

173 Gadesby, Wm. Life, and Transactions, from the age of 17 to 28,
when he rec'd Sentence of death. 8vo, paper, 57 pp. Edinburgh,
1791.

AN ^{ew}
A C C O U N T
OF THE
LIFE AND TRANSACTIONS
OF
WILLIAM GADESBY,

FROM
THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN TO TWENTY-EIGHT;

WHEN

He was brought to Trial before the HIGH COURT
of JUSTICIARY, and received SENTENCE of
DEATH, on Tuesday, the 21st of December, 1790.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, WHEN IN PRISON.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN

A P P E N D I X,

CONCERNING

HIS CONFESSION of having Robbed the DUNDEE
BANK.

THE WHOLE CONTAINING

A NARRATIVE of the most extraordinary and
unexampled Depravity of Conduct perhaps ever
exhibited to the World.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM CREECH,
AND SOLD BY DUNLOP AND WILSON, GLASGOW; R. NICOL,
DUNDEE; ANGUS AND SON, AND A. BROWN,
ABERDEEN.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT has been found in every nation, that, as wealth and luxury increased, crimes have multiplied.

EVERY succeeding year shews us additional reasons, for an increasing vigilance and activity of police, to preserve our persons and our properties. Without a strict police, the blessings of civil society cannot be enjoyed; and all the exertions of industry and virtue may be defeated.

IN several late criminal trials, it has appeared, that this country is considered by atrocious villains, as a region yet unexplored, and open to depredations of every kind, with little risk of detection, or fear of punishment.

JOHN

JOHN BROWN, alias *Humphry Moore*, (than whom a more abandoned miscreant has feldom appeared,) declared this to be his belief, when he was examined on the trial of WILLIAM BRODIE ; and he acknowledged, that this opinion was the occasion of his coming to Scotland.——We meet with the same sentiment in the following sheets : and it therefore becomes highly necessary, to put the Public in general upon their guard against such an increasing evil ; and to give civil magistrates every information of nefarious characters, and of the arts which they practise to delude the unwary, and to perpetrate their villainous purposes.

THE following Narrative, written by the unhappy man, under an avowed sense of penitence, exhibits such a continued train of crimes, as can scarcely be credited. Ma-

ny of them the public know to be facts :
 —others cannot, however, be investigated ;
 nor will it now serve any purpose to do so :
 —But all are probable. It is, indeed, seem-
 ingly impossible, to conceive that he could
 invent such a variety of circumstances, and
 names of places and persons ; nor could he
 have any motive to make himself appear
 more wicked than he really was. Long after
 the Narrative was written by him, and when
 he was under sentence of death, he re-
 peated the accounts of many of the crimes
 here narrated, to the clergyman who attend-
 ed him during that awfully interesting pe-
 riod.

THE Narrative is taken from his own
 hand-writing ; with corrections only of the
 spelling, and of grossly vulgar provincial
 idioms and expressions.

T H E
L I F E A N D T R A N S A C T I O N S
O F

W I L L I A M G A D E S B Y,

W R I T T E N B Y H I M S E L F, I N P R I S O N.

I WAS born in the city of Litchfield, in the county of Stafford, of honest and creditable parents; who gave me education as far as their circumstances would allow. But being of a wild disposition, I gave little attention to my education. My uncle, who is a farmer in that county, took me under his charge at the age of fourteen; and having no child of his own, gave me great indulgence, till I became master of him, and then he sent me back to my father. I remained at home some time before I committed any act of theft. The first that I remember, was a pocket-book from a stationer's shop, which theft having reached my father's ears, I was severely beat for the crime.

At the age of sixteen my father bound me apprentice to a black-smith at Birmingham, and I behaved myself very well for a considerable time. But getting acquainted with a gang of thieves proved my ruin. I was well skilled in making locks and keys, and I made many false keys and picklocks for them. With the assistance of these they robbed many capital shops, and I got an equal share of their booty. My master getting intelligence of my connection with these people turned me off at the age of eighteen. I sometime after got the place of boot-catch to a great inn in Birmingham; and, being reckoned a clever lad, I was engaged by one Jenkins a player, and was to receive ten shillings a-week. I continued in this way five months, when my extravagance rendered the wages insufficient. I then engaged with a gentleman that was going to travel, and I went with him to France. My master finding the inconvenience of my not understanding the language, was for parting with me, but delayed for sometime till he should find one who would carry me back to England. My master being of a gay and dissipated disposition, and being desirous of
being

being acquainted with the manners of the country, frequently left to me the charge of his cloaths and money ; and particularly when he went out at one time with some companions, on a party of pleasure. I knowing that I was to leave him very soon, thought it was high time to make my market. I therefore immediately went off with his cloathing and money ; which last amounted to 307 guineas, and I arrived safe at Dover, and then at London. My unfettled mind and fear of detection would not allow me to stop there, and I took a passage in a vessel to Dublin. I there passed for a gentleman's son. I got acquainted with a young gentleman, and being very intimate in the family, in the course of three months I became the lover of his sister. All this scene I went through in the course of a year. But my money becoming low, I was obliged again to take to my shifts ; either to steal, or do what I could for money. I began to be a thief again: and to save my credit, I wrote and forged letters to my mistress, on pretence that I had received money from my friends to visit my father. But being detected in an act of theft, I durst no more write or approach the dwelling house of
my

my mistress, whose father threatened my life if I presumed to come near his house. I then tried my fortune through some parts of Ireland, but nothing remarkable happened.

