he himself terms it, never had man a braver companion, for let him push at what he would, his new companion never flinched one inch. They turned out about London for some time, and got a great deal of money, for nothing hardly missed them. They used a long time the roads about Hounslow, Hampstead, and places adjacent, until the papers began to describe them, on which they went into Essex, and robbed several graziers, farmers and others. Then they went to Bishop's Stortford, in Hertfordshire, where they robbed one man in particular who had his money tied up under his arm in a great purse. Doyle says that he had some intelligence from a friend that the man had money about him, he made him strip in buff, and then found out where he lodged it, and took it, but he did not use him in any way ill, for he says it was the man's business to conceal it, as much as his to discover it.

Doyle and his partner hearing of a certain fair which was to be held a few days after, they resolved to go to it, and coming there took notice who took most money. In the evening they took their horses, and about three miles distant from the town there was a green, over which the people were obliged to come from the fair. There came a great many graziers and farmers, whom they robbed of upwards of eight hundred pounds. At this time Doyle had in money and valuable things, such as diamonds, rings, watches, to the amount of about sixteen hundred pounds. His partner had also a great deal of money, but not so much as Doyle, by reason that he (D) had got

some very often which he had no right to have a share of.

Doyle went again for Ireland, and carried all his money with him, and having a great many poor relations, distributed part of it amongst them; some he lent, which he could never get again, and in a little his money grew short, having frequented horse races and all public places. However, before all was spent he returned to England. Following his old course of life, he happened into several broils, with which a little money and a few friends he got over. In a short space of time he became acquainted with Benjamin Wileman. They two, with another person concerned with them, committed several robberies. At length they were discovered, apprehended and committed to Newgate. Wileman, it seems, had an itching to become an evidence against Doyle and W. G. But Doyle made himself an evidence, being really, as he said, for his own preservation and not for the sake of any reward.

Doyle's wife being for a second time transported, he went with her in the same ship, and having arrived in Virginia, slaved there some time, until he began to grow weary of the place. But as he was always too indulgent to her, he bought her her liberty, and shipped her and himself on board the first ship that came to England, when in seven weeks time they arrived in the Downs. Soon after they came up to England, but were not long in town before his wife was taken up for returning from transportation, and committed to Newgate, where she remained until the sessions following, and being brought upon her trial, pleaded guilty.

When they came to pass sentence upon her, she produced his Majesty's most gracious pardon, and was admitted to bail to plead the same, and thereupon discharged. Doyle, a short time after, went to the West of England, where he slaved some time, following his old way of life; and associating himself with a certain companion, got a considerable sum of money, and came to Marlborough. And having continued some time in that neighbourhood, they usually kept the markets, where they commonly cleared five pounds a day. Going from Marlborough they came to Hungerford, and put up their horses at the George Inn; and having ordered something for dinner, saw some graziers on the road, but one of them being an old sportsman, and a brother tradesman of Doyle's formerly, he knew the said Doyle immediately, by the description given of him, and very honestly came to him, and told him that he had a charge of money about him, and withal begged that he would not hurt him, since he had made so ingenuous a confession, desiring Doyle to make the best of his way to another part of the country, telling him at the same time where he lived in London, and that if he should act honourably by him, he would put a thousand pounds in his pocket in a month's time. According to the grazier's directions, Doyle and his companions departed, but having met, as Doyle phrases it, with a running chase in their cross way, which they had taken for safety, they were obliged to return back into the main road again, and by accident put up at the same inn where the grazier and his companions were that evening. The grazier, as soon as he saw Doyle, came in and drank a bottle with him, and then retired to his companions, without taking any manner of notice of him.

As they came for London, they took everything that came into their net, and in three days time Doyle paid his brother sportsman, the grazier, a visit, who received him handsomely, and appointed him to meet him the next market day at the Greyhound in Smithfield, in order to make good part of his promise to him. Doyle and his companion went to him, put up their horses at the same inn and passed for country farmers. This grazier, who formerly had been one of the same profession being now grown honest and bred a butcher, was then turned salesman in Smithfield, and sold cattle for country graziers, and sent them their money back by their servants who had brought the cattle to town. Having drunk a glass of wine together, they began to talk about business, and the grazier being obliged to go into the market to sell some beasts, desired Doyle and his companion to stay there until he returned. When he came he gave them some little instructions how they should proceed in an affair he had then in view to serve them in, and having taken his advice, they rode out of town; and it being a West Country fair they rode Turnham Green way.

They had not time to drink a pint of wine before the West Country chapman came ajogging along. They took two hundred and forty pounds from him, making (as D. terms it) a much quicker bargain with him than he had done with the butcher at Smithfield. The chapman begged hard for some money to carry him home to his family, and after they had given him two guineas, he said to them that he had often travelled that road with five hundred pounds about him, and never had been stopped. To which Doyle replied, that half the highwaymen who frequented the road were but mere old women, otherwise he would never have had that to brag of, and then parted. Doyle says that the honest man at Smithfield had poundage of him as well as from the grazier, so that he acted in a double capacity.

That night they came to London, and having put up their horses, put on other clothes and went to Smithfield, where not finding the butcher at home, they write a note and left it for an appointment to meet him at the Horn Tavern in Fleet Street, where they had not stayed long before he came. After taking a cheerful glass they talked the story over, and out of the booty Doyle gave turn fifty guineas, after which the butcher promised to be his friend upon a better affair. After paying the reckoning they parted and appointed to meet the next market day at Smithfield.

They went at the time appointed, and having drunk a morning glass, stepped into the market and stayed some time. Their brother sportsman being very busy, he made excuse to Doyle and his companion, telling them there was nothing to be done in their way till the evening, desiring them to be patient. They remained in and about Smithfield till then, and market being entirely over,

their friend came up to the place appointed, and showed them a man on horseback to whom he had just paid fifty pounds. Doyle and his companion immediately called for their horses, took leave of their friend, and kept in sight of the countryman until he was out of town. And when he was got near the Adam and Eve, at Kensington, they came up to him, and made a ceremony, as became men of their profession. He was very unwilling to part from his money, making an attempt to ride away, but they soon overtook him, and after some dispute took every penny that he received in Smithfield, and for his residing gave him back only a crown to bear his charges home. In his memoirs Doyle makes this observation, that they always robbed between sun and sun, so that the persons robbed might make the county pay them that money back if they thought fit to sue them for it.<sup>[100]</sup> Next morning Doyle and his companion came to the place appointed, and not meeting with their brother sportsman sent for him, where they drank together, and talked as usual about business, paying him poundage out of what money they had collected on his information (for they usually dealt with him as a custom-house officer does by an informer); after which they parted for that time, and did not meet for a month after.

Afterwards they went up and down Hertfordshire, but got scarce money enough to bear their expenses; but where there were small gettings they lived the more frugally, for Doyle observed that if the country did not bear their expenses wherever he travelled, he thought it very hard, and that if he failed of gaming one day, he commonly got as much the next as he could well destroy.

Hitherto we have kept very close to those memoirs which Mr. Doyle left behind him, which I did with this view, that my readers might have some idea of what these people think of themselves. I shall now bring you to the conclusion of his story, by informing you that finding himself beset at the several lodgings which he kept by way of precaution, he for some days behaved himself with much circumspection; but happening to forget his pistols, he was seized, coming out of an inn in Drury Lane, and though he made as much resistance as he was able, yet they forced him unto a coach and conveyed him to Newgate. It is hard to say what expectations he entertained after he was once apprehended, but it is reasonable to believe that he had strong hopes of life, notwithstanding his pleading guilty at his trial, for he dissembled until the time of the coming down of a death warrant, and then declared he was a Roman Catholic, and not a member of the Church of England, as he had hitherto pretended.

He seemed to be a tolerably good-natured man, but excessively vicious at the same time that he was extravagantly fond of the woman he called his wife. He took no little pleasure in the relations of those adventures which happened to him in his exploits on the highway, and expressed himself with much seeming satisfaction, because as he said, he had never been guilty of beating or using passengers ill, much less of wounding or attempting to murder them. In general terms, he pretended to much penitence, but whether it was that he could not get over the natural vivacity of his own temper, or that the principles of the Church of Rome, as is too common a case, proved a strong opiate in his conscience, however it was, I say, Doyle did not seem to have any true contrition for his great and manifold offences. On the contrary, he appeared with some levity, even when on the very point of death.

He went to execution in a mourning coach; all the way he read with much seeming attention in a little Popish manual, which had been given him by one of his friends. At the tree he spoke a little to the people, told them that his wife had been a very good wife to him, let her character in other respects be what it would. Then he declared he had left behind him memoirs of his life and conduct, to which he had nothing to add there, and from which I have taken verbatim a great part of what I have related. And then, having nothing more to offer to the world, he submitted to death on the first of June, 1730, but in what year of his age I cannot say.

However, before I make an end of what relates to Mr. Doyle, it would be proper to acquaint the public that the vanity of his wife extended so far as to make a pompous funeral for him at St. Sepulchre's church, whereat she, as chief mourner assisted, and was led by a gentleman whom the world suspected to be of her husband's employment.

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i.e., bailiffs, informers and spies.

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The Pretender, whose name was only to be mentioned with baited breath.

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See page [533](#).

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Passengers robbed on the highway between sunrise and sunset, could sue the county for the amount of their loss, it being the duty of the officials to keep the roads safe.

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## The Life of JOHN YOUNG, a Highwayman

I have more than once remarked in the course of these memoirs that of all crimes, cruelty makes men the most generally hated, and that from this reasonable cause, that they seem to have taken

up an aversion to their own kind. This was remarkably the case of the unhappy man of whom we are now speaking.

He was, it seems, the son of very honest and industrious parents, his father being a gardener at Kensington. From him he received as good an education as it was in his power to give him, and was treated with all the indulgence that could be expected from a tender parent; and it seems that after five years' stay at school, he was qualified for any business whatsoever. So after consulting his own inclinations he was put out apprentice to a coach-maker in Long Acre, where he stayed not long; but finding all work disagreeable to him, he therefore resolved to be gone, let the consequence be what it would. When this resolve was once taken, it was but a very short time before it was put into execution. Living now at large, and not knowing how to gain money enough to support himself, and therefore being in very great straits, he complied with the solicitations of some hackney-coachmen, who advised him to learn their trade. They took some pains to instruct him, employed him often, and in about six months time he became perfect master of his business, and drove for Mr. Blunt, in Piccadilly. His behaviour here was so honest that Mr. Blunt gave him a good character, and he thereby obtained the place of a gentleman's coachmen. In a short time he saved money and began to have some relish for an honest life; and continuing industriously to hoard up what he received either in wages or vales [tips] at last by these methods he drew together a very considerable sum of money.

And then it came into his head to settle himself in an honest way of life, in which design his father gave him all the encouragement that was in his power, telling him in order to do it, he should marry an honest, virtuous woman. Whereupon, with the advice and consent of his parents, he married a young woman of a reputable family from Kentish Town, who, as to fortune, brought him a pretty little addition to his own savings, so that altogether he had, according to his own account, a very pretty competency wherewith to begin the world.

For some time after his marriage he indulged himself in living without employment, but finding such a course wasted his little stock very fast, he began to apply his thoughts to the consideration of what course was the most likely to get his bread in. After beating his brains for some little time on this subject he at last resolved on keeping a public-house; which agreeing very well with his father's and relations' notions, he thereupon immediately took the King's Arms, in Red Lion Street, where for some time he continued to have very good business. In all, he remained there about five years, and might in that time have got a very pretty sum of money if he had not been so unhappy as to grow proud, as soon as he had anything in his pocket. It was not long, therefore, before he gave way to his own roving disposition, going over to Ireland, where he remained for a considerable space, living by his wits as he expresses it, or, in the language of honest people, by defrauding others.

But Ireland is a country where such sort of people are not likely to support themselves long; money is far from being plentiful, and though the common people are credulous in their nature, yet tradesmen and the folks of middling ranks are as suspicious as any nation in the world. The county of West Meath was the place where he had fixed his residence for the greatest part of the time he continued in the island, but at last it grew too hot for him. The inhabitants became sensible of his way of living, and gave him such disturbance that he found himself under an indispensable necessity of quitting that place as soon as possibly he could; and so having picked up as much money as would pay for his passage, he came over again into England, out of humour with rambling while he felt the uneasiness it had brought upon him, but ready to take it up again as soon as ever his circumstances were made a little easy, which in his present condition was not likely to happen in haste.

His friends received him very coldly, his parents had it not in their power to do more for him. In a word, the countenance of the world frowned upon him, and everybody treated him with that disdain and contempt which his foolish behaviour deserved. However, instead of reclaiming him, this forced him upon worse courses. His wife, it seems, either died in his absence, or was dead before he went abroad, and soon after his return he contracted an acquaintance with a woman, who was at that time cook in the family of a certain bishop; her he courted and a short time after, married. She brought him not only some ready money, but also goods to a pretty large value. Young being not a bit mended by his misfortunes, squandered away the first in a very short time, and turned the last into ready money. However, these supplies were of not very long continuance, and with much importunity his friends, in order, if it were possible, to keep him honest, got him in a small place in the Revenue, and he was put in as one of the officers to survey candles. In this post he continued for about a twelvemonth, and then relapsing into his former idle and profligate courses, he was quickly suspected and thereby put to his shifts again, though his wife at that time was in place, and helped him very frequently with money.

This, it seems, was too servile a course for a man of Mr. Young's spirit to take, so that he picked up as much as bought him a pair of pistols, and then went upon the highway, to which it seems the foolish pride of not being dependant upon his wife did at that time not a little contribute. In his first adventure in this new employment, he got fifteen guineas, but being in a very great apprehension of a pursuit, his fears engaged him to fly down to Bristol, in order, if it were possible, to avoid them. After staying there some considerable time, he began at last to take heart, and to fancy he might be forgotten. Upon these hopes he resolved with himself to come up towards London again; and taking advantage of a person travelling with him to Uxbridge, he made use of every method in his power to insinuate himself into his fellow traveller's good graces. This he effected, insomuch that at High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, as Young himself told the story, he prevailed on him to lend him three half-crowns to defray his expenses,

pretending that he had some friend or relation hard by who would repay him. But unfortunately for the man, he had talked too freely of a sum of money which he pretended to have about him. It thereupon raised an inclination in Young to strip him and rob him of this supposed great prize; for which purpose he attacked him in a lone place, and not only threatened him with shooting him, but as he pretended, by his hand shaking, was as good as his word, and actually wounded him in such a manner as he in all probability at that time took to be mortal; but taking advantage of the condition in which the poor man was, he made the best of his way off, and was so lucky as to escape for the present, although that crime brought him afterwards to his execution.

When he had considered a little the nature of the fact which he had committed, it appeared even to himself of so black and barbarous a nature that he resolved to fly to the West of England, in order to remain there for some time. But from this he was deterred by looking into a newspaper and finding himself advertised there; the man whom he had shot being also said to be dead, this put him into such a consternation that he returned directly to London, and going to a place hard by where his wife lived, he sent for her, and told her that he was threatened with an unfortunate affair which might be of the greatest ill-consequence to him if he should be discovered. She seemed to be extremely moved at his misfortunes, and gave him what money she could spare, which was not a little, insomuch that Young at last began to suspect she made bold now and then to borrow of her mistress; but if she did, that was a practice he could forgive her. At last he proposed taking a lodging for himself at Horsely Down,<sup>[101]</sup> as a place the likeliest for him to be concealed in. There his wife continued to supply him, until one Sunday morning she came in a great hurry and brought with her a pretty handsome parcel of guineas. Young could not help suspecting she did not come very honestly by them. However, if he had the money he troubled not his head much which way he came by it, and he had so good a knack of wheedling her that he got twenty pounds out of her that Sunday.

A very few days after, intelligence was got of his retreat, and the man whom he had robbed and shot made so indefatigable a search after him, that he was taken up and committed to the New Gaol, and his wife, a very little time after, was committed to Newgate for breaking open her lady's escrutoire, and robbing her of a hundred guineas. This was what Young said himself and I repeat it because I have his memoirs before me. Yet in respect to truth, I shall be obliged to say something of another nature in its due place; but to go on with our narration according to the time in which facts happened.

A *Habeas Corpus* was directed to the sheriff of Surrey, whereupon Young was brought to Newgate, and at the next sessions of the Old Bailey was indicted for the aforesaid robbery, which was committed in the county of Middlesex. The charge against him was for assaulting Thomas Stinton, in a field or open place near the Highway, and taking from him a mare of the value of seven pounds, a bridle value one shilling and sixpence, a saddle value twelve shillings, three broad-pieces of gold and nine shillings in silver, at the same time putting the said Thomas Stinton in fear of his life.

Upon this indictment the prosecutor deposed that meeting with the prisoner about seven miles on this side of Bristol, and being glad of each other's company, they continued and lodged together till they came to Oxford; where the prisoner complaining that he was short of money, the prosecutor lent him a crown out of his pocket, and at Loudwater, the place where they lodged next night, he lent him half a crown more. The next morning they came for London, and being a little on this side of Uxbridge, Young said he had a friend in Hounslow who would advance him the money which he had borrowed from the prosecutor, and thereupon desired Mr. Stinton to go with him thither, to which he agreed; and Young thereupon persuaded him to go by a nearer way, and under that pretence after making him leap hedges and ditches, at last brought him to a place by the river side, where on a sudden he knocked him off his horse, and that with such force that he made the blood gush out of his nose and mouth.

As soon as Young perceived that the prosecutor had recovered his senses a little, he demanded his money, to which Mr. Stinton replied, *Is this the manner in which you treat your friend? You see, I have not strength to give you anything.* Whereupon Young took from him his pocket-book and money. And Mr. Stinton earnestly entreating that he would give him somewhat to bear his expenses home, in answer thereto Young said, *Ay, I'll give you what shall carry you home straight,* and then shot him in the neck, and pushing him down into the ditch, said, *Lie there.* Some time after with much ado, Mr. Stinton crawled out and got to a house, but saw no more of the prisoner, or of either of their mares.

George Hartwell deposed that he helped both the prisoner and the prosecutor to the inn where they lay at Oxford. Sarah Howard deposed that she kept the inn or house where they lodged at Loudwater the night before the robbery was committed. And all the witnesses, as well as the prosecutor being positive to the person of the prisoner, the charge seemed to be as fully proved as it was possible for a thing of that nature to admit.

The prisoner in his defence did not pretend to deny the fact, but as much as he was able endeavoured to extenuate it. He said, that for his part he did not know anything of the mare; that the going off the pistol was merely accidental; that he did, indeed, take the money, and therefore, did not expect any other than to suffer death, but that it would be a great satisfaction to him, even in his last moments, that he neither had or ever intended to commit any murder. But those words in the prosecutor's evidence, *I'll give you something to carry you home,* and *Lie there* (that is in the ditch) being mentioned in summing up the evidence to the jury, Young, with great warmth and many asseverations, denied that he made use of them. The jury, after a very short

consideration, being full satisfied with the evidence which had been offered, found him guilty.

The very same day his wife was indicted for the robbery of her mistress, when the fact was charged upon her thus: that she on a Sunday, conveyed Young secretly upstairs in her mistress's house, where she passed for a single woman; that he took an opportunity to break open a closet and to steal from thence ninety guineas, and ten pounds in silver; a satin petticoat value thirty shillings, and an orange crepe petticoat were also carried off; and she asking leave of her lady to go out in the afternoon, took that opportunity to go quite away, not being heard of for a long time. Upon her husband being apprehended for the fact for which he died, somebody remembered her and the story of her robbing her mistress, caused her thereupon to be apprehended. Not being able to prove her marriage at the time of her trial, she was convicted, and ordered for transportation. This was a very different story from that which Young told in his relations of his wife's adventure, but when it came to be mentioned to that unhappy man and pressed upon him, though he could not be brought to acknowledge it, yet he never denied it; which the Ordinary says, was a method of proceeding he took up, because unwilling to confess the truth, and afraid when so near death to tell a lie.