I left Ireland in the twentieth year of my age, and came to England, to the town I was born in. My parents knew my bad character, and gave me little countenance. I therefore had my fortune to seek once more. On a Friday being market-day, I began to try my hand on picking pockets, and got a booty of sixteen guineas off a gentleman that I was well acquainted with. I then left the place, and soon got a companion of the same profession. We went together through the country, and committed numerous acts of theft. I was apprehended at Stafford for picking a man's pocket of nine guineas, and stood my trial, but got off, for being publicly whipped. Five weeks after I got my liberty, I was apprehended again for robbing a man of fifteen guineas, and stood my trial before Judge Buller, but got clear. I got a companion, and we then went to London together. There we committed many daring acts of theft and robbery, particularly one on a gentleman's carriage at

ten

ten o'clock. By mistake in the dusk my companion's pistol went off, and wounded me in the left hip. Finding London was too *sharp* for men of our trade, we determined to leave it. I was discovered, however, picking a gentleman's pocket of his purse, which contained seventy guineas, and, after some time, finding I was pursued and would be taken, I threw it away; but when taken I was sent to Tothill-Fields Bridewell, for three months. After I was in Bridewell, I sent for my companion, and he gave the jailor some money, and in less than fourteen days my liberation was obtained, on the footing of bad health. I left London four days after this, and went the direct road to Oxford; and I robbed two men on the road, but got very little from them. I became by this time very well known to the greatest part of the thieves in England, and was noted amongst them for picking both locks and pockets, and there were few that could surpass me.

I began to think it high time to alter my name, I therefore went under the name of JOHN SMITH, and made much booty in Oxford; but I left that city to go to a fair, to
see

see what I could get. The place was called Banbury about twelve miles from Oxford. I had not been long there before I joined a companion in the trade, and going together, we got some trifles from the multitude, but not sufficient to supply our greedy minds.

We were determined to have more before we left the place. We dined at an inn that day, and supped there likewise, but left the place at night, determining to rob some person. We lighted on a gentleman and a lady in a carriage, and got between sixty and seventy guineas, with a gold, and a silver watch. We then took the direct road for Birmingham, but nothing happened extraordinary on our travels; only that I stole two silver tankards at an inn at Coventry. When we came to Birmingham we got ready sale for the watches and plate.

Being too well known at Birmingham, I remained there but four weeks, during which time I drew up with a woman, and cohabited with her as man and wife. I left her, and took the road to Bath. At Gloucester I took a booty to the value of eighty guineas from a silver smith, and then altered my route, taking
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the stage-coach to Newmarket, where I had learnt the races were to begin the next week. Arriving there two days before the races, I went to the play, and got that night eighty guineas.

I passed my time here among the girls of the place, and for a month appeared in the habit of a gentleman, but got many a good beating. When I left this place, I had still remaining between seventy and eighty pounds, and was determined to see Bath. I went first to Bristol, and the night that I arrived there, I fell into company with three seafaring people, and won from them about 100l. at cribbage. The next day I went in the fly-coach to Bath. Here I began to think of a wife, as Bath was a place for a gentleman to make his fortune in that way, and I thought that I would try mine. I did all that lay in my power to get acquainted with the young gentlemen in the place, and soon got acquainted with Mr ——— a great merchant's son, who introduced me to a great deal of company. Being one night at the card-room, I had a great run of luck, and won near three hundred guineas from a young gentleman, but I being of a good natural temper, besides thinking it might serve o-
ther

ther good purposes, made him a present of a hundred pounds of the money. He was very grateful to me for my generosity, and invited me to his father's house. This invitation I accepted of, and got good entertainment from his parents. My first introduction was to tea, and I stayed supper. In the course of conversation I gave them a description of Ireland, as at this time, I passed for an Irish gentleman, under the name of Mr John Burke, from the city of Dublin. I visited this family very often, became very familiar in it, and attached myself to the young lady. I made her many valuable presents to ingratiate myself in her favour.

I committed few acts of theft this winter, for I had such luck at cards that I had no occasion to employ other means for supplying myself with money; one exploit, however, is worth mentioning, viz. the robbery of the stage between Cricklade and Bath. There were six passengers in all, and I got from them a sum of very near sixty guineas. Being thus at perfect liberty, and unsuspected, I used every endeavour to gain the favour and affection of the young lady above mentioned; and I succeeded so well, that she was always obliging
and

and remarkably civil to me. We frequently walked together in the country: But one day I unluckily happened to drop a letter out of my pocket from a man of my own profession, who was then a prisoner in Exeter jail; and I not missing it, she had an opportunity of perusing it, which made her acquainted with my true character. I did not fail to invent a number of stories, such as that it was a letter I had found, &c.; but all these were to no purpose, when she remarked that the direction was to me at my lodgings. This was the occasion of the match between us being broken off. I then thought my character would be blasted at Bath, and I resolved to leave it; but before I did leave it, I committed the vilest action of my life, which I think the greatest sin I have to answer for to God, and for which I feel the greatest affliction.—Having settled all my affairs, and paid for my lodging, &c. I contrived to send a letter to the young lady, requesting her to meet me that evening near a certain gate at nine o'clock that I might explain what had happened.—This she complied with. I tied my horse to the gate, and talked with her for some time;

and endeavoured to reconcile matters, but to no purpose. I then treated her very ill, mounted my horse, took the road for Birmingham, and never after heard of, or saw her.

I went the Marlborough road, and that night robbed the post, but got nothing of value. At Birmingham I went under the name of John Brown, and got intimate with a woman that kept a house of bad fame: She supplied me plentifully with money, and paid half-a-guinea a-week for my horse at the livery stables. I went to Litchfield races, where I lost all my money, and was again obliged to try my hand at my old trade. With a companion I there met, we robbed a gentleman of his purse containing 33 guineas. I returned again to Birmingham, and lived with the woman above mentioned for four months, during which time I committed many thefts. I was apprehended on suspicion of a robbery, and lay in jail eight weeks; but no proof coming out, I got clear. I then began to see, that, if I did not alter my course of life, I should

should soon be brought to the gallows. I now went northward, but without committing any great acts of theft for some time. At Carlisle I picked a gentleman's pocket of Scots notes and cash to the amount of 46 l. I then began to think of settling and returning to my own country. I engaged with a smith in Derbyshire, and worked with him soberly and diligently for some months; till having seduced a servant girl, her situation obliged me either to marry her, or leave the country. I therefore left my master, which I was then sorry to do, as he was making me a very capital workman, and went to the place where I was born. I there committed some small thefts, which obliged me to enlist for a soldier. I enlisted in the 7th regiment, or Royal English Fusileers, then recruiting in Litchfield, March 1784. I joined the regiment at Gloucester, and behaved myself very well for some months. Having been on a recruiting party at Leicester, and returning with the recruits through Birmingham, I fell in with some of my old companions; and on the last of the three nights we halted there, I was concerned in taking a trunk from

behind

behind a carriage. It contained wearing apparel of great value. I received my share of this booty, and proceeded on our march with the recruits the next day. After I had again joined the regiment, I began to dislike the military life, and I therefore deserted in February 1785, as I well remember, on the 5th day of the month. I went directly to find out my old companions at Birmingham; but I soon learned they were all in prison. I was therefore obliged to try my fortune in some other place. I then went to my parents, and imposed on them, by telling them I was behaving myself well. They did not know that I was a deserter; so that they furnished me with both money and cloaths. I soon left them, being determined to begin my old trade of thieving. I went directly for Derby, and on the night of my arrival there, I stole from a shop-keeper near six dozen of silk handkerchiefs, and then travelled the country as a hawker selling them. In this progress I got acquainted with a northern traveller, and soon after I was taken up at Nottingham for passing bad money, which I and my companion had made, and was sent

to

to jail. Not knowing me to be a deserter, the magistrates allowed me to enlist. I accordingly enlisted in the dragoons under the name of John Boodle, and got three guineas bounty-money. I joined the regiment at Stamford, and behaved myself well for some weeks. Being at drill one day with my horse, I received a hurt which disabled me from my duty, and occasioned my being sent on a recruiting party only nine miles from the place in which I was born. This made me think that if I stopped there I should be very soon apprehended. In the house where I was billeted, I picked the lock of my landlord's trunk, and took a suit of black clothes, and then deserted in July 1785. I left my quarters at twelve o'clock at night, leaving my regimentals in place of my landlord's black suit, thinking an exchange no robbery. I was determined to go to Birmingham again; but finding I could not reach it soon on foot, I took a horse from a stable about six miles from the place I left, and rode him many miles, and then turned him to grass; but whether his owner ever got him again I cannot tell. I got safe to Birmingham in the evening. Having little money, I began

began to try my hand at thieving again. Next morning I enquired for my old mistress, but she had left her former house. I found, however, one of my old companions, with whom I had done a deal of business. He got my cloaths changed as they were very remarkable. We then determined to travel together: But making farther enquiry after my late mistress, I found that she was doing extremely well; and he took me to her new house. When she saw me she fainted; for, as she afterwards said, she had heard that I had been hanged at Nottingham for coining. I stopped here all night, and when in bed, she begged me to give her the history of my last travels, which I faithfully did. She pitied my situation very much, and begged me to stay with her and travel no more. I promised to do so, and next day she cloathed me extremely well, and gave me a good watch. She never wanted money, for she had then ten of the finest girls in the place in her house. I went about more like a gentleman than the bully of a bawdy-house, and was known at this time by the name of John Brown, Esq. I staid two months with this woman,

woman, after which she was seized with a sudden fit of illness, and died. I gave her a decent burial, and ordered the girls to leave the house. I sold all the goods, and paid the landlord the house-rent, after which I had about 12l.

I sent for my last companion, and met him at the sign of the red lion at *Digbroth**. We then concerted what was to be done, and we agreed that the roads would be the best place we could go to. That same night we got three watches and near forty guineas. We sold the watches, but at astonishingly low prices. *If I had the King's crown of gold, I could sell it in Birmingham.* We left Birmingham, and went to Warwick; and there I altered my name again, calling myself John Booth, as that was my mother's maiden name. We committed here some few crimes, but not worth mentioning.

We went from Warwick, to Ipswich in Suffolk, where I contrived to pick a man's pocket of near an hundred and fifty pounds. We left the place that same night, and took
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* This is probably wrong-spelled; but not knowing the place, the original orthography is used.

the road to Cambridge. When we came there, I found that my companion was too well known, and we were obliged to take to some other quarter. I was desirous that he would go to Scotland, as I told him that was a very *flat place* *. He said he did not wish to go there, as he had been twice banished from the country already. We therefore agreed to go to the north of England, and first took the coach to Nottingham. Here I learned that *William Cook*, an old companion of mine lay under sentence of death. I went to see him next day, and finding him in a bad situation, I made him a present of two guineas. He begged of me that I would leave my way of life, and I promised to do so the first good booty that I made. I left him, but his situation and advice made no impression on me.

I left Nottingham, and then my companion and I went to Leeds fair. Here I picked a farmer's pocket of sixty guineas. We stopped four days, and returned on our road
to

* In the *slang* language, or that of thieves, a *flat* signifies an unguarded, unsuspecting person. A *sharp* is one who is on his guard, and is suspicious of roguery. Scotland therefore being termed a *flat* country, means, that the people are easily imposed upon, and not knowing in the tricks of sharpers and swindlers.

to Birmingham. We went by the way of Sheffield, and there I picked several pockets, but of no value. We went from thence in the coach to Leicester, and there we committed many robberies during our stay of seven weeks. The many robberies committed at Leicester, occasioned a strict enquiry to be made, and every stranger was apprehended, and I among others. My companion, however, got fortunately out of the way, otherwise it might have been very bad for us both. I was examined, and a silver watch found upon me; the maker's name and number of which being erased, and twenty-six guineas found in my pocket, occasioned great suspicion against me. But no clear evidence coming out, I escaped punishment. I was, however, sworn to, as a deserter from the 7th regiment, and I lay eight weeks and four days in prison, and then I was sent to join the regiment at Plymouth, near the Land's End of England. On the march from Gloucester to Exeter, at a place called Wellington, the money of our party ran low. I prevailed by my address in having my hand-cuffs taken off, as I could procure money, others could not. It was

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market-

market-day, and I went to the market-place amongst the farmers. I picked a farmer's pocket of eighteen guineas and seventeen shillings. There were three soldiers and a corporal with me. I gave them eight guineas, and kept the rest to myself. Besides I treated them that evening with six half crown bowls of punch, and we were all very merry. We proceeded the next day for Exeter, and there I was a prisoner under the 40th regiment. Nothing particular happened between Exeter and Plymouth barracks, where I arrived the first of November, 1785, and I think it was on a Sunday. I was committed to the black-hole, and was afterwards tried by a court-martial. Being a likely young man the major was not for punishing me, and I was only confined to the black-hole for five days. After this I behaved myself well, and was always reckoned a good clean soldier, and gained the good opinion both of the soldiers and officers of the regiment. I took up with a woman here, and lived with her as my wife, and she kept me in pocket-money and every thing I wanted. In the latter end of February I was ordered on a party, viz.