When under sentence of death, this unfortunate person began to have a true sense of his own miserable condition; he was very far from denying the crime for which he suffered, although he still continued to deny some of the circumstances of it. The judgment which had been pronounced upon him, he acknowledged to be very just and reasonable, and was so far from being either angry or affrighted at the death he was to die that on the contrary he said it was the only thing that gave his thoughts ease. To say truth, the force of religion was never more visible in any man than it was in this unfortunate malefactor. He was sensible of his repentance being both forced and late, which made him attend to the duties thereof with an extraordinary fervour and application. He said that the thoughts of his dissolution had no other effect upon him than to quicken his diligence in imploring God for pardon. To all those who visited him either from their knowledge of him in former circumstances, or, as too many do, from the curiosity of observing how he would behave under those melancholy circumstances in which he then was, he discoursed of nothing but death, eternity, and future judgment. The gravity of his temper and the serious turn of his thoughts was never interrupted in any respect throughout the whole space of time in which he lay under condemnation; on the contrary, he every day appeared to have more and more improved from his meditations and almost continual devotions, appearing frequently when at chapel wrapped up as it were in ecstasy at the thoughts of heaven and future felicity, humbling himself, however, for the numberless sins he had committed, and omitting nothing which could serve to show the greatness of his sorrow and the sincerity of his contrition.

The day he was to die, the unfortunate old man his father, then upwards of seventy years of age, came to visit him, and saw him haltered as he went out to execution. Words are too feeble to express that impetuosity of grief which overwhelmed both the miserable father and the dying son. However, the old man, bedewing him with a flood of tears, exhorted him not to let go on his hopes in Christ, even in that miserable conjuncture; but that he should remember the mercy of God was over all his works, and in an especial manner was promised to those who were penitent for their sins, which Christ had especially confirmed in sealing the pardon of the repenting thief, even upon the cross.

At the place of execution he appeared scarce without any appearance of terror, much less of obstinacy or contempt of death. Being asked what he did with the pocket-book which he took from Mr. Stinton, and which contained in it things of very great use to him, Young replied ingeniously that he had burnt it, for which he was heartily sorry, but that he did not look into or make himself acquainted with its contents. Just before the cart drew away, he arose and spoke to the people, and said, *The love of idleness, being too much addicted to company, and a too greedy love of strong liquors has brought me to this unhappy end. The Law intends my death for an example unto others; let it be so, let my follies prevent others from falling into the like, and let the shame which you see me suffer, deter all of you from the commission of such sins as may bring you to the like fatal end. My sentence is just, but pray, ye good people, for my soul, that though I die ignominiously here, I may not perish everlastingly.*

He was executed the first of June, 1730, being at the time about thirty-nine years of age.

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This district, at the Dockhead end of Tooley Street, was at that time a sort of No Man's Land, where horses were grazed and a few poverty-stricken wretches lived in sheds and holes in the ground.

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## **The Life of THOMAS POLSON, *alias* HITCHIN, a Footpad and Highwayman**

Habit is the most dangerous of all evils. The transports of passion are sometimes prevented from having fatal effects, either by the precautions of those with whom we quarrel, or because a sudden reflection of our own minds checks our hand. But where men have abandoned themselves to wickedness, and given themselves up to the commission of every kind of evil without restraint, there is little hope to be entertained of their ever mending; and if the fear of a sudden death work a true repentance, it is all that can be hoped.

As for this unfortunate man of whose actions the course of our memoirs obliges us to treat, he

was descended from parents who lived at Marlow, in the county of Salop, who were equally honest in their reputations, and easy in their circumstances. They spared nothing in the education of their son, and it is hard to say whether their care of him was more or his application was less. Even while a child and at school he gave too evident symptoms of that lazy, indolent disposition which attended him so flagrantly and was justly the occasion of all the misfortunes of his succeeding life. Learning was of all things his aversion. It was with difficulty that he was taught to read and write. As to employment, his father brought him up to husbandry and the business of a rural life.

When he was of age his father gave him an estate of twenty pounds *per annum*, freehold, and got him into a very good farm. He procured for him also a wife, who had ten pounds a year more of her own, and settled him in such a manner that no young man in the country had a better prospect of doing well than himself. But, alas! to what purpose are the endeavours of others, where a man studies nothing so much as to compass his own ruin? On a sudden he took a love to card-playing, and addicted himself to it with such earnestness that he neglected his business and squandered his money. What was what of all things he hated, except work, and therefore rather than labour to retrieve, he bethought himself of an easier way of getting money, and that was to steal.

His first attempt was upon his father, whom he robbed of a considerable sum of money. He not being in the least suspected, a poor maid who lived in the house bore the blame for about six months, and nobody in all that time being charged with it but her, there was at last a design in the old man's head to prosecute her. This reaching young Polson's ear, he resolved not to let an innocent person suffer, which was indeed a very just and honourable act, whereupon he wrote an humble letter to his father, acknowledging his fault, begging pardon for his offences, and desiring that he would not prosecute the poor woman, or suffer her to be any longer under the odium of a fact of which she had not the least knowledge. This, to be sure, had its effect on his father, who was a very honest and considerate man. He took care to restore the wench to her good character and his favour, though for a while he with just reason continued to frown upon his son. At last paternal tenderness prevailed, and after giving him several cautions and much good advice, he promised, on his good behaviour, to forgive him what had past. The young man promised fairly, but falling quickly into necessities, want of money had its old effect upon him again, that is, impatient to be at his old practices, tired with work, and yet not knowing how to get money, he at length resolved to go into Wales and steal horses.

This project he executed, and took one from one Mr. Lewis of a considerable value. He sold it to a London butcher for about sixteen pounds, at a village not far from Shrewsbury. That money did him a little good, and therefore the next time he was in a strait he readily bethought himself of Wales. Accordingly he equipped himself with a little pad, and out he set in quest of purchase. At a little inn in Wales he met with a gentleman whom he had reason to suppose had money about him, whereupon our highwayman was very industrious first to make him drink, and then to get him for a bed-fellow, both of which designs he in the end brought to pass, and by that means robbed him of six pounds odd money, taking care to go in the morning a different road from what he had talked of, and by that means easily escaped what pursuit was made after him.

When he had committed this fact he retired towards Canterbury, giving himself over entirely to thieving or cheating, on which design he traversed the whole county of Kent, but found the people so cautious that he did it with very little advantage; until at last coming near Maidstone, he observed a parcel of fine linen hanging upon a hedge. He immediately bethought himself that though the people were wise, yet their hedges might be otherwise, upon which stepping up to it, he fairly stripped it of ten fine shirts, and so left the people who had washed them to account for it. After this exploit, he made the best of his way to London, where he speedily sold the stolen linen for five pounds to a Life Guardsman; and when he had spent a good part of it, down he went into Norfolk. And being afraid that the inhabitants would take notice of a stranger setting up his abode there for any considerable time, he thought fit to pretend to be very lame. Having continued as long as he thought proper in this place, he took his opportunity to carry off a fine mare out of the grounds of Sir John Habbard, Baronet, now the Right Honourable the Lord Blickling. This was one of the most dangerous feats he ever committed in his life, for the scent was so strong upon him, and so quickly followed, that he was forced to take a multitude of byways to get to London, where he set her up in the Haymarket. However he quickly found there was no possibility of disposing of her here, information having been given of her to all the great jockeys; so that for present money he was obliged to borrow four guineas of the man at the inn, and to leave her in his hands by way of security, which was making but a poor hand of what he had hazarded his life for.

By this time his father had received some intelligence of his way of living, and out of tenderness of its consequences, wrote to him assuring him of forgiveness for all that was past, if he would come down into the country and live honestly. Such undeserved tenderness had some weight even with our criminal himself, and he at last began to frame his mind to comply with the request of so good a father. Accordingly, down he came, and for a little space, behaved himself honestly and as he should do; but his old distemper, laziness quickly came in his way, and finding money not to come in so fast as he would have it, he began to think of his old practice again, and prepared himself once more to sally out upon his illegal adventures. For this purpose taking with him a little mare of his brothers, for at that time he had no horse proper for the designs he went on, forth he rode in search of prey.

Wales was the place he first visited, and after riding up and down for a good while without

meeting with any purchase worth taking, he at last unluckily stumbled upon a poor old man in Flintshire, who had one foot already in the grave. From him he took a silver watch, worth about five pounds, and five shillings in money, which was all the poor man had, and making thereupon the greatest haste he could out of the country, he got clear away before it was discovered. After this he came again to London, where what little money he had he lavished away upon women of the town.

It was not long before want overtook him again, upon which he determined to visit Yorkshire, in hopes of raising some considerable booty there. All the way down, according to his common practice, he bilked the public-houses, and at last arriving at Doncaster, began to set heartily about the work for which he came down. On a market day, he robbed an old farmer of forty shillings and a pair of silver buckles, taking his horse also from him, which, when he had ridden about fifteen miles across country, he turned loose. He rambled from thence on foot, as well as he could, in order to get into his native country of Shropshire, where after the commission of a multitude of such actions, none of which afforded him any great booty, he arrived.

His father took him home again, and he lived for eleven months tolerably honest. However, to keep his hand in use, he now and then stole a shoulder of mutton, a joint which he particularly loved; but sometimes to please his father he would work a little, though it always went much against the grain. At last he quarrelled with his wife, and thereupon threatened to go away again, which very quickly after he did, turning his course, notwithstanding his former ill-success into Yorkshire once more. He was at several of the races in that county, and having no particular business at any place, did nothing but course the country round, pilfering and stealing whatever came in his way; insomuch that at one inn, finding nothing else to lay his hands on, he stole the people's sheets off the bed he lay in, and marched off in the morning so early, that he was out of danger before they perceived the theft.

But finding that he could not do any considerable matter amongst the people, who are cunning to a proverb, he bethought himself of returning to London, and the society of those strumpets in which he took a delight. However, all the way on the road he made a shift to pick up as much as kept him pretty well all the way. On his arrival in town he set up his place of residence in an inn near Leather Lane, Holborn, where he remained one whole day to rest himself after the fatigue of his northern journey. There he reflected on the sad state in which his affairs were, being without money and without friends, justly disregarded by his friends in the country, and hated and despised by all his neighbours. His debts, too, amounted there to near a hundred and forty pounds, so that there was no hopes in going back. The result of these cogitations was that the next day he would go out on the road towards Hampstead, and see what might be made there. He accordingly did so, but with very ill success. However, he returned a second time and had no better; the third day, towards evening, he observed an old gentleman in a chaise by himself, whom he robbed of six guineas, a watch, a mourning-ring, and nine and sixpence in silver, and then making over the fields got home very safe.

For three days he thought fit to remain within doors, under pretence of sickness, fearing lest he should be advertised and described in the public prints; but finding nothing of that happened, he grew bold, and for about fourteen nights continued the same trade constantly, getting, sometimes, two or three pieces, and sometimes losing his labour and getting nothing at all. At length, waiting pretty late for an old man, who, as he was informed, was to come that night with eight hundred pounds about him, although he was so feeble that a child might be able to take it from him, he at length grew impatient, and resolved to rob the first man he met. This proved to be one Mr. Andrews, who raised so quick a pursuit upon him that he never lost sight of him until the time of his being apprehended, when he was carried to Newgate and prosecuted the next sessions for the aforesaid robbery.

He was then indicted for taking from the said Thomas Andrews, after putting him in fear, six or seven shillings in money, a bay mare, bridle and saddle, and a cane, on the 23rd of July, 1730. The evidence was exceedingly clear, he having, as I have said, never gone out of sight, from the time of the robbery to the time he was taken. Under sentence of death the prisoner behaved with great piety and resignation. He showed great concern for the offences of his former life, and testified the utmost sorrow for having blemished an honest family by the shame of his vices and their just punishment. The night before his execution he wrote a letter to his parents in the country, which though it be written in a very uncouth style, yet I have thought fit to insert it *verbatim*, because there is a strain in it of unusual confusion and concern, expressing the agony of a dying man with more truth and tenderness than the best penned epistle could have done.

Honoured Parents,

My duty to both, my love to my brother-in-law. I wish to God I had been ruled by you, for now I see the evil of my sin, but I freely die, only the disgrace I have brought on you, my wife and children. I wrote to my wife last Saturday was seven night but had no answer, for I should have been glad to have heard from you before I die, which will be on Wednesday the seventh of this instant October, hoping I have made my peace with God Almighty. I freely forgive all the world, and die in charity with all people. Had it not been for Joyce Hite's sister and Mr. Howel, I might have starved, he told me it has cost him fifteen shillings on my account, and he gave me four more. I desire Thomas Mason will give my wife that locket for my son.

I have nothing more to say, but my prayers to God for you all day and night, and



for God's sake, be as kind to my poor wife and children as in your power lies. I desire there might be some care taken of that Estate at Minton for my son. Mr. Botfield hath the old writings, and I beg you will get them and give them to my wife, and pray show her this letter and my love to her, and my blessing to my children, begging of her as I am a dying man to be good to them, and not make any difference in them, but be as kind to one as the other, and if she is able to put the boy to some trade. Mr. Waring and Thomas Tomlings have each of them a book of mine, pray ask for them, which is all I have to say, but my prayers to God for you all, which is all from your

Dying Son,

Richard Polson.

In my Cell.

October the 6th.

P.S. My love to all my friends. Pray show this letter to my wife as soon as you can, and desire of her to bring up my children in the fear of the Lord, and to make my son a scholar if she is able. There is five of us to die.

In this disposition of mind, and without adding anything to his former confessions he suffered on the seventh of October, 1730, being then in the thirty-third year of his age.

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### **The Life of SAMUEL ARMSTRONG, a Housebreaker**

I have heretofore remarked the great danger there is in having a bad character, and keeping ill-company, from the probability of truth which it gives to every accusation that either malice or interest may induce men to bring against one.

This malefactor was the son of parents in tolerable circumstances, who were careful of his education, and when he grew up bound him apprentice to Captain Matthews, commander of a vessel which traded to Guinea and the West Indies. He behaved at sea very well, and had not the least objection made to his character when he came home. Happy had it been for him if he had gone to sea again, without suffering himself to be tainted with the vices of this great city.

Unfortunately for him, he fell in love with a young woman, and lived with her for some time as his wife. His fondness for this creature drew him to be guilty of those base actions which first brought him to Newgate and the bar at the Old Bailey, and so far blasted his character and unfortunately betrayed him to his death. In the company of this female he quickly lavished what little money he had, and not knowing how to get more, he fell into the persuasions of some wicked young fellows who advised him to take to robbing in the streets. Certain it is that he had not made many attempts (he himself said none) before he was apprehended, and that the first fact he was ever concerned in was stealing a man's hat and tobacco box in Thames Street. This was committed by his companion, who gave them to him, and then running away, left him to be answerable for the fact, for which being indicted at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, he was found guilty, but it being a single felony only it did not affect his life.

However, having been seen there by one Holland, who turned evidence, he thought fit to save his own life by swearing him into the commission of a burglary which himself and one Thomas Griffith actually committed. However, his oath being positive, and the character of this unhappy lad so bad, the people who were robbed were induced to prosecute him with great vehemence, and the jury, on the same presumptions, found him guilty. Griffith, who received sentence with him but afterwards had a pardon, acknowledged that he himself was guilty, but declared at the same time that this unhappy young man was absolutely clear of what was laid to his charge, Holland and himself being the only persons who committed that burglary, and took away the kitchen things which were sworn against him. Moreover, that Armstrong coming to Newgate, and seeing Holland and speaking to him about something, Holland took that opportunity of asking who Armstrong was, and what he came there for, being told the story of his conviction for the hat and wig, he thought fit to add him to his former information against Griffith, and so by swearing against two, effectually secured himself. In this story both the unhappy person of whom we are speaking and Thomas Griffith, who was condemned for and confessed the fact agreed, and Armstrong went to death absolutely denying the fact for which he was to suffer.

At the place of execution his colour changed, and though at other times he appeared to be a bold young man, yet now his courage failed him, he trembled and turned pale, besought the people to pray for his soul, and in great agony and confusion, submitted to death on the seventh day of October, 1730, being at the time of his death about twenty-two years of age.

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## The Life of NICHOLAS GILBURN, a Most Notorious Highwayman

This unfortunate person was born at Ballingary, near Limerick, in the west of Ireland, of parents in very tolerable circumstances, who gave him a very good education; but perceiving that he had a martial disposition, they resolved not to cross it, and therefore, though he was not above fourteen years of age, got him recommended to an officer, who received him as a dragoon. He served about four years with a very good reputation in the army; but he had a brother who then rode in a regiment of horse, who wrote to him from London, and encouraged him to come over into England, which occasioned his writing to his officer to desire his discharge. To this his officer readily agreed.

He went thereupon from the north of Ireland to the west, to his friend, where having equipped himself with clothing, linen and other necessaries, he then came to London, expecting to meet his brother. But on his arrival here he was disappointed, and that disappointment, together with his want of money, made him very uneasy. At last, in order to procure bread, he resolved to list himself in the Foot Guards. He did so, and continued in them for about two years, during which time, he says in his dying declaration, that he did duty as well, and appeared as clean as any man in the company; nay, in all that time, he avers that he never neglected his guard but once, which was very fatal to him, for it brought him into the acquaintance of those who betrayed him to measures which cost him his life. For being taken up and carried to the Savoy for the aforementioned offence, he had not been long in prison before Wilson, who had been concerned with Burnworth, *alias* Frazier, and the rest in the murder of Mr. Ball in the Mint; and one Mr. G—, an old highwayman, though he had never conversed with him before, came to pay him a visit.

They treated him both with meat and drink, seemed to commiserate his condition very much, and promised him that he should not want twelvecence a day, during the time in confinement. This promise was very well kept, and Gilburn in a few days obtained his liberty. The next day he met Wilson in St. James's Park, who after complimenting him upon his happy deliverance, invited him to a house in Spring Gardens to drink and make merry together. Gilburn readily consented, and after discoursing of courage, want of money, the miseries of poverty, and some other preparatory articles, Wilson parted with him for that time, appointing another meeting with him at eleven o'clock the next morning. There Wilson pursued his former topic, and at last told him plainly that the best and shortest method to relieve their wants was to go on the highway; and when he had once made this step, he scrupled not to make a further, telling Gilburn that there was no such danger in those practices as was generally apprehended, for that with a little care and circumspection the gallows might be well enough avoided, which he said was plain enough from his own adventures, since he had lived several years in the profession, and by being cautious enough to look about him, had escaped any confinement.

Gilburn heard this account with terror. He had never committed anything of this kind hitherto, and knew very well that if he once engaged he could never afterwards go back. Wilson seemed not at all uneasy at his pause, but artfully introducing discourse on other subjects, plied him in the meanwhile with liquor, until he saw him pretty warm, and then resumed the story of his own adventures and of the facility of acquiring money when a man is but well stored with courage and has ever so little conduct. This artifice unfortunately had its effect, Wilson's conversation and the fumes of liquor prevailing so far upon Gilburn that, as he himself phrased it, he resolved at last upon business.

The day following, Gilburn provided himself with pistols, and removed his quarters to go and live with Wilson, who encouraged him with all the arguments he was able to stick to his new profession, and Gilburn in return swore he would live and die with him. So at night they went out together in quest of adventures. The road they took was towards Paddington. A little after they were come into the fields, they attacked a gentleman and took from him eight shillings, with which Gilburn was very much pleased, though they had little luck after, so that they returned at last to their lodgings, weary and fatigued, and were obliged to mount guard the next morning. When their guard was over, they were, as Mr. Gilburn expresses it in his last speech, as bare as a bird's arse, so no time was to be lost, and accordingly that very night they made their second expedition. Nobody coming in their way, Gilburn began to fret, and at last falling into a downright passion, swore he would rob the first man he met. He was as good as his word, and the booty he got proved a tolerable provision for some days.

But guard-day drawing nigh again, Wilson told him there was no mounting without money, and the same methods were taken as formerly; but as the leagues by which men are united in villainy are liable to a thousand inconveniencies which are uneasily born, and yet hard to be remedied, so Wilson's humours being very different from that of Gilburn, they soon began to differ about the money they acquired by plunder. At last, coming one night very much tired and fatigued to a public-house where Wilson was acquainted, they called for some drink to refresh themselves, which when they had done, Gilburn was for dividing the money, himself standing in need of linen and other necessaries. Wilson, on the other hand, was for having a bowl of punch, and words thereupon arose to such a height that at last they fell to fighting. This quarrel was irreconcilable, and they absolutely parted company, though Gilburn unfortunately pursued the same road; and having robbed a gentleman on horseback of several yards of fine padusoy, he was shortly after apprehended and committed to Newgate.