twenty-

twenty-five of our regiment, and twenty-five of the 22d regiment; to do duty on board a Dutch vessel that had got on shore. The ship being loaded with valuable goods, the country people were eager to plunder her. The name of the place where this happened is Padstow, and a good quarter it is for soldiers. The captain of the stranded vessel paid a shilling a day for each soldier. When I was on duty, I sold many of the things put under my charge; and the sailors knowing nothing of the language or manners of our country, it was easy to take them in. There were only two men on board that could speak any English at all. We remained here seventeen days, and when I marched to join the regiment again, I had in money twenty-four guineas and eleven dollars, besides some valuable goods. When we arrived at Plymouth-dock barracks, I went to my fair doxy, and she was very happy at my return and success. I now kept up the drinking scheme, and in four weeks I had not a penny left. As my pretended wife had at this time a house well furnished, I got her persuaded to sell all off, as I told her, it was impossible to carry household

hold goods or furniture on the march. She accordingly did as I wished, and after paying off every thing, she had fourteen pounds. This kept me in drink for a considerable time; but when it was all gone I made her sell her best cloaths. When I found I had got all that she had, and there was nothing more to expect, I turned her off, when we marched from Plymouth on the twenty-fifth of April 1786. Our route was for Scotland. Nothing remarkable happened till we came to Exeter, and there I picked the lock of one of my landlord's trunks, and took out of it half a guinea and some small silver. We marched next morning, and I heard nothing of the theft, as I suppose it would be some time before the money was missed. We arrived at Bath upon a Saturday, and were to halt all next day. In the house where I was billeted, I made a conquest of the maid-servant, and we slept together. She was determined to go with me, and be married, but her friends interposed. Indeed I only intended to have carried her on as long as her money and cloaths lasted. We proceeded from Bath to Gloucester, and there the regiment was reviewed.

When

When we left Gloucester, I carried two of my landlord's tea-spoons with me. At Worcester, however, I stole three dozen of women's gloves, some blue, some green, from a glover who lived in my landlord's entry. When we arrived at Birmingham I met with some of my old companions, and being offered some handsome presents, I chose a silver watch. They did every thing in their power to induce me to desert, but at that time I was bent upon Scotland. The regiment halted two days at Birmingham, and I did not pass that time without some acts of theft. In particular, my landlord being an engraver, I stole a large quantity of coat and waistcoat buttons. We came next day to my native place, and my parents were very happy to see me. They got leave from the major for me to stop a day with them, and to join the regiment the next, but I staid four days. I was now determined to desert, but my scheme reaching my father's ears, he threatened to have me taken up. But on giving me some guineas I promised to join the regiment, and accordingly, I overtook them at Matlock. The major, with whom I was a favourite,

did

did not confine me, but gave me a severe reprimand. The regiment went forwards, and I was never sober, till I had spent all my money. I was perfectly honest till we came to Leeds. There I stole from an inn a horn cup tipped with silver on the top and bottom, and also two silver spoons. I sold them that same evening to a person that I knew was accustomed to buy suspicious goods. At Darlington I met with one of my old companions, and he gave me two guineas. He is well known in Scotland, and is at the time I am writing this, a convict for Botany-bay.

I left Darlington next morning, and parted with my companion, but not without plenty of liquor. At Belford I was quartered in a shoemaker's house, and I stole from him the morning of our departure, a quantity of leather, which I sold at Berwick for twelve shillings. During our stop of some days at Berwick, I stole two silver cups, and sold them for two guineas. From thence we were marched to Musselburgh to remain some time. I was sent to Edinburgh for three days on a recruiting party, and there I got intimate in a public-

public-house in the Grafs-market, with a gentleman that suffered about two years ago.

When the party went back to Muffelburgh I sold a pair of new shoes to a country-fellow, and while he was busy trying them on, I picked his pocket of eight shillings. But he missing the money, it was with difficulty I persuaded him that he had left it at home. I then got three shillings for my shoes, which I thought were well sold. I was exceedingly sorry that I could not get his pocket-book for there were a good many notes in it.

I was soon after this sent with a working party to the north of Scotland. We left Muffelburgh in July, and were to go to Dunkeld. We went through Edinburgh, and while we stopped, I stole a shirt, a pair of women's black stockings, and a worsted night-cap, from a house in the Canongate. We went that night to Inverkeithing, after crossing the ferry. Here I sold the shirt for three shillings, and I stole a silk handkerchief from the house where we were drinking. We marched next morning, and reached Kinross, where I stole from my quarters a white stock and silver stock buckle. The next day we arrived at
Perth

Perth on the market-day, and there being a stage-doctor, I thought of trying my hand in the croud as I was short of money. The first thing I got my hand upon, was a woman's Bible, but it being covered, I took it for a pocket-book. Finding my mistake, I was resolved to try for something else, and got six pocket handkerchiefs, and at last a pocket-book, which contained some bills and two twenty shilling notes. Before I left the place I heard some person say that there was some pick-pocket about, and therefore I made off directly.

I went to my quarters, and gave my companion one of the notes to get silver, and I took the other myself for the same purpose. The woman of the house where I changed my note, asked if I would take five shillings of halfpence, which I agreed to. She left me in a small room while she went to fetch the change, and I stole from a cupboard a quantity of halfpence I saw there. I then went to my companion, and found he had got change, and gave him five shillings for his trouble. I also sold the Bible to my landlady for a pint of whisky. Not being contented with what
I had

I had gotten, I went back to the stage-doctor's, but found the multitude mostly gone. I went then to the flesh-market, and took a purse from a woman which had twelve shillings in it. My companion and I then went to a public-house, where we drank very heartily. We wanted to go to a house of bad fame, and I gave a barber half a crown to conduct us, and we staid till near three o'clock in the morning in the monster's. When coming home I broke the window-shutter of a shop, and got several things, particularly about thirty pieces of ribbons. We then went directly to our quarters, and left the place the next morning for Dunkeld. We came to a river close by that place, and I being much in liquor, I would not pay for the ferry, and was determined to ford the river. In attempting this, I was carried off my feet, and with the weight of my knapsack I certainly would soon have lost my life, if the boatmen had not come to my relief, and taken me up. I had at this time near two guineas in my pocket. When I recovered, I gave the two boatmen who had saved me, one shilling a-piece, and a shillings worth of whisky. I was

quartered at a public-house near the cross at Dunkeld, and met with very civil usage. We halted here on Sunday, and next day went to a place called Strathbrand.

At a place called Amulree we got our meal, viz. a peck a-week for each man.— While they were busy serving out the meal there, I slipped into another room, and stole a pair of womens shoes, with silver buckles, and a large mutton ham. I gave the ham to my companion to carry to quarters. We went into another room, and there we found under the bed a small barrel; which being examined proved to be whisky. I searched about, and found some empty bottles in a corner; and afterwards got a cock, and we tapped the barrel, and carried off five bottles each, which we concealed in the bag with our meal. It was not missed for some-time; but, shame to the party, one of them told the truth concerning this theft. But the whole, except this one, paid a shilling a-piece rather than see me sent off a prisoner; and I promised to pay them again.

I stopped here for ten days before I committed any other theft, only a single bottle
of

of whisky from a public-house. I then with my comrade stole from a green twelve shirts, two velveret waistcoats, and some stockings, and we hid them in a heap of stones. We were four weeks in this quarter; and in the course of that time we broke the house of one Catharine Gordon, and got some womens wearing apparel. I got *them* sold easily to a travelling man who went through the country.

I now got acquainted with a maid servant of the name of M'Leod, and was a great favourite with her. When we had got the goods which were concealed in the heap of stones made clean and ready by means of the soldiers wives, we were ordered to Blair of Athol; but we carried the goods with us.—We sold them afterwards to one F—— a change-keeper.

We stopped at a place about nine miles from Dunkeld, and there my companions and I stole a number of yards of linen then bleaching, with shirts, handkerchiefs, stockings, &c. But the shirts being given to one of the soldiers wives to pick the marks out, she was discovered by the landlord of our quarters; and

and a warrant being obtained for searching, the whole goods were found. We were taken prisoners that evening, and next morning were carried before a justice of the peace. The justice having been a late captain in the army, took the soldiers part, and told the people who had lost the goods, that they might be very well satisfied that they had recovered them. He then desired us to go with our party; but, before we went, he ordered us all four a dinner in the kitchen: and a very good one it was. Having some time to consider, we determined to have something more from his worship, and accordingly brought off two hams with us.

The Sunday following we went over a river to a small pretty village. We went to the change-house, and I picked the lock of a trunk, and got some shirts, and near forty shillings in silver. I gave two of my companions the shirts and sent them off. I and another staid behind to pay the reckoning, and we came off without discovery.

When I came home to quarters, I received a letter from my last-mentioned mistress,
(M'Leod,)

(M'Leod,) and that evening I wrote the following answer :

‘ Most adorable Kate !

‘ THIS is to inform you, that I received
 ‘ yours this day, and think if you comply to
 ‘ your letter, I am the happiest man in the
 ‘ world. For I can safely say that I have not
 ‘ had an hour’s pleasure since I saw you, and
 ‘ never shall till I have the pleasure of see-
 ‘ ing you again.—As it does not ly in my
 ‘ power to call upon you, please to do me the
 ‘ favour to leave your place, and bring all
 ‘ your cloaths with you, as I do intend to be-
 ‘ have myself as a man to you, and have got
 ‘ liberty to join with you in the holy state of
 ‘ matrimony.—This is all from a distract-
 ‘ ed lover ; and I do expect to see you in-
 ‘ stead of another letter.

WM. GADESBY *.

* As a specimen of his spelling and writing, an exact copy of this letter is subjoined.

‘ Most adorable Kate

‘ This Is to In Form you that I Received yours this Day and
 ‘ do Think that If you Comploy to your Liter, that I am th apest
 ‘ man

I gave this letter to the bearer of hers.— My companions and I then passed the evening (although it was Sunday) in drinking; and also sold six shirts to F—— before mentioned for nine shillings: and he told me, that whatever we got he would buy, as he had a friend in Perth who kept a pawn-broker's shop.

We attended to our work all the following week, but our money was all spent on Saturday night. We were therefore determined to try our hands again; and we went four miles into the country, and there broke a barn, and in a chest got four very good country blankets, and some sheets. We sold them the next day, which was Sunday, to F——. I went to my quarters that evening a little
the

‘ man In the world For I can safeley Say that I ave not ad a
 ‘ Howers Plefor Since I feed you Last and never shall Till I ave
 ‘ the Plefor of seeing you A gain. And as It Dus not Lay In
 ‘ my Power to Call on you Pleas to Do Me the Favour to Leave
 ‘ your Plase And Bring all your Clofe With, you. As I Do In
 ‘ tend to Beave My self As a Man to you And ave Got Liberty
 ‘ to Goine to you In that Holey State of Matermony This Is all
 ‘ From a Distracted Lover and Do Expect to see you In Sted of
 ‘ a Nother Liter

WM. GADESBY.

the worse of liquor, and my landlady told me that my wife was come. I told her I had a wife, but had left her to finish the harvest, and on going into the cow-house (or byre) I found Kate assisting my landlady's daughter in milking the cows. We were very happy at meeting, and the people behaved to her extremely well. One night, however, I came home in liquor, and I took all her cloaths, and sold them for three pounds to F——, and she had an excellent gold ring. The next day I got the landlady to turn her out of quarters, as I told her she was a bad woman; and accordingly that day we got her mobbed out of the place. She went off, and I never saw her again. I continued to drink till all this money was spent.