At first he absolutely denied the fact, but when he was convicted, and saw no hopes of pardon, he acknowledged what had been sworn against him by the prosecutor to be true, attended with much gravity at chapel, and seemed to be greatly afflicted through a due sense of those many

sins which he had committed. Wilson, his companion, had a little before been executed at Kingston, and Gilburn with all outward signs of contrition, suffered the same death at Tyburn, at the same time with the before-mentioned malefactor, being at the time of his death about twenty-two years of age.

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## **The Lives of JAMES O'BRYAN, HUGH MORRIS and ROBERT JOHNSON, Highwaymen and Street-Robbers**

Amongst the many flagrant vices of the present age, there is none more remarkable than the strange property we see in young people to commit the most notorious crimes, provided they may thereby furnish themselves with money enough to support their lavish expenses in vices which in former times were scarce heard of by lads of that age, at which our boldest highwaymen begin to exert themselves now.

The first of these unfortunate lads, James O'Bryan, was born at Dublin, was brought over hither young, and had a good education given him which he had very little inclination to make a proper use of. Nothing could persuade him to go out to a trade; on the contrary, he pretended he would apply himself to his father's employment, which was that of a plasterer. But as working was required, he soon grew out of humour with it, and addicted himself wholly to strolling about the streets with such wicked lads as himself, and so was easily drawn in to think of supplying himself with money by the plunder of honest people, in order to carry on those debaucheries in which, though a lad, he was already deeply immersed.

Women, forsooth, drew this spark away from the paths of virtue and goodness at about sixteen years old, after which time he lost all sense of duty to his parents, respect of laws divine or human, and even care of himself. It seems he found certain houses in Chick Lane, where they met abundance of loose young men and women, accustomed themselves to every kind of debauchery which it was possible for wicked people to commit or the most fruitful genius to invent. Here he fell into the company of his two companions, Morris and Johnson.

The first of these was the son of an unfortunate tradesman who had once kept a great shop, and lived in good reputation in the Strand, but through the common calamities of life, he was so unfortunate as to break, and laying it too much to heart, died soon after it, happy, however, in one thing, that he did not live to see the deplorable end of his son by the hand of justice.

Robert Johnson was the son of honest parents, and had a very good education, but put it to a very ill use; for having all his life time been addicted to pilfering and thieving, at last he fell into the company of these unfortunate young men who led him a directer way to the gallows than perhaps he might have found himself. One of his chief inducements to forfeit reputation and hazard life by engaging in street robberies, was his commencing an amour with his father's servant-maid, and not long after falling into a multitude of such like adventures, the ready road to inevitable ruin.

These three sparks, together with Bernard Fink, and another person who turned evidence against them, came all at the same time to a resolution of attacking people in the streets; and having provided themselves with pistols and whatever else they thought necessary for putting their design in execution, they immediately set about it, and though but boys, committed bolder and more numerous robberies than had ever hitherto been heard of. It may, indeed, seem surprising that lads of their age should be able to intimidate passengers, but when it is considered that having less precaution than older rogues, they were more ready at firing pistols or otherwise injuring those whom they attacked, than any set of fellows who had hitherto disturbed the crown, this wonder will wear off.

It was not above two months that they continued their depredations, but in that time they had been exceedingly busy, and had committed a multitude of facts. One gentleman whom they attacked in Lincoln's Inn Fields, refused to surrender, and drew his sword upon Morris. That young robber immediately fired his pistol, and the rest coming to his assistance, the gentleman thought it but prudent to retire, the noise they made having alarmed the watch and so prevented his losing anything.

After this it became a very common practice with them, as soon as they stopped anybody, to clap a pistol under their nose, and bid them smell at it, while one of their companions, with a thousand execrations, threatened to blow their brains out if they made the least resistance. As soon as the business of the night was over, they immediately adjourned to their places of rendezvous at Chick Lane, or to other houses of the same stamp elsewhere, and without the least consideration of the hazards they had run, squandered the wages of their villainies upon such impudent strumpets as for the lucre of a few shillings prostituted themselves to them in these debaucheries.

Mr. O'Bryan was the hero of this troop of infant robbers; he valued himself much on never meddling with small matters or committing any meaner crime than that of the highway. It happened he had a mistress coming out of the country and he would needs have his companions take each of them a doxy and go with him as far as Windsor to receive her. They readily complied, and at Windsor they were all seized and from thence brought to town, two of their own gang turning evidence, so that on the clearest proof, they were all three convicted.

Under sentence of death they behaved with great audacity, seemed to value themselves on the crimes they had committed, caused several disturbances at chapel and discovered little or no sense of that miserable condition in which they were. O'Bryan died a Papist, and in the cart read

with great earnestness a book of devotions in that way. He wrote a letter to his father the day before he died, and also something which he called verses to his sister, both of which I have subjoined *verbatim* that my readers may have the better idea of the capacity of those poor creatures.

To Mr. Terrance O'Bryan, living in Burleigh Street in the Strand. Honoured Father and Mother,

The uneasiness I give you is more terror to me than the thoughts of death, but pray make yourselves as easy as you can, for I hope I am going to a better place; for God is my refuge and my strength, and my helper in time of tribulation, and pray take care of my brother now whilst he is young, and make him serve God, and keep him out of bad company. If I had served God as I ought to have done, and kept out of bad company, I had not come to this unhappy misfortune, but I hope it is for the good of my soul, it is good I hope what God has at present ordained for me, for there is mercy in the foresight of death, and in the time God has given me to prepare for it. A natural death might have had less terror, for in that I might have wanted many advantages which are now granted me. My trust is in God, and I hope he won't reward me according to my deserts. All that I can suffer here must have an end, for this life is short, so are all the sufferings of it, but the next life is Eternal. Pray give my love to my sister, and desire her not to neglect her duty to God. I hope you are all well, as I am at present, I thank God. So no more at present.

From your unhappy and undutiful son,

James O'Bryan.

The verses sent by James O'Bryan to his sister two days before his execution:

My loving tender sister dear,

From you I soon must part I fear.

Think not on my wretched state,

Nor grieve for my unhappy fate,

But serve the Lord with all your heart,

And from you He'll never part.

When I am dead and in my tomb,

For my poor soul I hope there's room,

In Heaven with God above on high,

I hope to live eternally.

At the time of their execution James O'Bryan was about twenty, Hugh Morris seventeen, and Robert Johnson not full twenty years of age, which was on the 16th of November, 1730.

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### **The History of the Life and surprising adventures of JOHN GOW, *alias* SMITH, a most notorious Pirate and Murderer**

The principal use to which a work of this nature can be applied is to engage persons to refuse the first stirrings of their passions, and the slighted emotions of vice in their breasts, since they see before their eyes so many sad examples of the fatal consequences which follow upon rash and wicked enterprises, of which the following history exhibits as extraordinary an instance as

perhaps is anywhere to be found.

In giving an account of this malefactor, we are obliged to begin with his embarking on board the vessel which he afterwards seized and went a-pirating in. It was called the *George* galley, and was of about two hundred tons burden, commanded by Oliver Ferneau, a Frenchman, but a subject of the Crown of England, who entertained this Gow as a private seaman only, but afterwards, to his great misfortune, preferred him to be the second mate in the voyage of which we are next to speak.

Captain Ferneau being a man of reputation among the merchants of Amsterdam, got a voyage for his ship from thence to Santa Cruz on the coast of Barbary, to load beeswax, and to carry it to Genoa, which was his delivering port; and as the Dutch, having war with the Turks of Algiers, were willing to employ him as an English ship, so he was as willing to be manned with English seamen, and accordingly among the rest, he unhappily took on board this Gow with his wretched gang, such as MacCauly, Melvin, Williams and others. But not being able to man themselves wholly with English or Scots, he was obliged to take some Swedes, and other seamen to make his complement, which was twenty-three in all. Among the latter sort, one was named Winter, and another Peterson, both of them Swedes by nation, but wicked as Gow and his other fellows were. They sailed from the Texel in the month of August, 1724, and arrived at Santa Cruz on the second of September following, where having a super-cargo on board, who took charge of the loading, and four chests of money to purchase it, they soon got the beeswax, on board, and on the third of November they appointed to set sail to pursue the voyage.

That day the ship having lain two months in the road at Santa Cruz, taking in her lading, the captain made preparations to put to sea, and the usual signals for sailing having been given, some of the merchants from on shore, who had been concerned in furnishing the cargo, came on board in the forenoon to take their leave of the captain, and wish him a good voyage, as is usual on such occasions. Whether it was concerted by the whole gang beforehand, we know not, but while the captain was treating and entertaining the merchants under the awning upon the quarter deck, as is the custom in those hot countries, three of the seamen, viz., Winter and Peterson, two Swedes, and MacCauly a Scotchman, came rudely upon the quarter deck as if they took the opportunity because the merchants were present, believing the captain would not use any violence with them in the presence of the merchants.

They made a long complaint of all their ill-usage, and particularly of their provisions and allowance, as they said, being not sufficient nor such as was ordinarily made in other merchant ships, seeming to load the captain, Monsieur Ferneau, with being the occasion of it, and that he did it for his private gain, which however had not been true. If the fact had been true, the overplus of provisions (if the stores had been more than sufficient) belonged to the owners, not to the captain, at the end of the voyage, there being also a steward on board to take the account. In making this complaint they seemed to direct their speech to the merchants as well as to the captain, as if they had been concerned in the ship, or as if desiring them to intercede for them with the captain, that they might have redress and a better allowance.

The captain was highly provoked at this rudeness, as indeed he had reason, it being a double affront to him as it was done in the view of the merchants who were come on board to him, to do him an honour at parting. However, he restrained his passion, and gave them not the least angry word, only that if they were aggrieved they had no more to do but to let him have know of it; that if they were ill-used it was not by his order that he would enquire into it and if anything was amiss it should be rectified, with which the seamen withdrew, seemingly well satisfied with his answer.

About five the same evening they unmoored the ship and hove short upon their best bower anchor, awaiting the land breeze (as is usual on that coast) to carry them out to sea; but instead of that, it fell stark calm, and the captain fearing the ship would fall foul of her own anchor, ordered the mizen top-sail to be furled. Peterson, one of the discontented seamen, being the nearest man at hand seemed to go about it, but moved so carelessly and heavily that it appeared plainly he did not care whether it was done or no, and particularly as if he had a mind the captain should see it and take notice of it. Which the captain did, for perceiving how awkwardly he went about it, he spoke a little tartly to him, and asked him what was the reason he did not stir a little and furl the sail. Peterson, as if he had waited for the question, answered in a surly tone, and with a kind of disdain, *So as we eat, so shall we work*. This he spoke aloud, so that he might be sure the captain heard him and the rest of the men also, and it was evident that as he spoke in plural numbers, *We*, so he spoke their minds as well as his own, and words which they all agreed to before.

The captain, however, though he heard plain enough what he said, took not the least notice of it, or gave him the least reason to believe he had heard him, being not willing to begin a quarrel with the men and knowing that if he took any notice at all of it, he must resent it and punish it too.

Soon after this, the calm went off, and the land breeze sprang up, and they immediately weighed and stood out to sea; but the captain having had these two bustles with his men just at their putting to sea, was very uneasy in his mind, as indeed he had reason to be; and the same evening, soon after they were under sail, the mate being walking on the quarter deck, he went, and taking two or three turns with him, told him how he had been used by the men, particularly how they affronted him before the merchants, and what an answer Peterson had given him on the quarter deck, when he ordered him to furl the mizen top sail. The mate was as surprised at these

things as the captain, and after some other discourse about it, in which it was their unhappiness not to be so private as they ought to have been in a case of such importance, the captain told him he thought it was absolutely necessary to have a quantity of small arms brought immediately into the great cabin, not only to defend themselves if there should be occasion, but also that he might be in a posture to correct those fellows for their insolence, especially should he meet with any more of it. The mate agreed that it was necessary to be done, and had they said no more, or said this more privately, all had been well, and the wicked design had been much more difficult, if not the execution of it effectually prevented.

But two mistakes in this part was the ruin of them all. First, that the captain spoke it without due caution, so that Winter and Peterson, the two principal malcontents, who were expressly mentioned by the captain to be corrected, overheard it, and knew by that means what they had to expect if they did not immediately bestir themselves to prevent it. The other mistake was that when the captain and mate agreed that it was necessary to have arms got ready, and brought into the great cabin, the captain unhappily bid him go immediately to Gow, the second mate and gunner, and give him orders to get the arms cleared and loaded for him, and to bring them up to the great cabin; which was in short to tell the conspirators that the captain was preparing to be too strong for them, if they did not fall to work with him immediately.

Winter and Peterson went immediately forward, where they knew the rest of the mutineers were, and to whom they communicated what they had heard, telling them that it was time to provide for their own safety, for otherwise their destruction was resolved on, and the captain would soon be in such a posture that there would be no muddling with him. While they were thus consulting, as they said, only for their own safety, Gow and Williams came into them with some others to the number of eight, and no sooner were they joined by these two, but they fell downright to the point which Gow had so long formed in his own mind, viz., to seize upon the captain and mate, and all those that they could not bring to join with them; in short, to throw them into the sea, and to go upon the account. All those who are acquainted with the sea language know the meaning of that expression, and that it is, in few words, to run away with the ship and turn pirates.

Villainous designs are soonest concluded; as they had but little time to consult upon what measures they should take, so very little consultation served for what was before them, and they came to this short but hellish resolution, viz., that they would immediately, that very night, murder the captain and such others as they named, and afterwards proceed with the ship as they should see cause. And here it is to be observed that though Winter and Peterson were in the first proposal, namely to prevent their being brought to correction by the captain, yet Gow and Williams were the principal advisers in the bloody part, which however the rest came into soon; for, as I said before, as they had but little time to resolve in, so they had but very little debate about it but what was first proposed was forthwith engaged in and consented to.

It must not be omitted that Gow had always had the wicked game of pirating in his head, and that he had attempted it, or rather tried to attempt it before, but was not able to bring it to pass; so he and Williams had also several times, even in this very voyage, dropped some hints of this vile design, as they thought there was room for it, and touched two or three times at what a noble opportunity they had of enriching themselves, and making their fortunes, as they wickedly called it. This was when they had the four chests of money on board and Williams made it a kind of jest in his discourse, how easily they might carry it off, ship and all. But as they did not find themselves seconded, or that any of the men showed themselves in favour of such a thing, but rather spoke of it with abhorrence they passed it over as a kind of discourse that had nothing at all in it, except that one of the men, viz., the surgeon, once took them up short for so much as mentioning such a thing, told them the thought was criminal and it ought not to be spoken of among them, which reproof was supposed cost him his life afterwards.

As Gow and his comrade had thus started the thing at a distance before, though it was then without success, yet they had the less to do now, when other discontents had raised a secret fire in the breasts of the men; for now, being as it were mad and desperate with apprehensions of their being severely punished by the captain, they wanted no persuasions to come into the most wicked undertaking that the devil or any of his angels could propose to them. Nor do we find that upon any of their examinations they pretended to have made any scruples or objections to the cruelty of the bloody attempt that was to be made, but came to it at once, and resolved to put it in execution immediately, that is to say, the very same evening.

It was the captain's constant custom to call all the ship's company into the great cabin every night at eight o'clock to prayers, and then the watch being set, one went upon deck, and the other turned in, or, as the seamen phrase it, went to their hammocks to sleep; and here they concerted their devilish plot. It was the turn of five of the conspirators to go to sleep, and of these Gow and Williams were two. The three who were to be upon the deck were Winter, Rowlinson, and Melvin, a Scotchman. The persons they immediately designed for destruction were four, viz., the captain, the mate, the super-cargo, and the surgeon, whereof all but the captain were gone to sleep, the captain himself being upon the quarter deck.

Between nine and ten at night, all being quiet and secure, and the poor gentlemen that were to be murdered fast asleep, the villains that were below gave the watch-word, which was, *Who fires next?* At which they all got out of their hammocks with as little noise as they could, and going in the dark to the hammocks of the chief mate, super-cargo and surgeon, they cut all their throats. The surgeon's throat was cut so effectually that he could struggle very little with them, but leaping out of his hammock, ran up to get upon the deck, holding his hand upon his throat. But

be stumbled at the tiller, and falling down had no breath, and consequently no strength to raise himself, but died where he lay.

The mate, whose throat was cut but not his windpipe, struggled so vigorously with the villain who attacked him that he got away from him and into the hold; and the super-cargo, in the same condition, got forwards between decks under some deals and both of them begged with the most moving cries and entreaties for their lives. And when nothing could prevail, they begged with the same earnestness for but a few moments to pray to God, and recommend their souls to mercy. But alike in vain, for the wretched murderers, heated with blood, were past pity, and not being able to come at them with their knives, with which they had begun the execution, they shot them with their pistols, firing several times upon each of them until they found they were quite dead.

As all this, even before the firing, could not be done without some noise, the captain, who was walking alone upon the quarter-deck, called out and asked what was the matter. The boatswain, who sat on the after bits, and was not of the party, answered he could not tell, but he was afraid there was somebody overboard; upon which the captain stepped towards the ship's side to look over. Then Winter, Rowlinson and Melvin, coming that moment behind him, laid hands on him, and lifting him up, attempted to throw him overboard into the sea; but he being a nimble strong man, got hold of the shrouds and struggled so hard with them that they could not break his hold. Turning his head to look behind him to see who he had to deal with, one of them cut his throat with a broad Dutch knife; but neither was that wound mortal, for the captain still struggled with them, and seeing he should undoubtedly be murdered, he constantly cried up to God for mercy, for he found there was none to be expected from them. During this struggle, another of the murderers stabbed him with a knife in the back, and that with such a force that the villain could not draw the knife out again to repeat his blow, which he would otherwise have done.

At this moment Gow came up from the butchery he had been at between decks, and seeing the captain still alive, he went close up to him and shot him, as he confessed, with a brace of bullets. What part he shot him in could not be known, though they said he had shot him in the head; however, he had yet life enough (though they threw him overboard) to take hold of a rope, and would still have saved himself but they cut that rope and then he fell into the sea, and was seen no more.

Thus they finished the tragedy, having murdered four of the principal men in command in the ship, so that there was nobody now to oppose them; for Gow being second mate and gunner, the command fell to him, of course, and the rest of the men having no arms ready, not knowing how to get at any, were in utmost consternation, expecting they would go on with the work and cut their throats. In this fright everyone shifted for himself. As for those who were upon deck, some got up in the round tops, others got into the ship's head, resolving to throw themselves into the sea rather than be mangled with knives and murdered as the captain and mate, etc., had been. Those who were below, not knowing what to do, or whose turn it should be next, lay still in their hammocks expecting death every moment, and not daring to stir lest the villains should think they did it in order to make resistance, which however they were in no way capable of doing, having no concert one with another, not knowing anything in particular of one another, as who was alive or who was dead. Had the captain, who was himself a bold and stout man, been in his great cabin with three or four men with him, and his fire-arms, as he intended to have had, those eight fellows had never been able to have done their work. But every man was taken unprovided, and in the utmost surprise, so that the murderers met with no resistance; and as for those what were left, they were less able to make resistance than the other, so that, as has been said, they were in the utmost terror and amazement, expecting every minute to be murdered as the rest had been.

But the villains had done. The persons who had any command were dispatched, so they cooled a little as to blood. The first thing they did afterwards, was to call up all the eight upon the quarter deck, where they congratulated one another, and shook hands together, engaging to proceed by joint consent in their resolved design, that is, of turning pirates. In older to which, they unanimously chose Gow to command the ship, promising all subjection and obedience to his orders, so that we must now call him Captain Gow, and he, by the same consent of the rest, named Williams his lieutenant. Other officers they appointed afterwards.

The first orders they issued was to let all the rest of the men know that if they continued quiet and offered not to meddle with any of their affairs, they should receive no hurt, but chiefly forbade any man to set a foot abaft the main mast, except they were called to the helm, upon pain of being immediately cut to pieces, keeping for that purpose one man at the steerage door, and one upon the quarter deck with drawn cutlasses in their hands. But there was no need for it, for the men were so terrified with the bloody doings they had seen, that they never offered to come in sight until they were called.

Their next work was to throw overboard the three dead bodies of the mate, the surgeon, and the super-cargo, which they said lay in their way; that was soon done, their pockets being first searched and rifled. From thence they went to work with the great cabin and with all the lockers, chests, boxes and trunks. These they broke open and rifled, that is, such of them as belonged to the murdered persons, and whatever they found there they shared among themselves. When they had done this, they called for liquor, and sat down to drinking until morning, leaving the men, as above, to keep guard, and particularly to guard the arms, but relieved them from time to time as they saw occasion.