We were sent to a place called Dalnecardoch, to work on the roads; but I and eleven more went with the engineer forwards to Dalwhinnie, where we halted. There was a packman or pedlar in the house selling goods, and I thought of trying my hand upon him. Accordingly, I contrived to steal from him six yards of printed cotton, some ribbons, lace, and three handkerchiefs. But one of our
party

party finding out this theft, I was obliged to give him a large share to stop his mouth. The next day we advanced to where we were to work, and on the road stole a sheep from a sheeling, and brought it to our quarters, where it was cooked. The packman, however, missing the lace and some of the other things, followed us, and to prevent my going to goal, I gave all up to him that I had. We left our work the latter end of the year, and when we returned to Dunkeld, we got a good dinner from the Duke of Athole. That same night I was concerned in stealing some linen from the Commissary. Next day we went to Cupar of Angus, on our road to Dundee, to join the regiment. On this march I picked up some small things, and brought them safe to Dundee. I did no business there for some time, but about a month after we arrived, I was stopped for felling some wearing apparel, and being tried by a court-martial, I was sentenced to receive 800 lashes, but only got 250, and was kept in the black-hole ten weeks. But this punishment did not cure me of my disposition to thieving, for I picked a gentleman's pocket after this at Dundee. When I got my liberty,

liberty, I made my addressees to a decent servant girl; but when she knew of my character, and the punishment I had received, she left me, and it was well for her, for I would have been her ruin. I lived, however, with another woman as my wife, and left her when the regiment marched for Fort George. I behaved myself well there for twenty weeks. But one night I went to Campbletown, and stole some ducks, for which I received no payment but 200 lashes; and I was very ill after this punishment.

On our march southward by Banff, Aberdeen, and Montrose, I committed several thefts. We came again to Dundee, where we halted ten days, and during that time I committed several crimes. In particular, a brewerie, where we had intelligence that there was a deal of money in the counting-house. But after breaking the place we only got ten shillings. We had information that there was four hundred pounds there the night before. This was a great disappointment. When we came to Edinburgh castle I behaved myself well for some time. I do not choose to write any thing concerning my transactions at E-

E

dinburgh

Edinburgh, in my present situation. I came to the castle May 15, 1788. The regiment was reviewed the seventeenth of June on Bruntsfield-links, and on the twentieth I got acquainted with Margaret Hamilton whom I afterwards married, and have constantly adhered to since. I lived a sober life while in Edinburgh castle, but not without committing some *petty* crimes, such as shop-lifting.

We left Edinburgh to go to Glasgow, where we arrived some time in April 1789. I behaved well for a long time, and getting employment at Anderston, I could earn sometimes ten and fifteen shillings a-week. In Glasgow I got acquainted with a gang of thieves, as we all know one another by our language. My wife and I having once harboured them in our house, we were very uneasy that we could not afterwards keep them away. My wife bought a gown from one of them, and he being apprehended, told to whom he had sold the gown: she was confined for this, ten weeks.

During this time I began my old trade again, with some of the regiment, and some town blackguards. I dont think I would have done this if my wife had had her liberty.

The

The first night we went out we stole some whisky from a cellar; and the same week broke into a gentleman's house at Little Govan, and from thence got some wearing apparel, some ducks and fowls. On Saturday night that same week I and a townsman broke a house near St Andrew's church, and got some silver plate, and two new hats. We sold all the next day, as I was well acquainted where to dispose of them. *I never was in a town three days before I found out a place of that kind.*

The next week I and two of my fellow-soldiers broke the poor's house, and stole some clothes and shoes, and a plated tankard, which we thought had been silver.—The night following we went into the country, and broke into a house; and I going in, was obliged to return, on account of the intollerable smell.—On making enquiry afterwards, we found that it was the *unknown work* *.—We got nothing there, but we resolved to have something before we slept. We went half a mile further, and robbed a bleaching green of holland, dimitty, and stockings. We hid part
in

* This is supposed to be the Cud-bear manufactory.

in a hay-stack, where it was discovered next day, and the people got their own again.— On Saturday night we went to the country again, and got a number of fowls: some we sold, and used the rest.

A few nights after, I and two of my fellow-soldiers, broke into a cellar, and got a quantity of salted beef, bottled porter, and some whisky. Not satisfied with that, we broke another, and got a quantity of salt herrings.—The next week we broke into a cellar in the Calton, and got some bottled porter. The serjeant hearing of the bad way I was going on, and frequently seeing me in liquor, spoke to the officer, and I was ordered to join the party at Port Glasgow.

I left my wife in prison, after giving her what money I had, and marched with the party on Friday. On Monday I went to work in the dry-dock at Port-Glasgow, and got five shillings for two days. The next day I got nine shillings for nine hours heaving ballast into the ship British Queen. I sent my wife two shillings to get her tea and sugar.

Having spent all my money, I resolved to
try

try the country houses ; and I and my comrades committed several depredations in the neighbourhood.

We had formed a scheme for robbing a silver-smith's shop, but were prevented in the execution by some taylor's.—We afterwards broke a hard-ware shop, but what we got was of little value.

We were soon after this sent across the Clyde to work, but had to return every Saturday evening to show ourselves to the officer of the party on Sunday. My wife had now got her liberation, and had come to Port-Glasgow ; and I carried her with me across the river on the Monday morning.

I worked very hard for a fortnight, when we were ordered to join the regiment at Glasgow. When the party left Port-Glasgow, I was much the worse of liquor, and could not keep up. My wife and I, took twenty hours to travel twenty miles, but I joined on Sunday evening.

I now hired a room in the Gorbals, and continued there till I was sent to goal.—One night when I was on guard, my comrade and I broke open the window of a ware-
room

room, which we left, being afraid of being missed at the guard-room.

What had been done, being observed by some passengers, created an alarm, and information was sent to the guard-room. My comrade and I, among others, were appointed to the duty of guarding the broken shop. While we were stationed in the place, I picked one of the gentlemens pockets of a pair of new buckles and a pack of cards.—When my comrade and I were relieved from this duty, we contrived to break another warehouse in a different quarter, and got a great quantity of shawls. We could have done a deal more if it had not been so late in the morning, and a stir in the streets beginning at six o'clock.

After this we broke a ware-house in Stockwell street, and got a quantity of wine and rum in bottles. We got sale for the rum and the shawls, but we drank the wine.—My wife was very angry with me, and after this would not let me go out at night; so that what I did for sometime afterwards, was done the nights I was on guard. Accordingly, the next guard I was on, we stole some
falted

salted beef, and a quantity of bottled porter, and sold them next day for ten shillings.—Another guard I was on, my comrade and I opened a window, and took out of a house a man's coat, waistcoat, and breeches, which we sold the next day.—I now got my wife's mind reconciled to my going out at night.—I went one night with two more, but we got nothing. The next night, however, that we went out, we were more successful, and robbed a house about four or five miles from the town. There were four of us, and we brought away a quantity of wearing apparel, and some table-cloths, sheets, and blankets, &c.; part of which we hid in a hay stack, others we sold. Those left in the hay stack were discovered, and returned to the owners, as we heard*.

About four days after this, one of my companions came to my room, and desired me to go along with him to a place where there was plenty of geese. We went and
broke

* It appeared, however, on the trial at Glasgow, 29th of April, 1790, that one of the four had stolen the articles from the hay-stack: and one of his fellow-prisoners, then at the bar, said, *He indeed deserved to be hanged, for he had stolen from his friends.*

broke open the door, but he found no geese, but said there was a sow. I desired him to bring it out, but on kicking it, he heard the rattling of a large chain, and ran off. A few days afterwards we understood that it was a bear in the yard.

I and one of my companions went out another night, and we met a gentleman who gave us half-a-crown to convoy him home, as he was afraid from the numerous robberies that had lately happened. When we arrived at his house, he made us drunk, and then we were *determined* to break open some house. Accordingly, we forced open a window, and my companion going in, found it was a chapel or church, and nothing to be got but some candles and candlesticks.

The next week I and two more went out on the Kirkintilloch road, and we robbed a house of some linens and wearing apparel, and some fowls. We had some difficulty in carrying this booty so far, but we got all safe, and had ready sale the next day.— This kept us drinking for some days.

On going along the street one day, a soldier told me that one Dallas had been enquir-
ing

ing for me at the guard-house, and he informed me where he was quartered. I went and found him, and brought him to my room, and gave him the best I had, to eat and drink. He told me that Tennant was to be hanged*, and I was very sorry for it.—I got acquainted with these two men, when I was with the regiment in Edinburgh castle.

The night Dallas was in Glasgow, I and one of my companions stole a pocket-book from a merchant's counter, and we found only one twenty shilling note in it. Dallas called the next morning at my room, before he marched, and I gave him plenty of drink, and a shilling to put in his pocket. He went

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to

* Tennant is now a prisoner in Edinburgh jail. He was condemned to be hanged, but received a reprieve *sine die*. Dallas was at one time a prisoner with Tennant. When Dallas's period of confinement was out, it is said that he and one M'Donald contrived to send the next day a buttered roll to Tennant for breakfast, in the heart of which a spring-saw was concealed, and this was accidentally detected by the innerkeeper of the jail.—Dallas, who from eleven years of age had been convicted of many house and shop-breakings, but got off with small punishments on account of his youth, turned evidence against Gadesby, on the late trial when Gadesby was condemned. After Dallas had remained many weeks in prison, suspected of being an accomplice of Gadesby's, the discovery which brought on the late trial, was at last made by the means of Tennant.—Such is the picture of thieves!

to join his regiment, and I never saw him again till in Edinburgh.

One night in the Calton of Glasgow, I broke open a shop, and got ten shillings and six pence in the drawer, and brought away two cheeses, and some tea and sugar. There was a woman in the back-room, in bed, and I went and lighted a candle; but she was either so afraid, or so fast asleep, that I met with no disturbance.

A few nights after this, being on guard, a companion and I broke a hen-house in Gibson's wynd, and got three hens.—
I would advise all officers on guard to call the roll every hour, for we had plenty of liberty.

One evening, two of my companions came to my room, and asked if I would go and try some of the shops. Accordingly we went, and from a shop in the Gallow-gate got a dozen of silk handkerchiefs.

I was afterwards detected in stealing some ready-made shoes, and was sent to the guard-house; and I expected to be tried by a court-martial, but the man failing to prosecute, I got free.

The same night that I was released, I and one
of

of my fellow soldiers set out at ten o'clock for the country, and on our road we stopped a man. He had only a shilling and a few half-pence; and, telling a lamentable story, I gave him back his money, and with a kick, I bad him go home to his wife and family. We went forward to Anderston, but got nothing there. On the road to Woodside we got some fowls; but not contented with this, we broke into another house. I entered thro' the window of a washing-house, but we got nothing in it, except some bread and cheese: and there being a good fire, we sat down, and enjoyed ourselves for some time. We opened a door that led to the garden, and from thence we opened a back-window, and got some womens and childrens wearing apparel, as stockings, gowns, petticoats, &c. and the next day we sold the greatest part of them.

The next time I was on guard, I and one of my companions broke two windows, but got nothing worth mentioning. That same night we broke a cellar near the guard-house, and got some liquor. We could have got a great deal more here, but the people being alarmed, we made off.—We then went down

a clofe, and opened the window of a houfe belonging to one M'Alpin a baker. The firft thing I got was a great coat and fome blue cotton yarn. But while I was bufied picking the locks of a cheft of drawers; my companions begged of me to come out, as the people he faid were getting up.—We committed feveral other robberies both in town and country.

One night that I was on guard, I and two of my fellow foldiers broke a cellar, and got out of it a parcel of fmoothing irons, a falt tongue, and fome bottles of ale, and three of vinegar.—A few nights after we tried the country again, but got nothing but fome fowls.

On the 8th of March 1790, when I had come off guard, the town-officers came to my room to make a fearch for goods. They asked if I had ever fold any thing to ferjeant Crabb? I denied that I had:—But they fearched and found fome fhirts and linens, the marks of which had not been taken out. Crabb's wife fwore, that thofe found in her poffeffion ſhe bought from me: But I had only fold her two; the reft ſhe had bought
from

from my companions. The officers making a further search, found some table-cloths, which had been left at my house in order to be fold, at a time when I was on guard.

I was committed to prison to take my trial at the next assizes.

[GADESBY, in his manuscript, does not give an account of what happened at the circuit-court at Glasgow, in April; but this is supplied by the following note: which, indeed, verifies much of what he has above narrated.--Upon this trial, he turned evidence against his companions; but he seems to have been ashamed to confess it*.]