By this time they had drawn in four more of the men to approve of what they had done, and

promised to join with them, so that now there were twelve in number, and being but twenty-four at first, whereof four were murdered, they had but eight men to be apprehensive of, and those they could easily look after. So the next day, they sent for them all to appear before their new captain, where they were told by Gow what his resolution was, viz., to go a-cruising or to go upon the account. If they were willing to join with them and go into their measures, they should be well used, and there should be no distinction among them but they should all fare alike; he said that they had been forced to do what they had done by the barbarous usage of Ferneau, but that there was now no looking back; and therefore, as they had not been concerned in what was past, they had nothing to do but to act in concert, do their duty as sailors, and obey orders for the good of the ship, and no harm should come to any of them.

As they all looked like condemned prisoners brought up to the bar to receive sentence of death, so they all answered by a profound silence, which Gow took as they meant it, viz, as a consent because they durst not refuse. So they were then permitted to go up and down everywhere as they used to do, though such of them as sometimes afterwards showed any reluctance to act as principals, were never trusted, always suspected and very often severely beaten. Some of them were in many ways inhumanly treated and that particularly by Williams, the lieutenant, who was in his nature a merciless, cruel, and inexorable wretch, as we shall have occasion to take notice of again in its place.

They were now in a new circumstance of life, and acting upon a different stage of business, though upon the same stage as to the element, the water. Before they were a merchant ship, laden upon a good account, with merchants' goods from the coast of Barbary, and bound to the coast of Italy; but they were now a crew of pirates, or as they call them in the Levant, Corsairs, bound nowhere but to look out for purchase and spoil wherever they could find it. In pursuit of this wicked trade they first changed the name of the ship, which was before called the *George* galley, and which they called now the *Revenge*, a name, indeed, suitable to the bloody steps they had taken. In the next place they made the best of the ship's forces. The ship had but twelve guns mounted when they came out of Holland, but as they had six more good guns in the hold with cartridges and everything proper for service (which they had in store through being freighted for the Dutch merchants, and the Algerians being at war with the Dutch), they supposed they might want them for defence. Now they took care to mount them for a much worse design, so that now they had eighteen guns, though too many for the number of hands they had on board. In the third place, instead of pursuing their voyage to Genoa with the ship's cargo, they took a clear contrary course, and resolved to station themselves upon the coasts of Spain and Portugal, and to cruise upon all nations; but what they chiefly aimed at was a ship with wine, if possible, for that they wanted extremely.

The first prize they took was an English sloop, belonging to Pool, Thomas Wise commander, bound from Newfoundland with fish for Cadiz. This was a prize of no value to them, so they took out the master, Mr. Wise and his men, who were but five in number, with their anchors, cables and sails, and what else they found worth taking, and sunk the vessel. The next prize they took was a Scotch vessel, bound from Glasgow with herrings and salmon from thence to Genoa, and commanded by one Mr. John Somerville, of Port Patrick. This vessel was likewise of little value to them, except that they took as they had done from the other, their arms, ammunition, clothes, provisions, sails, anchors, cables, etc., and everything of value, and sunk her too as they had done the sloop. The reason they gave for sinking these two vessels was to prevent their being discovered, for as they were now cruising on the coast of Portugal, had they let their ships have gone with several of their men on board, they would presently have stood in for shore, and have given the alarm, and the men-of-war, of which there were several, as well Dutch as English, in the river of Lisbon, would immediately have put out to sea in quest of them, and they were very unwilling to leave the coast of Portugal until they had got a ship with wine, which they very much wanted.

After this they cruised eight or ten days without seeing so much as one vessel upon the seas, and were just resolving to stand more to the coast of Galicia, when they descried a sail to the southward, being a ship about as big as their own, though they could not perceive what force she had. However they gave chase, and the vessel perceiving it, crowded from them with all the sail they could make, hoisting up French colours, and standing away to the southward. They continued the chase three days and nights, and though they did not gain much upon her, the Frenchman sailing very well, yet they kept her in sight all the while and for the most part within gunshot. But the third night, the weather proving a little hazy, the Frenchman changed her course in the night, and so got clear of them, and good reason they had to bless themselves in the escape they had made, if they had but known what a dreadful crew of rogues they had fallen among if they had been taken.

They were now gotten a long way to the southward and being greatly disappointed, and in want of water as well as wine, they resolved to stand away for the Madeiras, which they knew were not far off; so they accordingly made the island in two days more, and keeping a large offing, they cruised for three or four days more, expecting to meet with some Portuguese vessel going in or coming out. But it was in vain, for nothing stirred. So, tired with waiting, they stood in for the road, and came to anchor, though at a great distance. Then they sent their boat towards the shore with seven men, all well armed, to see whether it might not be practicable to board one of the ships in the road, and cutting her away from her anchors, bring her off; or if they found that could not be done, then their orders were to intercept some of the boats belonging to the place, which carry wines on board the ships in the road, or from one place to another on the coast. But



they came back again disappointed in both, everybody being alarmed and aware of them, knowing by their posture what they were.

Having thus spent several days to no purpose, and finding themselves discovered, at last (being apparently under a necessity to make an attempt somewhere) they stood away for Porto Santo, [102] about ten leagues to the windward of Madeiras, and belonging also to the Portuguese. Here putting up British colours, they sent their boat ashore with Captain Somerville's bill of health, and a present to the governor of three barrels of salmon, and six barrels of herrings, and a very civil message, desiring leave to water, and to buy some refreshments, pretending to be bound to —.

The Governor very courteously granted their desire, but with more courtesy than discretion went off himself, with about nine or ten of his principal people, to pay the English captain a visit, little thinking what kind of a captain it was they were going to compliment, and what price it might have cost them. However, Gow, handsomely dressed, received them with some ceremony, and entertained them tolerably well for a while. But the Governor having been kept as long by civility as they could, and the refreshments from the shore not appearing, he was forced to unmask; and when the Governor and his company rose up to take their leave, to their great surprise they were suddenly surrounded with a gang of fellows with muskets, and an officer at the head of them. These told them, in so many words, they were the captain's prisoners, and must not think of going on shore any more until the water and provisions which were promised should come on board.

It is impossible to conceive the consternation and surprise the Portuguese gentry were in, nor is it very decently to be expressed. The poor Governor was so much more than half dead with fright that he really befouled himself in a piteous manner, and the rest were in not much better condition. They trembled, cried, begged, crossed themselves, and said their prayers as men going to execution, but it was all one, they were told flatly that the captain was not to be trifled with, that the ship was in want of provisions, and they would have them, or they should carry them all away. They were, however, well enough treated, except for the restraint of their persons, and were often asked to refresh themselves; but they would neither eat nor drink any more all the while they stayed on board, which was until the next day in the evening, when to their great satisfaction they saw a great boat come off from the fort, and which came directly on board with seven butts of water, a cow and a calf, and a good number of fowls.

When the boat came alongside and delivered the stores, Captain Gow complimented the Governor and his gentlemen, and discharged them to their great joy, and besides that gave them in return for their provisions two cerons of beeswax, and fired them three guns at their going away. It is to be supposed they would have a care how they went on board any ship again, in compliment to their captain, unless they were very sure who they were. Having had no better success in this out of the way run to the Madeiras, they resolved to make the best of their way back again to the coast of Spain and Portugal. They accordingly left Porto Santo the next morning with a fair wind, standing directly for Cape St. Vincent or the Southward Cape.

They had not been upon the coast of Spain above two or three days, before they met with a New England ship, one Cross commander, laden with slaves, and bound for Lisbon, being to load there with wine for London. This was also a prize of no value to them, and they began to be very much discouraged with their bad fortune. However, they took out Captain Cross and his men, which were seven or eight in number, with most of the provisions and some of the sails, and gave the ship to Captain Wise, the poor man whom they took at first in a sloop from Newfoundland; and in order to pay Wise and his men for what they took from them, and make them satisfaction, as they called it, they gave to Captain Wise and his mate twenty-four cerons of wax, and to his men who were four in number, two cerons of wax each. Thus they pretended honesty, and to make reparation of damages by giving them the goods which they had robbed the Dutch merchants of, whose super-cargo they had murdered.

The day before the division of the spoil they saw a large ship to windward, which at first put them into some surprise, for she came bearing down directly upon them, and they thought she had been a Portuguese man-of-war, but they found soon after that it was a merchant ship, had French colours and bound home, as they supposed from the West Indies; and so it was, for they afterwards learned that she was laden at Martinico and bound for Rochelle.

The Frenchmen not fearing them came on large to the wind, being a ship of much greater force than Gow's ship, carrying thirty-two guns and eighty men, besides a great many passengers. However, Gow at first made as if he would lie by for them, but seeing plainly what a ship it was, and that they should have their hands full of her, he began to consider; and calling his men together upon the deck, told them what was in his mind, viz., that the Frenchman was apparently superior in force in every way; that they were but ill-manned, and had a great many prisoners on board, and that some of their own people were not very well to be trusted; that six of their best hands were on board the prize; and that all they had left were not sufficient to ply their guns and stand by the sails, and that therefore as they were under no necessity to engage, so he thought it would be next to madness to think of it.

The generality of the men were of Gow's mind, and agreed to decline the fight, but Williams, his lieutenant, strenuously opposed it; and being not to be appeased by all that Gow could say to him, or any one else, flew out into a rage at Gow, upbraiding him with being a coward, and not fit to command a ship of force. The truth is, Gow's reasoning was good, and the thing was just,

considering their own condition; but Williams was a fellow incapable of any solid thinking, had a kind of savage, brutal courage, but nothing of true bravery in him, and this made him the most desperate and outrageous villain in the world, and the most cruel and inhuman to those whose disaster it was to fall into his hands, as had frequently appeared in his usage of the prisoners under his power in this very voyage. Gow was a man of temper, and notwithstanding all the ill-language Williams gave him, said little or nothing but by way of argument against attacking the French ship, which would certainly have been too strong for them; but this provoked Williams the more, and he grew so extraordinary an height, that he demanded boldly of Gow to give his orders for fighting, which Gow declining still Williams presented his pistol at him, and snapped it, but it did not go off, which enraged him the more.

Winter and Peterson standing nearest to Williams, and seeing him so furious, flew at him immediately, and each of them fired a pistol at him. One shot him through the arm, and the other into his belly, at which he fell, and the men about him laid hold of him to throw him overboard, believing he was dead; but as they lifted him up, he started violently out of their hands, and leaped directly into the hold, and from thence ran desperately into the powder-room with his pistol cocked in his hand, swearing he would blow them all up. He had certainly done it, if they had not seized him just as he had gotten the scuttle open, and was that moment going to put his hellish resolution into practice.

Having thus secured the distracted, raving creature, they carried him forward to the place which they had made on purpose between decks to secure their prisoners, and put him amongst them, having first loaded him with irons, and particularly handcuffed him with his hands behind him, to the great satisfaction of the other prisoners, who knowing what a butcherly furious fellow he was, were terrified to the last degree to see him come in among them, until they beheld the condition he came in. He was, indeed, the terror of all the prisoners, for he usually treated them in a barbarous manner, without the least provocation, and merely for his humour, presenting pistols to their breasts, swearing he would shoot them that moment, and then would beat them unmercifully, and all for his diversion as he called it. Having thus laid him fast, they presently resolved to stand away to the westward, by which they quitted the Martinico ship, who by that time was come nearer to them, and farther convinced them they were in no condition to have engaged her, for she was a stout ship and full of men.

All this happened just the day before they shared their last prize among the prisoners, in which they put on such a mock face of doing justice to the several captains and mates and other men, their prisoners, whose ships they had taken away, and to whom now they made reparation, by giving them what they had taken violently from another, so that it was a strange medley of mock justice made up of rapine and generosity blended together.

Two days after this they took a Bristol ship bound from Newfoundland to Oporto with fish. They let her cargo alone, for they had no occasion for fish, but they took out almost all their provisions, all the ammunition, arms, etc., and her good sails, also her best cables, and forced two of her men to go away with them, and then got ten of the Frenchman on board and let her go. But just as they were parting with her, they consulted together what to do with Williams the lieutenant, who was then among the prisoners and in irons. And after a short debate, they resolved to put him on board the Bristol-man and send him away too, which accordingly was done, with directions to the master to deliver him on board the first English man-of-war they should meet with, in order to get his being hanged for a pirate, as they jeeringly called him, as soon as he came to England, giving the master an account of some of his villainies.

The truth is, this Williams was a monster rather than a man. He was the most inhuman, bloody and desperate creature that the world could produce, and was even too wicked for Gow and all his crew, though they pirates and murderers, as has been shown. His temper was so savage, so villainous, so merciless, that even the pirates themselves told him it was time he was hanged out of the way.

One instance of the barbarity of Williams cannot be omitted, and will be sufficient to justify all that can be said of him. When Gow gave it as a reason against engaging with the Martinico ship, that he had a great many prisoners on board, and some of their own men that they could not depend on, Williams proposed to have them all called up one by one, and to cut their throats and throw them overboard—a proposal so horrid that the worst of the crew shook their heads at it. Gow answered him very handsomely, that there had been too much blood spilled already; yet the refusing this, heightened the quarrel, and was the chief occasion of his offering to pistol Gow himself. After which his behaviour was such as made all the ship's crew resolved to be rid of him, and it was thought if they had not had an opportunity to send him away, as they did by the Bristol ship, they would have been obliged to have hanged him themselves. This cruel and butchery temper of Williams being carried to such a height, and so near to the ruin of them all, shocked some of them, and as they acknowledged gave some check in the heat of their wicked progress, and had they had an opportunity to have gone on shore at that time, without falling into the hands of Justice, it is believed the greatest part of them would have abandoned the ship, and perhaps the very trade of a pirate too. But they had dipped their hands in blood, and Heaven had no doubt determined to bring them, that is, the chief of them, to the gallows for it, as indeed they all deserved, so they went on.

When they put Williams on board the Bristol-man, and he was told what directions they gave with him, he began to relent, and made all the intercession he could to Captain Gow for pardon, or at least not to be put on board the ship, knowing that if he was carried to Lisbon, he should meet

with his due from the Portuguese, if not from the English; for it seems he had been concerned in some villainies among the Portuguese before he came on board the *George* galley. What they were he did not confess, nor indeed did his own ship's crew trouble themselves to examine him about it. He had been wicked enough among them, and it was sufficient to make them use him as they did. It was more to be wondered, indeed, that they did not cut him to pieces upon the spot and throw him into the sea, half on one side of the ship, and half on the other, for there was scarce a man in the ship but on one occasion or other had some apprehensions of him, and might be said to go in danger of his life from him. But they chose to shift their hands of him this bloodless way, so they double fettered him and brought him up. When they brought him among the men, he begged they would throw him into the sea and drown him; then entreated for his life with a meanness which made them despise him, and with tears, so that one time they began to relent. But then the devilish temper of the fellow over-ruled it again, so at last they resolved to let him go, and did accordingly put him on board, and gave him many a hearty curse at parting, wishing him a good voyage to the gallows, which was made good afterwards, though in such company as they little thought of at that time. The Bristol captain was very just to him, for according to their orders, as soon as they came to Lisbon, they put him on board the *Argyle*, one of His Majesty's ships, Captain Bowles commander, then lying in the Tagus, and bound home for England, who accordingly brought him home. Though, as it happened, Heaven brought the captain and the rest of the crew so quickly to an end of their villainies that they all came home time enough to be hanged with their lieutenant.

But to return to Gow and his crew. Having thus dismissed the Bristol-man, and cleared his hands of most of his prisoners, with the same wicked generosity he gave the Bristol captain thirteen cerons of beeswax, as a gratuity for his trouble and charge with the prisoners, and in recompense, as he called it, for the goods he had taken from him, and so they parted.

This was the last prize they took, not only on the coast of Portugal, but anywhere else, for Gow, who, to give him his due, was a fellow of council and had a great presence of mind in cases of exigence, considered that as soon as the Bristol ship came into the river of Lisbon, they would certainly give an account of them, as well of their strength, and of their station in which they cruised, and that consequently the English men-of-war (of which there are generally some in that river) would immediately come abroad to look for then. So he began to reason with his officers that the coast of Portugal would be no proper place at all for them, unless they resolved to fall into the hands of the said men-of-war, and they ought to consider immediately what to do. In these debates some advised one thing, some another, as is usual in like cases. Some were for going to the coast of Guinea, where, as they said, was purchase<sup>[103]</sup> enough, and very rich ships to be taken; others were for going to the West Indies, and to cruise among the Islands, and take up their station at Tobago; others, and not those of the most ignorant, proposed standing in to the Bay of Mexico, and joining in with some of a new sort of pirates at St. Jago de la Cuba, who are all Spaniards, and call themselves *Guarda del Costa*, that is Guard ships for the coast (though under that pretence they make prize of ships of all nations, and sometimes even of their own countrymen too, but especially of the English), but when this was proposed, it was answered they durst not trust the Spaniards. Others said they should go first to the islands of New Providence [Bahama Islands], or to the mouth of the Gulf of Florida, and then cruising on the coast of North America, and making their retreat at New Providence, cruise from the Gulf of Florida, north upon the coast of Carolina, and as high as the Capes of Virginia.

But nothing could be resolved on, until at last Gow let them into the secret of a project, which, as he told them, he had long had in his thoughts, and this was to go away to the North of Scotland, near the coast of which, as he said, he was born and bred, and where he said, if they met with no purchase upon the sea, he could tell them how they should enrich themselves by going on shore. To bring them to concur with this design, he represented the danger they were in where they were, the want they were in of fresh water, and of several kinds of provisions, but above all, the necessity they were in of careening and cleaning their ship; that it was too long a run for them to go to southward, and that they had not provisions to serve them till they could reach to any place proper for that purpose, and might be driven to the utmost distress, if they should be put by from watering, either by weather or enemies.

Also, he told them, if any of the men-of-war came out in search of them, they would never imagine they were gone away to the northward, so that their run that way was perfectly secure, and he could assure them of his own knowledge that if they landed in such places as he should direct, they could not fail of considerable booty in plundering some gentlemen's houses, who lived secured and unguarded very near the shore; and that though the country should be alarmed, yet before the Government could send any men-of-war to attack them, they might clean their ship, lay in a store of fresh provisions, and be gone. Beside that, they would get a good many stout fellows to go along with them upon his encouragement, so that they should be better manned than they were yet, and should be ready against all events.

These arguments and their approaching fate concurring, had a sufficient influence on the ship's company to prevail on them to consent, so they made the best of their way to the northward; and about the middle of January they arrived at Carristoun,<sup>[104]</sup> in the Isles of Orkney, and came to an anchor in a place which Gow told them was safe riding under the lee of a small island at some distance from the port. But now their misfortunes began to come on, and things looked but with an indifferent aspect upon them, for several of their men, especially such of them as had been forced or decoyed into their service, began to think of making their escape from them, and to cast about for means to bring it to pass.

The first to take an opportunity to go away was a young man who was originally one of the ship's company, but was forced by fear of being murdered (as has been observed) to give a silent assent to go with them. It was one evening when the boat went on shore, for they kept a civil correspondence with the people of the town, that this young fellow, being one of the ship's crew and having been several times on shore before, and therefore not suspected, gave them the slip and got away to a farm-house which lay under a hill out of sight. There, for two or three pieces-of-eight, he got a horse, and soon by that means escaped to Kirkwall, a market town and chief of the Orkneys, about twelve miles from the place where the ship lay. As soon as he came there he surrendered himself to the Government, desiring protection, and informed them who Gow was, and what the ship's crew were, and upon what business they were abroad, with what else he knew of their designs, as to plundering the gentlemen's houses, etc. Upon this they immediately raised the country, and got a strength together to defend themselves.

But the next disaster that attended the pirates (for misfortunes seldom come alone) was more fatal than this, for ten of Gow's men, most of them likewise forced into their service, went away with the long-boat, making the best of their way for the mainland of Scotland. These men, however they did it, or what shift soever they made to get so far, were taken in the Firth of Edinburgh, and made prisoners there.

Hardened for his own destruction and Justice evidently pursuing him, Gow grew the bolder for the disaster, and notwithstanding that the country was alarmed, and that he was fully discovered, instead of making a timely escape, he resolved to land, and so put his intended project of plundering the gentlemen's houses into execution, whatever it cost him.

In order to this he sent the boatswain and ten men on shore the very same night, very well armed, directing them to go to the house of Mr. Honeyman of Grahamsey, sheriff of the county, and who was himself at that time, to his great good fortune, from home. The people of the house had not the least notice of their coming, so that when they knocked at the door, it was immediately opened. Upon which they all entered the house at once, except one Panton, who they set sentinel and ordered him to stand at the door to secure their retreat, and to hinder any from coming in after them Mrs. Honeyman and her daughter were extremely frightened at the sight of so many armed men coming into the house, and ran screaming about like people distracted, while the pirates, not regarding them, were looking about for chests and trunks, where they might expect to find some plunder; and Mrs. Honeyman in her fright coming to the door asked Panton, the man who stood sentinel there, what the meaning of it all was. He told her freely they were pirates, and that they came to plunder her house. At this she recovered some courage, and ran back into the house immediately, and knowing where her money lay, which was very considerable and all in gold, she put the bag in her lap and boldly rushing by Panton, who thought she was only running from them in a fright, carried it all off, and so made her escape with the treasure.

The boatswain being informed that the money was carried off, resolved to revenge himself by burning the writings and papers, which they call there the charters of their estates, and are always of great value in gentlemen's houses of estates but the young lady, Mr. Honeyman's daughter hearing them threaten to burn the writings, watched her opportunity, and running to the charter-room where they lay, tied the most considerable of them up in a napkin and threw them out of the window, jumped out after them herself, and escaped without damage, though the window was one storey high at least.

However, the pirates had the plundering of all the rest of the house besides, and carried off a great deal of plate, and things of value, and forced one of the servants, who played very well on the bagpipes, to march along, piping before them, when they carried it off to the ship. The next day they weighed anchor, intending though they had cleaned but one side of the ship, to put out to sea and quit the coast. But sailing eastward, they came to anchor again at a little island called Calf Sound. And having some further mischief in their view here the boatswain went on shore again with some armed men; but meeting with no other plunder they carried off three women, whom they kept on board some time and used so inhumanly that when they set them on shore again they were not able to go or stand, and it is said one of them died on the beach where they left them.

The next day they weighed again, holding the same course eastward, through the openings between the islands, till they came off Ross Ness; and now Gow resolved to make the best of his way for the Island of Eday, to plunder the house of Mr. Fea, a gentleman of a considerable estate, and with whom Gow had some acquaintance, having been at school together, when they were youths. On the 13th of February in the morning, Gow appearing with his ship off Calf Sound, Mr. Fea and his family were very much alarmed, not being able to get together above six or seven men for his defence. He therefore wrote a letter to Gow intending to send it on board as soon as he should get into the harbour, to desire him to forbear the usual salutes, with his great guns, because Mrs. Fea his wife was so very much indisposed, and this as he would oblige his old school fellow; telling him at the same time that the inhabitants were all fled to the mountains, on the report of his being a pirate, which he hoped would not prove true. In which case, he should be very ready to supply him with all such necessities as the island would afford, desiring him to send the messengers safe back, at whose return the alarms of the people would immediately be at an end.

The tide it seems runs extremely rapid among those islands, and the navigation is thereby rendered very dangerous and uncertain. Gow was an able seaman, but was no pilot for that place,

and which was worse, he had no boat to assist in case of extremity, to ware the ship, and in turning into Calf Sound, he stood a little too near the point of a little island called the Calf, and which lay in the middle of the passage. Here his ship missing stays, was in great danger of going on shore; to avoid which, he dropped an anchor under his foot, which taking good hold, brought him up, and he thought the danger was over. Gow was yet in distress and had no remedy but to send his small boat on shore to Mr. Fea to desire his assistance, that is to say, to desire him to lend him a boat to carry out an anchor and heave off the ship. Mr. Fea sent back the boat, and one James Laing in it, with the letter already mentioned. Gow sent him back immediately with an answer, by word of mouth, viz., that he would write to nobody, but if Mr. Fea would order his people to assist him with a boat to carry out an anchor, he would reward them handsomely.

In the meantime Mr. Fea ordered his great boat, for he had such a one as Gow wanted, to be staved and launched into the water and sunk, and the masts, sails and oars to be carried out of sight. While this was doing Mr. Fea perceived Gow's boat coming on shore, with five persons in her. These men having landed on the main island, left their boat on the beach, and altogether marched directly up to the mansion house. This put him into some surprise at first, however, he resolved to meet them in a peaceable manner, though he perceived they were all double-armed. When he came up to them, he entreated them not to go up to the house, because of the languishing condition of his wife, who was already frighted with the rumours which had been raised of their being pirates, and that she would certainly die with the fear she was in for herself and family, if they came to the door.

The boatswain answered they did not desire to fright his wife, or anybody else, but they came to desire the assistance of his boat, and if he would not grant them so small a favour, he had nothing to expect from them but the utmost extremity. Mr. Fea returned that they knew well enough he could not venture to give them or lend them his boat or any help, as they appeared to be such people as were reported, but that if they would take them by force, he could not help himself. But in the meantime, talking still in a friendly manner to them, he asked them to go to a neighbouring house, which he said was a change-house, that is a public-house, and take a cup of ale with him. This they consented to, seeing Mr. Fea was alone; so they went all with him. In the meantime Mr. Fea found means to give secret orders that the oars, masts and sails of the pirates' boat should be all carried away, and that a quarter of an hour after they had sat together, he should be called hastily out of the room, on some pretence or other of somebody to speak with him; all which was performed to a tittle. When he was got from them, he gave orders that his six men, who before he had got together, and who were now come to him well armed, should place themselves at a certain stile behind a thick hedge, and which was about half way between the alehouse and his own house, saying that if he came that way with the boatswain alone, they should suddenly start out upon them both, and throwing him down, should seize upon the other, but that if all the five came with him, he would take an occasion to be either before or behind them, so that they might all fire upon them, without danger of hurting him.

Having given these orders, and depending upon their being well executed, he returned to the company and having given them more ale, told them he would gladly do them any service that he could lawfully do, and that if they would take the trouble of walking up to his house in a peaceable manner so that his family might not be frighted with seeing him among them, they should have all the assistance that was in his power. The fellows (whether they had taken too much ale, or whether the condition of their ship and the hopes of getting a boat to help them, blinded their eyes, is not certain) fell with ease into this snare, and agreed readily to go along with Mr. Fea; but after a while resolved not to go all of them, only deputed the boatswain to go, which was what Mr. Fea most desired.



A GANG OF MEN AND WOMEN TRANSPORTS BEING MARCHED FROM NEWGATE TO BLACKFRIARS

Chained neck to neck and hand to hand these wretches were led through the streets to Blackfriars Stairs, where they were taken aboard a barge and carried down the river to the vessel which was to transport them to America.

*(From the Newgate Calendar)*

The boatswain was very willing to accept of the trust, but it was observed he took a great deal of care of his arms, which were no less than four pistols, all loaded with a brace of bullets each, nor would he be persuaded to leave any of them behind him, no not with his own men. In this posture, Mr. Fea and the boatswain walked along together very quietly, until they came to the stile, having got over which Mr. Fea, seeing his men all ready, turned short about upon the boatswain, and taking him by the collar, told him he was his prisoner and the same moment, the rest of his men rushing in upon them, threw both down, and so secured the boatswain, without giving him time so much as to fire one pistol. He cried out, indeed, with all his might to alarm his men, but they soon stopped his mouth by first forcing a pistol into it, and then a handkerchief; and having disarmed him, bound his hands behind him and his feet together. Then Mr. Fea left him there under a guard, and with his other five men, but without arms, at least such that could be seen, returned to the alehouse to the rest. The house having two doors, they divided themselves and rushing in at both doors at the same time, they seized the four men before they were aware, or had time to lay hold of their arms. They did indeed what men could do, and one of them snapped a pistol at Mr. Fea, but it did not go off, and Mr. Fea at the same time snatching at the pistol to divert the shot if it had fired, struck his hand with such force against the cock, as very much bruised it.

They were all five now in his power, and he sent them away under a good guard to a village in the middle of the island, where they were kept separate from one another, and sufficiently secured. Mr. Fea then despatched expresses to the gentlemen in the neighbouring island to acquaint them with what he had done, and to desire their speedy assistance, also desiring earnestly that they would take care that no boat should go within reach of the pirates' guns. And at night Mr. Fea caused fires to be made upon the hills round him, to alarm the country, and ordered all the boats round the Island to be hauled up upon the beach, as far as it was possible, and disabled also, lest the pirates should swim from the ship, and get any of them into their possession.

Next day, the 4th, it blew very hard all day, and in the evening about high water, it shifted to W.N.W., upon which the pirates set their sails, expecting to get off and so to lay it round the island, and put out to sea. But the fellow who was ordered to cut the cable, missing several strokes, the cable checked the ship's way, and consequently on a sudden she took all aback. Then the cable being parted when it should have been held, the ship ran directly on shore on the Calf Island, nor could all their speed prevent it. With an air of desperation Gow told them they were all dead men, nor could it indeed be otherwise, for having lost the only boat they had, and five of their best hands, they were able to do little or nothing towards getting their ship off; besides, as she went on shore at the top of high water, and a spring tide, there was no hope of getting her off afterward. Wherefore the next morning, being Monday, the 15th, they hung out a white flag, as a signal for a parley, and sent a man on shore upon Calf Island, for now they could go on shore out of the ship at half flood.

Now Mr. Fea thought he might talk with Gow, in a different style from what he did before; so he wrote a letter to him, wherein he complained of the rude behaviour of his five men, for which he told him, he had been obliged to seize on them, and make them prisoners, letting him know that the country being all alarmed would soon be too many for him, and therefore advised him to surrender himself peaceably, and be the author of a quiet surrender of the rest, as the only means to obtain any favour; and then he might become an evidence against the rest, and so might save his own life. This letter Mr. Fea sent by a boat with four armed men to the island, to be given to the fellow that Gow had sent on shore, and who waited there; at the same time, he gave them a letter from Gow to Mr. Fea, for now he was humbled enough to write, which before he refused. Gow's letter to Mr. Fea was to let him have some men and boats, to take out the best of the cargo, in order to lighten the ship, and set her afloat; offering himself to come on shore and be hostage for the security of men and boats and to give Mr. Fea a thousand pounds in goods for the service. He declared at the same time, that if this small succour was refused him, he would take care nobody should better himself by his misfortunes, for rather than they would suffer themselves to be taken, they would set fire to the ship, and would all perish together.

Mr. Fea replied to this letter that he had a boat indeed, that would have been fit for his service, but that she was staved and sunk; but if he would come on shore quietly without arms, and bring his carpenter with him to repair the boat, he might have her. Mr. Fea did this to give Gow an opportunity to embrace his first offer of surrendering. But Gow was neither humble enough to come in nor sincere enough to treat with him fairly, if he had intended to let him have the boat; and if he had, it is probable that the former letter had made the men suspicious of him, so that now he could do nothing without communicating it to the rest of the crew. About four in the afternoon Mr. Fea received an answer to his last letter, the copy of which is exactly as follows:

From on board our Ship the

*Revenge*, Feb. 16th, 1725.

Honoured Sir,

I am sorry to hear of the irregular proceedings of my men; I gave no orders to that effect, and what hath been wrongfully done to the country, was contrary to my inclinations. It is my misfortune to be in this condition at present; it was in

your power to have done otherwise in making my fortune better. Since my being in the country, I have wronged no man, nor taken anything but what I have paid for. My design in coming was to make the country better, which I am still capable to do, providing you are just to me. I thank you for the concern you have for my bad fortune, and am sorry I cannot embrace your proposal as to being evidence, my people have already made use of that advantage. I have by my last signified my design of proceeding, provided I can procure no better terms. Please to send James Laing on board to continue till my return. I should be glad to have the good fortune to commune with you upon that subject. I beg that you would assist me with a boat, and be assured I do no man harm, were it in my power, as I am now at your mercy. I cannot surrender myself prisoner, I'd rather commit myself to the mercy of the seas; so that if you will incline to contribute to my escape, I shall leave my ship and cargo at your disposal.

I continue,

Honoured Sir etc.,

John Smith

Upon this letter, and especially that part wherein Gow desired to commune with him, Mr. Fea, believing he might do some service in persuading him to submit, went over to Calf Island and went on shore alone, ordering his boat to lie in readiness to take him in again, but not one man to stir out of her, and calling to Gow with a speaking trumpet desired him to come on shore. This the other readily did, but Mr. Fea, before he ventured, wisely foresaw that whilst he was alone upon the Island, the pirates might unknown from him, get the ship by different ways, and under cover of shore might get behind and surround him. To prevent which, he set a man upon the top of his own house, which was on the opposite shore and overlooked the whole island, and ordered him to make signals with his flag, waving his flag once for every man that he saw come on shore, but if four or more came on shore, then to keep the flag waving continually, till he (Mr. Fea) should retire. This precaution was very needful, for no sooner was Mr. Fea advanced upon the island, expecting Gow to come on shore to meet him, but he saw a fellow come from the ship, with a white flag, a bottle, a glass and a bundle, then turning to his own house, he saw his man make the signals appointed, and that the man kept the flag continually waving. Upon which he immediately retired to his boat, and he was no sooner got into it, but he saw five fellows running under shore, with lighted matches and grenadoes in their hands to have intercepted him, but seeing him out of their reach, they retired to the ship.

After this the fellow with the white flag came up and gave Mr. Fea two letters; he would have left the bundle, which he said was a present to Mr. Fea, and the bottle which he said was a bottle of brandy, but Mr. Fea would not take them, but told the fellow his captain was a treacherous villain, and he did not doubt that he should see him hanged, and as to him (the fellow) he had a great mind to shoot him; upon which the fellow took to his heels, and Mr. Fea being in his boat did not think it worth while to land again to pursue him. This put an end to all parley for the present, but had the pirates succeeded in this attempt, they would have so far gained their point, either that they must have been assisted, or Mr. Fea must have been sacrificed.

The two letters from Gow were one for Mr. Fea, and the other for his wife. The first was much to the same purpose as the former, only that in this Gow requested the great boat with her masts, sails and oars, with some provisions to transport themselves whither they thought fit to go for their own safety, offering to leave the ship and cargo to Mr. Fea, and threatening that if the men-of-war arrived (for Mr. Fea had given him notice that he expected two men-of-war) before he was thus assisted, they would set fire to the ship, and blow themselves up, so that as they had lived so they would die together. The letter to Mrs. Fea was to desire her to intercede with her husband, and plead that he was their countryman and had been her husband's schoolfellow, etc. But no answer was returned to either of these letters.

On the 17th, in the morning, contrary to expectation, Gow himself came on shore upon the Calf Island<sup>[105]</sup>, unarmed except for his sword, and alone, only one man at a distance, carrying a white flag, making signals for a parley. Mr. Fea, who by this time had gotten more people about him, immediately sent one Mr. Fea, of Whitehall, a gentleman of his own family, with five other persons well-armed over the island, with orders to secure Gow if it were possible by any means, either dead or alive. When they came on shore, Gow proposed that one of them, whose name was Schottary, a master of a vessel, should go on board the ship as hostage for this Gow's safety, and Schottary consenting, Gow himself conducted him to the ship's side.

Mr. Fea perceiving this from his own house, immediately took another boat and went over to the island himself, and while he was expostulating with his men for letting Schottary go for hostage, Gow returned, and Mr. Fea made no hesitation, but told him that he was his prisoner. At this Gow started and said that it ought not to be so, since there was a hostage delivered for him. Mr. Fea said he gave no order for it, and it was what they could not justify, and since Schottary had ventured without orders, he must take his fate, he would run the venture of it; but he advised

Gow, as he expected good usage himself, that he would send the fellow who carried his white flag back to the ship with orders for them to return Schottary in safety, and to desire Winter and Peterson to come with him. Gow declined giving any such orders, but the fellow said he would readily go and fetch them, and did so, and they came along with him. When Gow saw them, he reproached them for being so easily imposed on, and ordered them to go back to the ship immediately, but Mr. Fea's men, who were too strong for them, surrounded them and took them all. When this was done, they demanded Gow to deliver his sword, but he said he would rather die with it in his hand, and begged them to shoot him, but was denied; and Mr. Fea's men disarming him of his sword, carried him with the other two into their boat, and after that to the main island, where Mr. Fea lived.

Having thus secured the captain, Mr. Fea prevailed with him to go to the shore over against the ship, and to call the gunner and another man to come on shore on Calf Island, which they did. But they were no sooner there, but they also were surrounded by some men which Mr. Fea had placed out of sight upon the island for that purpose. Then they made Gow call to the carpenter to come on shore, still making them believe they would have a boat; and Mr. Fea went over and met him alone, and talking with him, told him they could not repair the boat without help and without tools. So persuading him to go back and bring a hand or two with him, and some tools, some oakum, nails, etc., the carpenter being thus deluded, went back and brought a Frenchman and another with him, with all things proper for their work. All of whom, as soon as they came on shore, were likewise seized and secured by Mr. Fea and his men.

But there were still a great many men in the ship, whom it was necessary to bring if possible to a quiet surrender; so Mr. Fea ordered his men to make a feint as if they would go to work upon the great boat which lay on the shore upon the island but in sight of the ship. There they hammered and knocked and made a noise as if they were really caulking and repairing her, in order to her being launched off and put into their possession; but towards night he obliged Gow to write to the men that Mr. Fea would not deliver the boat until he was in possession of the ship, and therefore he ordered them all to come on shore, without arms, and in a peaceable manner. This occasioned many debates in the ship, but as they had no officers to guide them and were all in confusion, they knew not what to do. So after some time bewailing their hard fate, and dividing what money was left in the ship among them, they yielded and went on shore, and were all made prisoners, to the number of eight-and-twenty, including those who were secured before.

Being now all secured and in custody in the most proper places in the island, Mr. Fea took care to give notice to the proper officers in the country, and by them to the Government of Edinburgh, in order to get help for the carrying them to England. The distance being so great, it took up some time; for the Government at Edinburgh not being immediately concerned in it, but rather the Court of Admiralty of Great Britain, expresses were despatched from thence to London, that his Majesty's pleasure might be known; in return to which, orders were despatched into Scotland to have them immediately sent up into England with as much expedition as the case would admit. Accordingly they were brought up by land to Edinburgh first, and from thence being put on board the *Greyhound* frigate, they were brought by sea to England. This necessarily took up a great deal of time, so that had they been wise enough to improve the hours that were left, they had almost half a year's time to prepare themselves for death, though they cruelly denied the poor mate of a few moments to commend his soul to God's mercy, even after he was half murdered before. They were most of them in custody the latter end of January, and were not executed till the 11th of June.

The *Greyhound* arrived in the river the 25th of March, and the next day came to an anchor at Woolwich; and the pirates being put into boats appointed to receive them, with a strong guard to attend them, were brought on shore on the 30th, and conveyed to the Marshalsea prison in Southwark, where they were delivered to the keepers of the said prison, and were laid in irons. There they had the mortification to meet Lieutenant Williams, who was brought home by the *Argyle* man-of-war, from Lisbon, and had been committed to the same prison but a very few days before.

Indeed, as it was a mortification to them, so it was more to him, for though he might be secretly pleased that those who had so cruelly, as he called it, put him into the hands of Justice by sending him to Lisbon, were brought into the same circumstances with himself, yet on the other hand, it could not but be a terrible mortification to him that here were now sufficient witnesses found to prove his crimes against him, which were not so easy to be had before.

Being thus laid fast, it remained to proceed against them in due form, and this took up some long time still. On Friday, the 2nd of April, they were all carried to Doctors' Commons, where the proper judges being present, they were examined; by which examination the measures were taken for the farther proceedings. For as they were not equally guilty, so it was needful to determine who it was proper to bring to an immediate trial, and who, being less guilty, were more proper objects of the Government's clemency, as being under force and fear and consequently necessitated to act as they did; and also who it might be proper to single out as an evidence against the rest. After being thus examined they were remanded to the Marshalsea. On Saturday, the 8th of May, the five who were appointed for evidence against the rest, and whose names are particularly set down in its place, were sent from the Marshalsea prison to Newgate, in order to give their information.

Being thus brought up to London, and committed to the Marshalsea prison, and the Government being fully informed, what black uncommon offenders they were, it was thought proper to bring



them to speedy justice. In order to this, some of them, as has been said, who were less criminal than the rest, and who apparently had been forced into their service, were sorted out, and being examined (giving first an account of themselves, and then of the whole fraternity) it was thought fit to make use of their evidence for the more clear detecting and convincing of the rest. These were George Dobson, John Phinnes, Timothy Murphy, and William Booth.

These were the principal evidences, and were indeed more than sufficient, for they so exactly agreed in their evidence, and the prisoners (pirates) said so little in their defence, that there was no room for the jury to question their guilt, or to doubt the truth of any part of the account given in. Robert Read was a young man, mentioned before, who escaped from the boat in the Orkneys, where he surrendered himself, after getting a horse at a farmer's house, and conveying himself to Kirkwall, the chief town of the said Orkneys. Nevertheless, he was brought up as a prisoner with the rest, nor was he made use of as an evidence but was tried upon most, if not all the indictments with the rest. But Dobson, one of the witnesses, did him the justice to testify that he was forced into their service, as others were, for fear of having their throats cut, as many had been served before their faces, and that in particular he was not present at, or concerned in any of the murders for which the rest were indicted. Upon which evidence, he was acquitted by the jury. Also he brought one Archibald Sutor, the man of the house said before to be a farm-house, as to whether the said Read made his escape in the Orkneys, who testified that he did so escape to him, and that he begged him to procure him a horse, to ride off to Kirkwall, which he did, and there he surrendered himself; also he testified that Read gave him (Sutor) a full account of the ship and the pirates that were in her, and what they were; and that he (Sutor) revealed it all to the collector of the Customs, by which means the country was alarmed, and he added, that it was by this man's means that all the prisoners were apprehended (though that was going too far, for 'tis plain, that it was by the vigilance and courage of Mr. Fea, chiefly, that they were reduced to such distresses as obliged them to surrender). However, it was true that Read's escape did alarm the country, and that he merited very well of the public for the timely discovery he made, so he came off clear as indeed it was but just, for he was not only forced to serve them, but as Dobson testified for him, he had often expressed his uneasiness at being obliged to act with them, and that he wished he could get away, and he was sincere in those wishes, as appeared by his taking the first opportunity he could get to put it in practice. This Dobson was one of the ten men who ran away with the pirates' long-boat from the Orkneys, and who were afterwards made prisoners in the Firth of Leith, and carried up to Edinburgh.

Gow was now a prisoner among the rest in the Marshalsea. His behaviour there was sullen and reserved, rather than penitent. It had been hinted to him by Mr. Fea, as by others, that by his behaviour he should endeavour to make himself an evidence against others, and to merit his life by a ready submission, and obliging others to do the like. But Gow was no fool, and he easily saw there were too many gone before who had provided for their own safety at his expense, and besides that he knew himself too deeply guilty of cruelty and murder to be accepted by public justice as an evidence, especially where so many other less criminals were to be had. This made him, with good reason, too, give over any thoughts of escaping by such means as that; and perhaps seeing so plainly that there was no room for it might be the reason why he seemed to reject the offer, otherwise he was not a person of such nice honour as that we should suppose he would not have secured his own life at the expense of his comrades. Gow appeared to have given over all thoughts of life, from the first time he came to England. Not that he showed any tokens of his repentance, or any sense of his condition suitable to that which was before him, but continuing sullen and reserved, even to the very time he was brought to the bar, when he came there, he could not be tried with the rest, for the arraignment being made in the usual form, he refused to plead. The Court used all the arguments which humanity dictates in such cases, [\[106\]](#) to prevail on him to come into ordinary course of other people in like government, laying before him the sentence of the law in such cases, namely that he must be pressed to death, the only torturing execution which however they were obliged to inflict.

But he continued inflexible, carried on his obstinacy to such a height as to receive the sentence in form, as usual in such cases. The execution being appointed to be done the next morning, he was carried back to Newgate in order to it. But whether he was prevailed with by argument and the reasons of those about him, or whether the apparatus for the execution and the manner of the death he was to die terrified him, we cannot say, but the next morning he yielded, and petitioned to be allowed to plead, and he admitted to be tried in the ordinary way. Which being granted, he was brought to the bar by himself and pleaded, being arraigned again upon the same indictment upon which he had been sentenced as a mute, and was found guilty.

Williams the lieutenant, who was put on board the Bristol ship (as hath been said) with orders to deliver him on board the first English man-of-war they should meet with, comes, of course, to have the rest of his history made up in this place. The captain of the Bristol ship, though he received his orders from the crew of pirates and rogues, whose instructions he was not obliged to follow, and whose accusation of Williams they were not obliged to give credit to, yet punctually obeyed the order, and put him on board the *Argyle*, Captain Bowler, then lying in the port of Lisbon and bound for England; who, as they took him in irons, kept him so, and brought him to England, in the same conditions. But as the pirates did not send any of their company, nor indeed could they do it, along with him to be evidence against him, and the men who went out of the pirate ship on board the Bristol ship, being till then kept as prisoners on board the pirate ship (and perhaps could not have said enough, or given particular evidence, sufficient to convict him in a course of justice), Providence supplied the want by bringing the whole crew to the same place; for Williams was in the Marshalsea prison before them, and by that means they furnished

sufficient evidence against Williams also, so that they were all tried together.

In Williams's case the evidence was as particular as in Gow's, and Dobson and the other swore positively that Williams boasted that after MacCauly had cut the super-cargo's throat imperfectly, he (Williams) murdered him, and added that he would not give him time to say his prayers, but shot him through the head. Phinnes and Timothy Murphy testified the same, and to show the bloody disposition of this wretch, William Booth testified that Williams proposed afterwards to the company that if they took any more ships they should not encumber themselves with the men, having already so many prisoners that in case of a fight they should not be safe with them; but that they should take them and tie them, back to back, and throw them all overboard into the sea.

It should not be omitted here also in the case of Gow himself (as I have observed in the introduction) that Gow had long meditated the kind of villainy which he now put in practice, and that it was his resolution to turn pirate the first opportunity he should get, whatever voyage he undertook, and that I observed he had intended it on board a ship in which he came home from Lisbon, and failed only for want of a sufficient party. So this resolution of his is confirmed by the testimony and confession of James Belvin, one of his fellow-criminals, who upon trial declared that he knew that Gow and the crew of the *George* galley had a design to turn pirates from the beginning, and added that he discovered it to George Dobson, in Amsterdam, before the ship went out to sea. For the confirmation of this, George Dobson was called up again, after he had given his evidence upon the trials, and being confronted by Belvin, he did acknowledge that Belvin had said so, and that in particular he had said that the boatswain had a design to murder the master and some others and run away with the ship. Being asked why he did not immediately reveal it to the master, Captain Ferneau, he answered that he heard Belvin tell the mate of it, and that the mate told the captain; but the captain made light of it. But the boatswain finding himself discovered, refused to go, upon which Gow was made second mate, and Belvin was made boatswain; and he had been as honest afterwards as before (whereas on the contrary, he was as forward and active as any of them, except that he was not in the first secret nor in the murders), he might have escaped what afterwards became so justly his due. But as they acted together, Justice required that they should suffer together, and accordingly, Gow and Williams, Belvin, Melvin, Winter, Peterson, Rowlinson and MacCauly, received the reward of their cruelty and blood at the gallows, being all executed together on the eleventh of June.

It happened that Gow being a very strong man, and giving a kind of spring, it so strained the rope that, on some people pulling him by the legs, it broke and he fell down, after he had remained about four minutes suspended. His fall stunned him a little, but as soon as he was taken up, he recovered himself so far as to be able to ascend the ladder a second time, which he did with very little concern, dying with the same brutal ferocity which animated all his actions while alive. His body hangs in chains over against Greenwich, as that of Williams does over against Blackwall.

[102]

The most northerly of the islands.

[103]

The word is here used in its original sense, indicating something acquired by seeking—or hunting—*pour chasser*.

[104]

The island of Carrick.

[105]

According to Johnson's *History of the Pirates* (Chap. XVIII) Gow's real motive for returning to the Orkneys was to wed a girl whose parents had repulsed him on account of his poverty. She was the daughter of one Mr. G—, a well-to-do man.

[106]

One of these humane arguments, according to Johnson, *op. cit.*, consisted in tying his thumbs together with whipcord, "which was done several times by the executioner and another officer; they drawing the cord until it broke."

## APPENDIX

*Although the several histories which are related within the compass of this Appendix do not so properly fall under the general title of this work (most of them having fallen out in a period of time long before that to which I have fixed the beginning of these memoirs of the unfortunate victims to public justice) yet there are two reasons which determined me to give these narratives a place in this collection. The first is that the wonders of Providence signalized in these transactions might hereby be recorded and preserved to posterity; and the other, that from the perusal the wicked might be deterred from pursuing their vicious courses, from the prospect of those sudden, dreadful, and unexpected strokes which the best hid criminal practices have met with from the unsearchable conduct of Divine Justice. And as these arguments had weight*

*enough with me to engage me to the performance of this work, so I hope they will also incline my readers to peruse them with that improvement and delight which I have ever aimed to excite in the course of my labours.*

**A true and perfect account of the examination, confession, trial, condemnation and execution, of JOHN PERRY, his mother and brother, for the supposed murder of WILLIAM HARRISON, Gent.**

Upon Thursday, the 6th of August, 1660, William Harrison, steward to the Lady Viscount Campden, at Campden in Gloucester, being about seventy years of age, walked from Campden aforesaid to Charringworth, about two miles from thence, to receive his lady's rent; and not returning so early as formerly, his wife, Mrs. Harrison, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, sent her servant John Perry, to meet his master on the way from Charringworth. But neither Mr. Harrison nor his servant John Perry returning that night, early the next morning Edward Harrison, William's son, went towards Charringworth to enquire after his father. On the way he met Perry coming thence, and being informed by him that he was not there, they went together to Ebrington, a village between Charringworth and Campden, where they were told by one Daniel, that Mr. Harrison called at his house the evening before, in his return from Charringworth, but stayed not. Then they went to Paxford, about half a mile from thence, where hearing nothing of Mr. Harrison, they returned towards Campden. And on the way hearing of a hat, band and a comb, taken up on the highway between Ebrington and Campden, by a poor woman then leasing [gleaning] in the field, they sought her out. With her they found the hat, band and comb, which they knew to be Mr. Harrison's; and being brought by the woman to the place where she found the same, in the highway between Ebrington and Campden, near unto a great furze-brake, they there searched for Mr. Harrison, supposing he had been murdered, the hat and the comb being hacked and cut, and the band bloody, but nothing more could there be found. The news hereof coming to Campden, so alarmed the town that the men, women and children hasted thence in multitudes to search for Mr. Harrison's supposed dead body, but all in vain.

Mrs. Harrison's fears for her husband were now much increased, and having sent her servant Perry the evening before to meet his master, and he not returning that night, caused a suspicion that he had robbed and murdered him. Thereupon the said Perry was the next day brought before a Justice of the Peace; by whom being examined concerning his master's absence, and his own staying out the night he went to meet him, gave this account of himself. That his mistress sending him to meet his master, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, he went down Campden Field towards Charringworth about a land's length,<sup>[107]</sup> where meeting one William Read of Campden, he acquainted him with his errand, and farther told him that as it was growing dark he was afraid to go forwards, and would therefore return and fetch his young master's horse and return with him; he went to Mr. Harrison's court gate, where they parted. He stayed till one Pierce coming by, he went again with him about a bow's shot into the fields, and returned with him likewise to his master's gate, where they also parted; and the said John Perry averred that he went into his master's hen-roost, where he lay about an hour, but slept not, but when the clock struck twelve, arose and went towards Charringworth, until a great mist arising, he lost his way, and so lay the rest of the night under a hedge. At break of day on Friday morning he went to Charringworth, where he enquired for his master of one Edward Plaisterer, who told him he had been with him the afternoon before, and received three-and-twenty pounds of him, but stayed not long with him. He went to William Curtis of the same town, who told him he heard his master was at his house the day before, but being not at home, did not see him. After which he said he returned homewards, it being about five o'clock in the morning, when on the way he met his master's son, with whom he went to Ebrington and Paxford, etc. Curtis being examined, affirmed what Perry had said concerning them to be true.

Perry then being asked by the Justice of Peace how he, who was afraid to go to Charringworth at nine o'clock, became so bold as to go thither at twelve, answered that at nine o'clock it was dark, but at twelve the moon shone. Being further asked why returning twice home after his mistress had sent him to meet his master, and staying until twelve of the clock, he went not into the house to know whether his master was come, before he went a third time, at that time of night to look after him, he answered that he knew his master was not at home, because he saw a light in his chamber window, which never used to be there so late when he was at home.

Yet notwithstanding this that Perry had said about staying forth that night, it was not thought fit to discharge him until further enquiry was made after Mr. Harrison, and accordingly he continued in custody at Campden, sometimes in an inn there, and sometimes in the common prison, from Saturday, August the 18th, to the Friday following; during which time he was again examined at Campden, by the aforesaid Justice of Peace, but confessed nothing more than before, nor at that time could any further discovery be made as to what was become of Mr. Harrison. But it hath been said that during his restraint at Campden he told some (who pressed him to confess what he knew concerning his master) that a tinker had killed him; and to others he said that a gentleman's servant of the neighbourhood had robbed and murdered him; and others, again, he told that he was murdered and hid in a bean-rick in Campden, where search was in vain made for him. At length he gave out that if he was again carried before the Justice, he would discover that to him which he would not do to anybody else; and thereupon he was, on Friday, August the 24th, again brought before the Justice of Peace, who first examined him. And asking him whether he

would confess what had become of his master, he answered he was murdered but not by him. The Justice of Peace then telling him that if he knew him to be murdered, he knew likewise by whom he was, so he acknowledged he did, and being urged to confess what he knew concerning it, affirmed that it was his mother and brother that had murdered his master. The Justice of Peace then advised him to consider what he said, telling him that he feared he might be guilty of his master's death, and that he should not draw more innocent blood upon his head, for what he now charged his mother and brother with might cost them their lives. But he affirming he spoke nothing but the truth, and that if he were immediately to die he would justify it, the Justice desired him to declare how, and when they did it.

He then told him that ever since he came into his master's service his mother and brother had lain at him to help them to money, telling him how poor they were, and that it was in his power to relieve them by giving them notice when his master went to receive his lady's rents, for they would then waylay him and rob him. And further, he said that upon the Thursday morning, when his master went to Charringworth, going on an errand into the town, he met his brother in the street, whom he then told whither his master was going, and if he waylaid him he might have his money; and further said, that in the evening when his mistress sent him to meet his master, he met his brother in the street before his master's gate, going as he said to meet his master, and so they went together to the churchyard, about a stone's throw from Mr. Harrison's gate, where they parted. He going the footway beyond the church, they met again, and so went together the way leading to Charringworth, until they came to a gate about a bow's shot from Campden church that goes into a ground of the Lady Campden's, called the Conygree, which to those who have a key to go through the garden, is the nearest from that place to Mrs. Harrison's house. When they came near unto that gate, he (the said John Perry) said he told his brother that he believed his master was just gone into the Conygree (for it was then so dark they could not discern any man, so as to know him). But perceiving there was no way but for those who had a key through the gardens, he concluded it was his master who had gone through, and so told his brother if he followed him, he might have his money, and he in the meantime, would walk a turn in the fields. Which accordingly he did, and then followed his brother. About the middle of the Conygree, he found his master on the ground, his brother upon him, and his mother standing by. Being asked whether his master was dead, he answered, No, for that after he came to them, his master cried, *Ah, rogues! Will you kill me?* At which he told his brother he hoped he would not kill his master; his brother replied, *Peace, peace, you're a fool;* and so strangled him. Which having done, he took a bag of money out of his pocket, and threw it into his mother's lap; and then he and his brother carried his master's dead body into the garden, adjoining to the Conygree, where they consulted what to do with it, and at length agreed to throw it into the great pool by Wallington's Mill, behind the garden.

His mother and brother bid him go up to the court next the house, to hearken whether anyone was stirring, and they would throw the body into the pool; and being asked whether it was there, he said, he knew not, for that he left it in the garden, but his mother and brother said they would throw it there, and if it was not there, he knew not where it was, for that he returned no more to them, but went into the court gate, which goes into the town. He met with John Pierce with whom he went into the field, and again returned with him to his master's gate. After which he went into the hen-roost, where he lay until twelve o'clock at night, but slept not, and having, when he came from his mother and brother, brought with him his master's hat, band and comb, which he laid in the hen-roost, he carried the said hat, band and comb, and threw them after he had given them three or four cuts with his knife, in the highway, where they were after found. And being asked what he intended by so doing, he said he did it that it might be believed his master had been there robbed and murdered. And having thus disposed of his hat, band and comb, he went towards Charringworth, as hath been related.

Upon this confession and accusation, the Justice of Peace gave order for the apprehending of Joan and Richard Perry, the mother and brother of John Perry, and for searching the pool where Mr. Harrison's body was said to be thrown, which was accordingly done, but nothing of him could be found there. The Fish Pools, likewise, in Campden, were drawn and searched, but nothing could be found there either; so that some were of opinion that the body might be laid in the ruins of Campden House, burnt in the late wars, and not unfit for such a concealment, where was likewise search made, but all in vain.

On Saturday, August 25th, Joan and Richard Perry, together with John Perry, were brought before the Justice of Peace, who acquainted the said Joan and Richard with what John had lain to their charge. They denied all, with many imprecations on themselves if they were in the least guilty of anything of which they were accused, but John on the other side affirmed to their faces that he had spoken nothing but the truth and that they had murdered his master, further telling them that he could never be at quiet for them since he came into his master's service, being continually followed by them to help them to money (which they told him he might do by giving them notice when his master went to receive his lady's rents), and that meeting his brother Richard in Campden Town, the Thursday morning his master went to Charringworth, he told him whither he was going, and upon what errand; Richard confessed he met his brother that morning and spoke with him, but nothing passed between them to that purpose. Both he and his mother told John he was a villain to accuse them wrongfully, as he had done, but John on the other side affirmed that he had spoken nothing but the truth and would justify it to his death.

One remarkable circumstance happened in these prisoners' return from the Justice's house to Campden, viz., Richard Perry following a good distance behind his brother John, pulling a clout

out of his pocket, dropped a ball of inkle, [\[108\]](#) which one of his guard taking up, he desired him to restore it, saying it was only his wife's hair lace; but the party opening it, and finding a slip knot at the end, went and showed it unto John, who was then a good distance before and knew nothing of the dropping and taking up of this inkle. Being showed it, and asked whether he knew it, he shook his head and said, yes to his sorrow, for that was the string his brother strangled his master with. This was sworn upon the evidence at their trial.

The morrow being the Lord's day, they remained at Campden, where the minister of the place designing to speak to them, if possible to persuade them to repentance and a farther confession, they were brought to church; and in their way thither passing by Richard's house, two of his children meeting him, he took the lesser in his arm, and was leading the other in his hand, when on a sudden both their noses fell a-bleeding, which was looked upon as ominous.

Here it will be no impertinent digression to tell how the year before, Mr. Harrison had his house broken open between eleven and twelve o'clock at noon, upon Campden market-day, whilst himself and his whole family were away, a ladder being set up to a window of the second story, and an iron bar wrenched thence with a ploughshare, which was left in the room, and seven score pounds in money carried away, the authors of which robbery could never be found. After this, and not many weeks before Mr. Harrison's absence, one evening in Campden garden his servant Perry made a hideous outcry, whereas some who heard it coming in, met him running and seemingly affrighted, with a sheep-pick in his hand, to whom he told a story how he had been set upon by two men in white, with naked swords, and how he defended himself with his sheep-pick, the handle whereof was cut in two or three places, as was likewise a key in his pocket, which he said was done with one of their swords.

The passages the Justice of the Peace having before heard, and calling to mind upon Perry's confession, asked him first concerning the robbery, when his master lost seven score pounds out of his house at noon-day, whether he knew who did it? He answered, Yes, it was his brother, and being further asked, whether he was with him, he answered, No, he was at church, but that he gave him notice of the money, and told him in which room it was, and where he might have a ladder, that would reach the window; and that his brother after told him he had the money, and had buried it in his garden, and that they were at Michaelmas next to have divided it, whereupon search was made in the garden, but no money could be there found. And being further asked concerning the other passage, of his being assaulted in the garden, he confessed it was all a fiction, and that he did it having a design to rob his master, so that rogues being believed to haunt the place, when his master was robbed they might be thought to have done it.

At the next assizes, which were held in September following, John, Joan and Richard Perry had two indictments found against them, one for breaking into William Harrison's house, and robbing him of one hundred and forty pounds, in the year, 1659; the other for robbing and murdering the said William Harrison on the 16th day of August, 1660. Upon the last indictment, the judge of the assizes, Sir C. T., would not try them, because the body was not found; but they were then tried upon the other indictment for robbery, to which they pleaded not guilty. But someone whispering behind them, they soon pleaded guilty, humbly begging the benefit of his Majesty's gracious pardon and Act of Oblivion, [\[109\]](#) which was granted them. But though they pleaded guilty to their indictment, being thereunto promised (as probable) by some who are unwilling to lose time and trouble the Court with their trial as the Act of Oblivion pardoned them; yet they all afterwards and at their death, denied that they were guilty of that robbery, or that they knew who did it. Yet at his assize, as several credible persons have affirmed, John Perry still persisted in his story that his mother and brother had murdered his master, and further added that they had attempted to poison him in gaol, so that he durst neither eat nor drink with them.

At the next assizes, which was held the Spring following, John, Joan and Richard Perry were by the then judge of assize, Sir B. H., tried upon the indictment of murder, and pleaded thereunto severally not guilty. And when John's confession before the Justice was proved, *viva voce*, by several witnesses who heard the same, he told them he was then mad and knew not what he said. The other two, Richard and Joan Perry, said they were wholly innocent of what they were accused, and that they knew nothing of Mr. Harrison's death, nor what was become of him; and Richard said that his brother had accused others as well as him of having murdered his master, which the judge bidding him prove, he said that most of those who had given evidence against him knew it, but naming none, nor did any speak to it. And so the jury found them all three guilty.

Some few days after being brought to the place of their execution, which was on Broadway Hill, in sight of Campden, the mother, who was reputed a witch and to have bewitched her sons, so that they would confess nothing while she lived, was executed first. After which, Richard being upon the ladder, professed as he had done all along that he was wholly innocent of the fact for which he was then to die, and that he knew nothing of Mr. Harrison's death, nor what was become of him, and did with great earnestness beg and beseech his brother, for the satisfaction of the whole world and for his own conscience, to declare what he knew concerning him. But he, with a dogged and surly carriage, told the people he was not obliged to confess to them; yet immediately before his death, he said he knew nothing of his master's death, nor what had become of him but they might hereafter possibly hear.

Mr. Harrison's account of his being absent two years, and of his return home, addressed to Sir Thomas Overbery, Knight

Honoured Sir,

In obedience to your commands, I give you this true account of my being carried away beyond the seas, my continuance there and return home.

On Thursday, in the afternoon, in the time of harvest, I went to Charringworth to demand rents due to my Lady Campden, at which the tenants were busy in the fields, and were late ere they came home, which occasioned my stay there till the close of the evening. I expected a considerable sum, but received only twenty-three pounds and no more. In my return home, in the narrow passages amongst Ebrington Furzes, there met me one horseman, and said, *Art thou there?* and I, fearing that he would have rode over me, struck his horse over the nose, whereupon he struck me with his sword several blows, and ran it into my side, while I with my little cane made my defence as well as I could. At last another came behind me, ran me in the thigh, laid hold on the collar of my doublet, and drew me to a hedge near to the place. Then came in another. They did not take away my money, but mounted me behind one of them, drew my arms about his middle, and fastened my wrists together with something that had a spring lock to it, as I conceived, by hearing it give a snap as they put it on; then they threw a great cloak over me and carried me away.

In the night, they alighted at a hayrick, which stood near unto a stone pit, by a wall side, where they took away my money. This was about two hours before day, as I heard one of them tell the other he thought it to be then. They tumbled me into the stone pit. They stayed, as I thought, about an hour at the hayrick. When they took horse again, one of them bade me come out of the pit. I answered they had my money already, and asked what they would do with me, whereupon he struck me again, drew me out, and put a great quantity of money into my pockets, and mounted me again, after the same manner. And on Friday, about sunset, they brought me to a lone house upon a heath, by a thicket of bushes, where they took me down, almost dead, being sorely bruised with the carriage of the money. When the woman of the house saw that I could neither stand nor speak, she asked them whether or no they had brought a dead man? They answered, no, but a friend that was hurt, and they were carrying me to a surgeon. She answered, if they did not make haste their friend would be dead before they could bring him to one. There they laid me on the cushions and suffered none to come into the room but a little girl. There we stayed all night, they giving me some broth and strong waters.

In the morning, very early, they mounted me as before, and on Saturday night, they brought me to a place where were two or three houses, in one of which I lay all night on cushions by their bedside. On Sunday morning they carried me from thence, and about three or four of the clock, they brought me to a place by the seaside, called Deal, where they laid me down in the ground. One of them staying by me, the other two walked a little off to meet a man, with whom they talked; and in their discourse I heard them mention seven pounds, after which they went away together, and about half an hour after returned. The man (whose name, as I after heard, was Wrenshaw) said he feared I would die before they could put me on board; then they put me into a boat, and carried me on ship-board, where my wounds were dressed.

I remained in the ship, as near as I could reckon, about six weeks, in which time I was indifferently recovered of my wounds and weaknesses. Then the master of the ship came in and told me and the rest who were in the same condition, that he discovered three Turkish ships. We all offered to fight in defence of the ship and ourselves, but he commanded us to keep close, and said he would deal with them well enough. A little while after, he called us up, and when we came on deck we saw two Turkish ships close by us; into one of them we were put, and placed in a dark hold, where how long we continued before we were landed, I know not.

When we were landed they led us two days' journey, and put us into a great house or prison, where we remained four days and a half, and then came to us eight men to view us, who seemed to be officers. They called us and examined us of our trades and callings, which everyone answered. One said he was a surgeon, another that he was a broad-cloth weaver, and I, after two or three demands, said I had some skill in physic. We three were set by, and taken by three of these eight men who came to view us. It was my chance to be chosen by a grave physician of eighty-seven years of age, who lived near to Smyrna, who had formerly been in England, and knew Crowland in Lincolnshire, which he preferred before all others in England. He employed me to keep his still-house, and gave me a silver bowl, double gilt, to drink in. My business was most in that place, but once he set me to gather cotton wool, which I not doing he struck me to the ground, and after drew his stiletto to stab me; but I holding up my hands to him, he gave me a stamp and turned from me, for which I render thanks to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who stayed his hand and preserved me.

I was there about a year and three quarters, and then my master fell sick on a Thursday, and sent for me, and calling me, as he used, by the name of Bell, told me he should die and bid me shift for myself. He died on the Saturday following,

and I instantly hastened with my bowl<sup>[110]</sup> to a port almost a day's journey distant, the way to which place I knew, having been twice there employed by my master about the carriage of the cotton wool. When I came thither I addressed myself to two men who came out of a ship of Hamburg, which, as they said, was bound for Portugal within three or four days. I enquired of them for an English ship, they answered there was none. I entreated them to take me into their ship, but they answered they durst not, for fear of being discovered by the searchers, which might occasion the forfeiture, not only of their goods, but also of their lives. I was very importunate with them, but could not prevail. They left me to wait on Providence, which at length brought me another out of the same ship, to whom I made known my condition, craving his assistance for my transportation. He made me the like answer as the former, and was as stiff in his denial, until the sight of my bowl put him to pause. He returned to the ship, and after an hour's space came back again accompanied with another seaman, and for my bowl, undertook to transport me; but he told me I must be contented to lie down in the keel and endure much hardship, which I was content to do to gain my liberty.

So they took me on board, and placed me below in the vessel, in a very uneasy place, and obscured me with boards and other things, where I lay undiscovered, notwithstanding the strict search that was made in the vessel. My two chapmen who had my bowl, honestly furnished me with victuals daily, until we arrived at Lisbon in Portugal, where, as soon as the master had left the ship and was gone into the city, they set me on shore moneyless, to shift for myself. I knew not what course to take, but as Providence led me, I went up into the city, and came into a fair street, and being weary I turned my back to a wall, and leaned upon my staff. Over against me were four gentlemen discoursing together; after a while one of them came to me, and spake to me in a language that I understood not. I told him I was an Englishman and understood not what he spoke. He answered me in plain English, that he understood me, and was himself born in Wisbech, in Lincolnshire. Then I related to him my sad condition, and he taking compassion on me, took me with him, provided me with lodging and diet, and by his interest with a master of a ship bound for England, procured my passage; and bringing me on ship board, he bestowed wine and strong waters on me, and at his return gave me eight stivers and commended me to the care of the master of the ship, who landed me safe at Dover. From thence I made a shift to get to London, where being furnished with necessaries I came into the country.

Thus, honoured Sir, I have given you a true account of my great sufferings and happy deliverance by the mercy and goodness of God, my most gracious Father in Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, to whose name be ascribed all honour, praise and glory. I conclude and rest,

Your Worship's,

In all dutiful respect,

William Harrison

Before I part with this story, it is proper for me to remark that though it does not contain any extraordinary mark of the wisdom of Providence, yet being in its nature strange and hitherto having escaped any other collection, I thought it not improper to be preserved here, since some of the circumstances are of such a nature as not to be paralleled in any English story.

[107]

A local term for a strip of furrowed land.

[108]

A kind of broad linen tape.

[109]

Passed at the Restoration, in 1660, granting "free general pardon, indemnity, and oblivion for all treasons and state offences" committed between 1 Jan., 1637, and 24 June, 1660. The regicides and certain Irish priests were excepted.

[110]

That is, the silver-gilt one his master had given him.

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**A Relation of the Surprising Discovery of the Murder of MARY BARWICK, committed by WILLIAM BARWICK, her husband, on the 14th of April,**

## **1690, upon which he was convicted, at the Lent Assizes at York, before the Honourable Sir John Powell, Knight, then one of the Judges of Assize**

In the following relation, I have kept strictly up to the motives which I have mentioned in the beginning of this Appendix, and I hope that will atone for the inserting of this story, which I confess can be of no other use than to gratify the curiosity of the reader.

As murder is one of the greatest crimes that man can be guilty of, so it is no less strangely and providentially discovered when secretly committed. The foul criminal believes himself secure, because there was no witness of the fact. Not considering that the all-seeing eye of Heaven beholds his iniquity, and by some means or other bringing it to light, never permits it to go unpunished. Indeed, so certainly does the revenge of God pursue the abominated murderer, that when witnesses are wanting of the fact, the very ghosts of the murdered parties cannot rest quiet in their graves until they have made the detection themselves. Of this we are now to give the reader two remarkable examples that lately happened in Yorkshire, and no less signal for the truth of both tragedies, as being confirmed by the trial of the offenders at the last assizes held for that county.

The first of these murders was committed by William Barwick, upon the body of Mary Barwick his wife, at the same time big with child. What were the motives that induced the man to do this horrid fact does not appear by the examination of the evidence, or the confession of the party; only it appeared upon his trial that he had got her with child before he married her, that being then constrained to marry her, he grew weary of her, which was the reason he was so willing to be rid of her, though he ventured body and soul to accomplish his design.

The murder was committed on Palm Monday, being then the fourteenth of April, about two o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the said Barwick drilled his wife along until he came to a certain close, within sight of Cawood Castle, where he found the conveniency of a pond. He threw her by force into the water, and when she was drowned and drawn forth again by himself upon the bank of the pond, he had the cruelty to behold the motion of the infant, yet warm in her womb. This done, he concealed the body, as it may readily be supposed, among the bushes that usually encompass a pond, and the next night when it grew dusk, fetching a hay spade from a rick that stood in the close, he made a hole by the side of the pond, and there slightly buried the woman in her clothes. Having thus despatched two at once, and thinking himself secure, because unseen, he went the same day to his brother-in-law, one Thomas Lofthouse of Rusforth, within three miles of York, who had married his drowned wife's sister, and told him he had carried his wife to one Richard Harrison's house in Selby, who was his uncle, and would take care of her.

But Heaven would not be so deluded, but raised up the ghost of the murdered woman to make the discovery. It was Easter Tuesday following, about two-o'clock in the afternoon, that the aforementioned Lofthouse, having occasion to water a quickset hedge not far from his house, as he was going for the second pailful, an apparition went before him in the shape of a woman, and soon after set down against a rising green grass plot, right over against the pond. He walked by her as he went to the pond, and as he returned with the pail from the pond, looking sideways to see whether she continued in the same place, he found she did, and that she seemed to dandle something in her lap that looked like a white bag, as he thought, which he did not observe before. So soon as he had emptied his pail, he went into his yard and stood still to turn whether he could see her again, but she was vanished. In this information he says that the woman seemed to be habited in a brown-coloured petticoat, waistcoat and a white hood, such a one as his wife's sister usually wore, and that her countenance looked extremely pale and wan, with her teeth in sight, but no gums appearing, and that her physiognomy was like that of his wife's sister, who was wife to William Barwick.

But notwithstanding the ghastliness of the apparition, it seems it made so little impression on Lofthouse's mind that he thought no more of it, neither did he speak to anybody concerning it until the same night, as he was at family duty of prayers, when that apparition returned again to his thoughts, and discomposed his devotion; so that after he had made an end of his prayers, he told the whole story of what he had seen to his wife, who laying circumstances together, immediately inferred that her sister was either drowned or otherwise murdered, and desired her husband to look after her the next day, which was the Wednesday in Easter week. Upon this, Lofthouse, recollecting what Barwick had told him of his carrying his wife to his uncle at Selby, repaired to Harrison before-mentioned, but found all that Barwick had said to be false, for Harrison had neither heard of Barwick nor his wife, neither did he know anything of them. Which notable circumstance, together with that other of the apparition, increased his suspicion to that degree that now concluding his wife's sister was murdered, he went to the Lord Mayor of York. And having obtained his warrant, he got Barwick apprehended; who was no sooner brought before the Lord Mayor, but his own conscience then accusing him, he acknowledged the whole matter, as it has been already related, and as it appears by the examination and confession herewith printed.

On Wednesday, the 16th of September, 1690, the criminal, William Barwick, was brought to his trial before the Honourable Sir John Powel, Knight, one of the judges of the Northern Circuit, at the assizes held at York, where the prisoner pleaded not guilty to his indictment. But upon the evidence of Thomas Lofthouse and his wife, and a third person, that the woman was found buried in her clothes, close by the pond side, agreeable to the prisoner's confession, and that she had several bruises on her head, occasioned by the blows the murderer had given her to keep her



under water, and upon reading the prisoner's confession before the Lord Mayor of York, attested by the clerk who wrote the confession, and who swore the prisoner's owning and signing it for truth, he was found guilty and sentenced to death, and afterwards ordered to be hanged in chains.

All the defence that the prisoner made was only this, that he was threatened into the confession that he had made, and was in such a consternation that he did not know what he said or did; but then it was sworn to by two witnesses that there was no such thing as any threatening made use of, but that he made a free and voluntary confession, only with this addition at first, that he told the Lord Mayor he had sold his wife for five shillings, but not being able to name either the person or the place, where she might be produced, that was looked upon as too frivolous to outweigh circumstances that were too apparent.

The Examination of William Barwick, taken the 25th of April, 1690

Who sayeth and confesseth that he carried his wife over a certain wainbridge, called Bishop Dyke Bridge, between Cawood and Sherburn; and within a lane about one hundred yards from the said bridge, and on the left hand of the said bridge, he and his wife went over a stile, on the left hand of a certain gate, entering into a certain close, on the left hand of the said lane; and in a pond in the said close, adjoining to a quick-wood hedge, he did drown his wife and upon a bank of the said pond did bury her, and further, that he was within sight of Cawood Castle, on the left hand, and there was but one hedge betwixt the said close where he drowned his wife, and the Bishops Slates, belonging to the said castle.

William Barwick

*Exam, capt. did etc.*

*anno super dict.*

*coram me.*

*S. Dawson, Mayor*

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### **An Account of the Conviction and Execution of Mr. WALKER, and MARK SHARP, for the Murder of ANN WALKER**

I am conscious that my collecting these relations may expose me to the railery and ridicule of a very numerous tribe of wits in this age, who value themselves extremely on their contempt of supernatural stories, and their disbelief of all things which relate to apparitions or returns from that state in which souls go when they depart from the body. Yet the following story is so remarkable, the proofs so exceedingly cogent, and the mistakes made in the relation of it by various authors so likely, notwithstanding, to bring it in the course of time into discredit, that I thought I could not do a greater service to the public than to preserve it in its genuine purity, which I have had occasion to retrieve from the sight of some papers which related thereto, and from which the following account is written verbatim, without any alteration so much as in a letter.

About the year 1631, there lived in a place called Chester-in-the-Street, in the County Palatine of Durham, one Mr. Walker, a yeoman of good fortune and credit. He was a widower and kept a young woman, one Ann Walker, a relation of his, in his house as housekeeper. It was suspected, it seems, by some of the neighbours, that she was with child, immediately upon which she was removed to one Dame Cair's an aunt of hers in the town of Lumley, hard by. The old woman treated her with much kindness and civility, but was exceedingly earnest to know of her who was the father of the child with which she went, but the young woman constantly avoided answering that question. But at last, perceiving how uneasy the old woman was because she could get no knowledge how the poor babe was to be provided for, this Ann Walker at last said that he who got her with child would take care of both her and it, with which answer her aunt was tolerably satisfied.

Some time after, of an evening, her old master Walker, and one Mark Sharp, with whom he was extraordinarily intimate, came to her aunt's house and took the said Anne Walker away. About a fortnight passed without her being seen or heard of, and without much talk of the neighbourhood concerning her, supposing she had been carried somewhere to be privately brought to bed, in order to escape her shame. But one James Graham, a miller, who lived two miles from the place

where Walker's house was, being one night between the hours of twelve and one, grinding corn in his mill, and the mill door shut, as he came downstairs from putting corn into the hopper, he saw a woman standing in the middle of the floor, with her hair all bloody, hanging about her ears, and five large wounds in her head. Graham, though he was a bold man, was exceedingly shocked at this spectacle. At last after calling upon God to protect him, he, in a low voice, demanded who she was, and what she wanted of him. To which the woman made answer, *I am the spirit of Anne Walker, who lived with Walker at Chester-in-the-Street, and being got with child by him, he promised to send me to a private place, where I should be well looked to until I was brought to bed, and well again, and then I should come to him again and keep his house. And I was accordingly, late one night, sent away with Mark Sharp, who upon the moor, just by the Yellow Bank Head, slew me with a pick, an instrument wherewith they dig coals, and gave me these five wounds, and afterwards threw me into a coalpit hard by, and hid the pick under the bank. His shoes and stockings also being bloody he endeavoured to wash them, but seeing the blood would not go forth, he hid them there too. And now James Grime (so the country people pronounce Graham) I am come to you, that by revealing this bloody act my murderers may be brought to justice; which unless you do, I will continually pursue and haunt you.*

The miller returned home to his house very melancholy, and much astonished at this sight, yet he held his peace, hoping that if he did not reveal it she would go to somebody else. He was fearful of blasting the character of Mr. Walker, who was a man of substance, by telling such a tale concerning him to a Justice of Peace. However, he avoided as much as he was able being in the mill alone, especially at nights, but notwithstanding all his care, and though other persons were not far off, she appeared to him there again, and in a harsh tone demanded why he had not made known what she had spoken of to him. He made her no answer, but fled to the other end of the place where the people were. Yet some little time after, just after sunset, she met him in his own garden, and spoke to him with such a cruel aspect and with such fearful threats that he promised to go the next morning to a magistrate, which he accordingly did.

On the morrow, being St. Thomas's Day, he applied to a justice of the peace and told him the story. The justice having tendered him his oath, and taking his information in writing, forthwith issued his warrant, and apprehended Mr. Walker and Mark Sharp, who by trade was a collier, i.e., dug coals out of a mine. They made light of the thing before the justice, although he in the meanwhile had caused a place which Graham said the apparition had spoken of, to be searched, and there found the dead body, wounded in place and manner as before described, with the pick, the shoes and the stockings. However, Walker and Sharp were admitted to bail, and at the next assizes appeared upon their trial.

Judge Davenport heard the several circumstances of the woman's being carried out by Sharp, her being suspected to be with child by her master, Walker, and the story which Graham repeated exactly upon oath, as he had done before the justice. The foreman of the jury did depose that he saw a child standing upon the shoulders of the prisoner Walker, at the Bar, and the judge himself was under such a concern and uneasiness that as soon as the jury had found the prisoners guilty, he immediately rose up and passed sentence of death upon them, a thing never known before nor since in Durham, the custom being not to pass sentence until the close of the assizes.

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## **The Life of JACQUES PERRIER, a French Robber and Murderer**

As I have stepped in the former stories a little back in time, so in this I shall make bold to go out of our own nation, to relate a very extraordinary passage which happened at Paris in the beginning of the last century, because it will serve as a notable instance of that confusion and fear which guilt brings over the souls of the most hardened villains and thereby renders them often instruments of justice upon themselves; so that it seems not virtue only is its own reward, but vice also brings upon itself those torments which it ought to feel. Thus Providence ordereth, with inscrutable wisdom, that every man should feel happiness or misery according as his own demeanour serves. But it is now time that we hearken to the story.

It happened that a certain architect, who was in high esteem with the greatest nobles in France for his excellent skill in building after the Italian model, and had thereby obtained both a great reputation and a large estate, being a generous and charitable man, took into his house one Jacques Perrier, in the nature of an accountant, for the better ordering of his affairs. For the six years that this Jacques lived in his master's house, never any man was known to behave better or more commendably than he did. At length he married and had children, so that the master looking upon him as a staid discreet person, of whose fidelity he had indubitable proofs; he therefore gave him the charge of everything, when he went to a country house of his, a small distance from Paris, where he sometimes stayed for a week or so to unbend his mind and enjoy the benefit of the summer season.

At last, Jacques observing what great wealth he had acquired, began to be covetous and desirous of obtaining it; and after having cast it long in his head how he might obtain it, he at length resolved with himself to join with certain villains who at that time robbed in the streets and committed murders on the roads about Paris. Gaining notice of a house where such people frequented, he found ways and means to be admitted into the room where they had their consultations. And the person who introduced him having promised for his fidelity, they listened very attentively to the proposal which he promised to make them, and which after a little pause, he performed in these words. *My good friends, it is now upwards of six years since I have lived in*

*the service of a rich and eminent person. I thought that before this time I might have made my fortune under him, and therefore have hitherto served him faithfully and honestly; but finding my expectations herein deceived, I come to make you an offer which may enrich you all. He has a house in the country, whither he retires with his daughter and maid-servant only. These may easily be dispatched and then all his effects will be our own. I will venture to assure you, they will be worth ten thousand crowns.*

The thieves were not a little rejoiced at the thoughts of so extraordinary a booty, and therefore, after returning Perrier thanks, they readily embraced his motion and promised him whatever assistance he should require. It was not long before the unfortunate, gentleman went, as usual, with his daughter and her maid, to enjoy the pleasures of his rural habitation, leaving the direction of his affairs to Jacques, who no sooner saw him safe out of Paris, but he went to give notice to his associates that the time was now come to execute his bloody proposal. They quickly got all things in readiness, and as soon as it was evening, set out under the command of this desperate varlet to commit that horrible murder which he had contrived. Arriving at the house, Perrier knocked at the door; the maid knowing him, supposed some extraordinary business had brought him thither, and readily opened the door. But she was exceedingly surprised to find him followed by five ruffians oddly dressed, masked and with large staves in their hands. However, they did not give her much time to consider, but followed her immediately into the kitchen, where, by the direction of their abominable leader, they immediately, with many cruel blows, put her to death. From thence they went upstairs into the old gentleman's apartment, and found him sitting upon his bed. As soon as they entered, *Perrier*, said his master, *is it thus that you return that kindness with which I have always treated you. Did I not take you from misery and want. Have I not maintained you, and put it in your power to maintain your family? Will you repay this my charity with robbing me of all I have? Must the tenderness I have shown towards you draw upon me death from your hands, and do you not think that the same God who hath seen me cherish and relieve you, will not bring upon you condign punishment for this execrable villainy thou art going to commit?*

Perrier was sensible of the truth of what he said, but knowing it was impossible for him to go back, he gave a sign to the murderers to fall about the execution of their work; but the old man, who was too wise to expect mercy from their hands, endeavoured to lay hold of a halbert which stood in his room, designing therewith, as well as he could, to defend himself. But before he could get it into his hands the villains struck him down, and with thirty or forty wounds gave a passage for his soul into a better life.

The unfortunate young lady lay in the next room to her father's, and being already got to bed, heard with astonishment the execrable fact. However, full of fear and astonishment, she covered herself with the bed clothes, and endeavoured all she was able, to hide herself in the bed. But alas, her caution was to small purpose. Perrier knew too well the situation of all things to be deceived by so trivial an artifice, and therefore after pulling the bedclothes into the middle of the floor, he exposed, naked, to his fellow ruffians, the most beautiful young lady in France. In vain she fell upon her knees, and with all that tender elocution so natural to their sex when in distress, besought them that they would spare her life, which, as she said, could be of no benefit to them, and could only serve to increase the number of their sins; but they were too much flushed in cruelty and blood to give any attention to her entreaties, and so without respect either to the softness of her sex, or to her tender age, with a shower of blows from their clubs they laid her dead upon the floor. Being thus become master of the house, Perrier took the keys, and opening the several apartments, disclosed to them all the riches of his deceased master. They immediately brought away all the ready money they found in the house, which amounted to little less than ten thousand crowns. All the rich movables they conveyed away to a boat which they had prepared for that purpose, and had fastened in a creek of the river on a bank of which the house stood. They loaded and unloaded this vessel five or six times, for there was no hurry in carrying away the goods, seeing it was the dead time of the night, and when they had thoroughly plundered it of everything that would yield money, they then came away and went to the place where they laid up their spoils. There it was resolved to divide the booty, and Perrier claimed the largest share, as well in right of his having put them upon that project, as that he had assisted more strenuously in the execution of it than any of them; for when men associate themselves to commit wickedness, he who surpasses the rest in villainy claims the same reward, and from the same reasons, as he who in another society surpasses all his neighbours in virtue. When this execrable fact was over, and he had secured his share in the plunder, he returned home to the house of his master, and remained in carrying on the ordinary course of business of his master.

About two days after, it happened that a man who had business with the old gentleman called at his country house, and after knocking a good while at the door, finding that nobody answered, he went to town, and meeting with Jacques Perrier at his master's house, he told him of his calling upon him in the country, and that he found nobody there. Jacques counterfeited the greatest surprise at the news, and calling many assistants, went down immediately to his master's seat, and with all the seeming horror imaginable, became a second time a witness of those barbarities which he and his villainous associates had committed. At the sight of the murdered maid in the kitchen, he cried out with the greatest vehemence, and seemed in an agony of sorrow; but when he saw the body of his master, he roared and stamped, he cried out, tore his hair and threw himself upon the body as if he had never more intended to have drawn breath. All the persons he had carried with him were effectually deceived by his behaviour, and were under apprehensions lest his too violent grief should throw him into a fever or prompt him to lay hands upon himself. He was not contented with acting thus upon the spot, but resolved to play it over again when he

came back to Paris. There abundance of people pitied him, and looked on him as one whom the sincere love he had for his master had drawn to the utmost despair by reason of his unfortunate death.

But one of the old gentleman's relations, who was a man of more penetration than the rest, began to suspect his excessive affliction, and by his arguments drew another gentleman, who was also interested in the family affairs, to be of his opinion; whereupon Jacques was apprehended on suspicion and sent to prison. Solitude and confinement are often the roads to repentance and confession, for the vanities of the world being no longer before them, in such cases people are apt to retire into the recesses of their own breasts, and having no avocations from considering how they have spent their former years, the reflection often extorts truth which would never be by any other method discovered. But it was not so with Perrier. His dissimulation was of a stronger texture, and not to be broken even by sorrow and confinement. He not only continued to deny the knowledge of the murder, but also to lament the loss of so indulgent a master, with such floods of tears, and so many strong appearances of real sorrow and affection that, no proof appearing against him, the magistrates were afraid of having themselves reproached with injustice if they had not given him his liberty, to which, after six months imprisonment, he was restored.

The rest of the assassins seeing a long space of time elapsed, and that still not the least discovery was made of the murder, laid aside all fears of being taken, and began to appear more openly than hitherto they had done since the perpetration of that fact. But in the midst of their security the Providence of God forced them to betray themselves; for as the father, son and cousin, who were all concerned in the murder, were sitting with one Masson, another of the confederates, making merry at a public-house, on a sudden they turned their heads and saw ten or twelve archers or marshal's men (who have the same authority as constables in our country) who by chance met together and came into the house to drink. Guilt on a sudden struck the whole company with apprehensions that they were come in search of them, the fear of which made them throw down their knives and forks, leave what they had upon the table and fly with the utmost precipitation, as supposing they ran for their lives.

This extravagant behaviour struck the archers with amazement, and immediately calling for the landlord, they enquired of him what should be the sudden cause of this terror in his guests. He replied that it was impossible for him to tell certainly, but from discourse which he had heard, he took them to be persons of no very honest character, and from the great sums of money he had heard them count out, he was apprehensive that they had committed some robbery or other. There wanted not any farther account to stir up the archers to a pursuit, from whence they already assured themselves they should be considerable gainers, the thing speaking for itself, since honest people are not used to fall into such panics; but only guilt creates apprehensions in men at the sight of the ministers of justice. Immediately, therefore, the officers pursued them in the road they had taken, and the old man being less able to travel than the rest, in about two hours time they came up with him at the side of a rivulet, where, for very weariness he had stopped as not being able to cross it.

No sooner did they come up to him but he surrendered, and fear having brought a sudden repentance, he, without any equivocation, began to confess all the crimes of his life. He said that it was true they all of them deserved death, and he was content to suffer; he said, moreover, that in the course of his life he had murdered upwards of three-score with his own hands. He also carried the officers to an island in the river, which was the usual place of the execution of those innocents who fell into the hands of their gang, and acknowledged that of all the offences he had committed, nothing gave him so much pain as the having murdered a hopeful young gentleman (for the sake of a trifle of money which he had about him) by putting a stone about his neck and sinking him in the water.

Of the other three, two were apprehended, but the third made his escape and was running hastily with the news to Jacques Perrier and their other companions, but he was soon after seized, and carried to prison with the rest, none escaping from the hands of Justice but Masson and the cruel Perrier, the author of all this mischief. The three who were in prison endured the torture with the greatest constancy, absolutely denying that they knew anything of the murders and robberies which had been committed, yet when they were confronted by the old man, their courage deserted them, they acknowledged the fact, and judgment was pronounced upon them that they should be broke alive upon the wheel, before the house of the unfortunate architect whom they had murdered.

When they were brought there, with a strong guard, to suffer that punishment to which the Law had so justly doomed them, they appeared to be very penitent and sorrowful for their crimes, and one of them in particular did, with greatest vehemency, beseech the pardon of Almighty God, of the king his sovereign, and of his people whom he had so much injured, declaring that he could not die in peace without informing the multitude who were assembled to behold their execution, of a certain kind of villainy in which he was particularly concerned. He said it was his custom to watch about the sides of the road which lay near the woods, and that having a cord with him, he suddenly threw it about the neck of any passenger who was coming by, and therewith immediately strangled him before he was aware, or capable of resisting them, and if at any time there came by several passengers together who demanded what he did there, he replied that he was sent thither by his master to catch a cow; and his going in the habit of a peasant gave such an aspect of truth to the story that he was never suspected.

Though the concourse of people be generally very great, yet the assembly on this occasion was much larger than ordinary, and those who were spectators, contrary to the ordinary custom, showed but very little compassion at the miserable tortures which those wretches endured. On the contrary, they continually cried out that they should discover what was become of Perrier and their other accomplice, Masson. These unfortunate men continued to assert in their last moments that they knew nothing of either of them, but supposed that, hearing of their apprehension, they had immediately made their escape, and were retired as far as they were able from the danger. The people were infinitely satisfied with the death of these assassins, and nothing was wanting to complete the triumph of Justice but the apprehension of Perrier and his associate, to whose adventures it is now time that we return, in order to display the severe justice of Providence, and the admirable methods by which it disappoints all the courses that human wit can invent in order to frustrate its intent.

Masson had hid himself in a village not far from the city of Tours, where he concealed himself so effectually that the inhabitants had not the least suspicion of his being a dishonest man. On the contrary, he applied himself to an honest way of getting his livelihood, and after sojourning there for a considerable space, he married a young woman, with the consent of her parents, and seemed to be now established in a state of peace and security, if it were possible for a guilty soul to know either security or peace. A trivial accident, in which no man but Masson would have had a hand, proved the instrument by which he was drawn to suffering that cruel death which his companions had before undergone, and he so justly deserved.

There was, it seems, a young country fellow in the neighbourhood where Masson lived, who was just married, and according to a silly notion which prevails not only among the peasants of France but also among the clowns of all other nations in Europe, fancied himself bewitched by some charm or other, which rendered him incapable of performing the rites of his marriage bed. Masson thereupon offered, if he would give him a reasonable gratuity, to free him from this insupportable malady, and a bargain was accordingly struck for four crowns, two of which the fellow gave him in his hand, and two more were to be paid on the accomplishment of the cure, when there were no more complaints of insufficiency. Upon this he immediately demanded the other two crowns, which the other refused, and our infatuated thief brought the cause before the magistrates, where, when it came to be examined, it appeared plainly that Masson had bragged to his companions that he had wrought the charm, for the undoing of which he now claimed a reward. And as the Justice of the Court required, he was sentenced to be banished as a sorcerer, after being first whipped at all the cross-streets in town.

But behold the marvellous conduct of Divine Justice. He appealed from this sentence to the parliament at Paris, whither he was no sooner conducted under a strong guard, but he was immediately known to be one of that gang of assassins which had been executed for the murder of Perrier's master and family. Immediately he was charged with this fact, and the heirs of that unfortunate gentleman prosecuted their charge with such vigour that he received the like judgment, to be broken alive upon the wheel at the same place where his associates had suffered death; which sentence was rigorously executed five years after the perpetration of that execrable fact.

There remained nobody but Jacques Perrier, the author and contriver of this horrid villainy, who had not suffered according to their deserts. He, after hiding himself for a while, until he saw what became of his companions, hastily betook himself to flight, and endeavoured to fly into England, where, if he once arrived, he knew he should remain in safety. But in this attempt he was disappointed (although nobody pursued him), for being arrived at Calais, the same covetous and wicked disposition which had prompted him to murder so kind a master and all his family, egged him on to rob a certain rich merchant there, which villainous design he effected whilst the gentleman was at church. But he gained not much by that, for the booty being too large to be concealed, he was very quickly apprehended and for this fact condemned to be hanged. He had more wit, however, than his companion, Masson, and therefore never dreamt of appealing to the parliament of Paris, where he knew he should meet with the same fate which had befallen the rest of the gang. However, when he came to suffer that death which was appointed him by Law, he did not stick to acknowledge that execrable parricide which he had projected, as well as carried into execution; so that when the news reached Paris, it occasioned universal joy that not one of these bloody villains had escaped, but were so wonderfully cut off, when they themselves fancied the danger to be over.

The French author from whom I have transcribed this account hath swelled the relation with much of that false eloquence which was so common in the last age, not only in France, but throughout all Europe. Except that I have rejected this, I have been very faithful in this translation, the story appearing to me to be very extraordinary in its kind, and worthy therefore of being known to the public, since it will sufficiently declare that as vice prevails generally throughout all countries and climates, stirring up men to cruel and atrocious deeds, so the eye of Providence is continually watchful, and suffers not the blood of innocents to cry out for revenge in vain. It remains that I inform my readers that this villainy was transacted about the year 1611, and that Masson and Jacques Perrier suffered in the year 1616.

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**The Lives of ABRAHAM WHITE, FRANCIS SANDERS, JOHN MINES, *alias* MINSHAM, *alias* MITCHELL, and CONSTANCE BUCKLE, Thieves and Housebreakers**

Of these unfortunate lads, Abraham White was born of mean parents who had it not in their power to give him much education, but taught him, however, the business of a bricklayer, which was his father's trade, and by which, doubtless, if he had been careful, he might have got his bread. But he unfortunately addicting himself from childhood to drinking and lewd company, soon plunged himself into all manner of wickedness, and quickly brought on a fatal necessity of stepping into the road of the gallows; and associating himself with Sanders and Minsham, they had all gone together upon the road for about six weeks before they were taken.

Francis Sanders was a young fellow of very tolerable arts and education. He had been put out apprentice to a stay-maker, attained to a great proficiency in his trade; and by the help of his friends, who were very willing to lend him their assistance, he might have done very well in the world if it had not been for that unfortunate inclination to roving, which continually possessed him. His acquaintance with a certain bad woman was in all probability the first cause of his addicting himself to ill-courses, and as in the papers I have before me relating to him, her history is also contained, I thought it would not be unentertaining to my readers if I ventured to insert it. This woman's true name was Mary Smith. She was brought up, while young, from her native country of Yorkshire to London, where getting into the service of an eminent shopkeeper, she might, had she been honest and industrious, have lived easily and with credit; but unfortunately both for herself and her master's apprentice, the young man took a liking to her, and one night, having first taken care to make himself master of the key of her door, he came out of his chamber into hers, where after a faint resistance, he got to bed to her. Their correspondence was carried on for a good while without suspicion, but the young man having one night stole a bottle of rum with a design that it should make his mistress and he merry together before they went to bed, they inconsiderately drank so heartily of it that the next morning they slept so sound that their master and mistress came upstairs at ten o'clock, and found them in bed together. Upon this, the wench, without more ado, was turned out of doors, and was forced to live at an alehouse of ill-repute, where Sanders used to come of an evening, and so got acquainted with her.

John Minsham was an unfortunate wretch, born of mean parents, and equally destitute of capacity or education. From the time he had been able to crawl alone, he had known scarce any other home than the street. Shoe-blacks and such like vagabonds were his constant companions, and the only honest employment he ever pretended to was that of a hackney-coachman, which the brethren of the whip had taught him out of charity.

Thus furnished with bad principles, and every way fitted for those detestable practices into which they precipitated themselves, they first got into one another's company at a dram-shop near St. Giles in the Fields, much frequented by Constance Buckle, a most lewd and abandoned strumpet, and one Rowland Jones, a fellow of as bad principles as themselves. One night, having intoxicated themselves with the vile manufacture of the house, they went out, after they had spent their money, and in Bloomsbury Square attacked one John Ross, from whom they took away a hat value five shillings, and fourpence halfpenny in money. This man, it seems, lived the very next door to the gin-shop where they frequented. Going there the next day, to make complaint, he was immediately told that the people who had robbed him had sold his hat, and were coming thither by and by to drink the money out in gin. Upon this information Ross procured proper assistance, and the people keeping their appointment pretty exactly, were all surprised and taken.

In the confusion they were under when first apprehended, Minsham and Sanders in part owned the fact, but Rowland Jones making a full and frank discovery, was accepted as an evidence, and produced against them at their trial at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, where, upon full evidence, they were all convicted of this fact, and Francis Sanders, Constance Buckle, and Robert Tyler, were indicted for assaulting Richard Smith on the highway, putting him in fear, and taking from him a hat value five shillings.

Rowland Jones, the evidence, deposed that the night the robbery was committed he was in company with the prisoners at a brandy shop, where having drunk until they were all pretty much elevated, they went out in order to see what they could pick up. And not far from the place they went from, overtaking a man whom they saw had a pretty good hat on, Sanders hit him a blow in the face, and that not doing the business, he repeated it, and at the second blow, the hat fell off from his head, whereupon Constance Buckle caught it and clapped it under her coat. The constable deposed that by the information of Rowland Jones, he apprehended the prisoners. Constance Buckle acknowledged that she was in their company when the man was knocked down and the hat taken, whereupon the jury, without withdrawing, found them guilty, and they received sentence of death.

The woman Constance Buckle pleaded her being with child, and a jury of matrons being impannelled, they found she was quick, and thereby procured her a respite of execution, and soon after her sentence was changed to transportation. The rest, under conviction, behaved themselves very indifferently, and manifested sufficiently that though custom and an evil disposition might make them bold in the commission of robberies, yet when death looked them steadily and unavoidably in the face, all that resolution forsook them, and in their last moments they behaved with all the appearances of terror which are usually seen in souls just awakened to a due sense of their guilt. They died on the 23rd of December, 1730; White being eighteen, Sanders near eighteen, and Minsham sixteen years of age.

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