But

* On Wednesday the 28th of April, 1790, the Circuit Court of Justiciary was opened at Glasgow, before Lord Hailes and Lord Swinton. William Haines, soldier in the 7th regiment, then quartered there, was brought to the bar, accused of robbing a chapman near Anderston. The Advocate-depute passed from the trial on account of a defect in the execution of the indictment. The diet was deserted *pro loco et tempore*, and the prisoner recommitted.

The same day Janet Robertson, wife of William Tuffnal, soldier in the said 7th regiment, was brought to the bar accused of theft; but the same defect in the execution appearing, she was remanded to prison.

On Thursday the 29th of April, William Tuffnal, Henry Moss, Peter Hixon, John Hislop, and David Alexander Dunlop, all soldiers in the 7th regiment, were brought to the bar,
accused

But the war beginning, I was relieved to go abroad with the regiment for Gibraltar. — When we marched from Glasgow, our route was for Linlithgow. I was ordered to be confined in the guard house at every place till the regiment embarked at Leith. But understanding that my wife would not be allowed to go with me, I was determined to desert if a fit opportunity offered. I was under charge of a serjeant and twelve men, but I made my escape at night from them at Linlithgow, without either coat or hat. I took the direct road to Edinburgh, as at that time my wife was there with her father, who is a cow-feeder

er
accused of breaking into several shops and houses in Glasgow and the neighbourhood, and carrying off shirts, stockings, gowns, petticoats, yarn, &c. &c. Also accused of breaking into a cellar in that city, and stealing several box smoothing irons, a salt tongue, six bottles of ale, &c. Also accused of breaking into the house of Daniel M'Alpine, baker in Glasgow; — into the house of one Boutman at the south end of the new bridge; into Mr Colvill's cellar:—and stealing from these places a great number of articles. David Alexander Dunlop was also accused of having broke into a warehouse in the high-street of Glasgow.

Upon this occasion, Gadesby, their accomplice turned evidence against them, but from the defect in the execution of the indictment, which was; that one of the witnesses had stood on the pillory

er in Fountain-bridge. I ran about three or four miles, and then got the coultter of a plough, with which I opened a stable-door, and took a horse, which I rode a considerable way, and thereby prevented the party from overtaking me. I reached Edinburgh about five o'clock in the morning, and went straight to my father-in-law's house. My wife instantly got up, and I was soon provided with a coat and hat.—We then went together to Warrender's park, adjoining to Bruntsfield links. Here we sat down a long time to consider what was to be done.—My wife went to her father's to fetch me some breakfast, but when she arrived there, she found a party in search of me. They not being able to get any intelligence from her, they took her into custody, and kept her till the evening. When she was dismissed, she came to me; and

lory for adhibiting his name to false executions, the diet was deserted, and they were recommitted.

Soon after this, the armaments in the prospect of a war with Spain took place, and the 7th regiment was ordered to embark at Leith for Gibraltar. In consequence of which order the above-mentioned soldiers were liberated, in the view of their immediately embarking for Gibraltar. But Gadesby deserted on the march to Leith, and remained in this country to be hanged for future crimes.

and I was very impatient to learn what had passed.

We got a lodging the two following nights in Richmond-street, and then took a room near the Gibbet-toll; where we lived till the regiment was embarked, and had sailed from Leith for Gibraltar.

[*Here Gadesby's manuscript ends.*]

N O T E.

Some time after the embarkation of the 7th regiment at Leith, several house and shop-breakings happened in Edinburgh; and also some street robberies. This induced the magistrates to make a search. The constables with the proper officers attending, were desired to meet at twelve o'clock at night, on the 9th of August, and different parties allotted to search separate parts of the city, and to commit all suspicious persons for examination till next day. In consequence of this search, nineteen suspicious persons were committed, and among others William Gadesby, was seized by a very active and intelligent gentleman belonging to the Council Chamber, who went out to see what was passing in the street, till the constables should return from their duty. Gadesby was taken in the Cowgate, at the foot of the College wynd. His hair was untied, and he had a bludgeon in his right-hand. When he was seized he fell a trembling. He was conveyed to the guard, and on being searched, an open knife was found in his waistcoat pocket.

The two recent street robberies that had occasioned the search were;— first, that of a turnpike keeper, to the south of the city, whose watch and money had been taken, after he was knocked down, by two men. His watch was not pulled from his pocket, but cut out with a knife, and his breeches pocket was also cut, where his money was. These circumstances led to a strong

strong suspicion against Gadesby, next day upon his examination, together with his being known at the Council Chamber to be a deserter.

The other street robbery was that of Mr Logan on the south end of the mound of earth, leading from the Old to the New Town. This gentleman was most cruelly used, and was left for dead. His watch and money were taken.

Dallas was taken up the same night, but on examination denied all knowledge of Gadesby, and lay many weeks in prison on strong suspicion. He afterwards turned king's evidence against Gadesby as has been mentioned. [See note, page 40.]

When Gadesby understood, that Dallas had turned evidence against him, he gave himself up for lost; and desired permission to have pen, ink, and paper, that he might make a full confession of his crimes. It was during this paroxysm of despair and penitence that he wrote the foregoing Narrative.

William Gadesby was brought to trial before the High Court of Justiciary on Monday the 20th of December, 1790. He was indicted for three robberies, one theft, and a house-breaking, viz. 1st, for assaulting and robbing William Proctor on the 31st of July, at the back of the Castle, or the Castle-walk. 2^d, Thomas Elliot, near the Sciennes, or near the Archers Hall, on the 2^d of August. 3^d, James Logan on the Earthen Mound on the 4th of August. 4th, Of stealing a silver watch from Thomas Tate in the Cowgate; and 5th, of breaking into the house of William Lyon, at Kirkbraehead, and stealing a number of articles.

The jury returned their verdict next day, Tuesday the 21st of December, unanimously finding William Gadesby guilty of the 4th and 5th charges in the indictment; but finding the 1st, 2^d, and 3^d charges not proven.

This last part of the verdict was owing to Dallas his accomplice,

plice, being the only witnesses, and circumstances not strong enough to corroborate the testimony of such vicious evidence appearing,

The counsel for Gadesby pled an arrest of judgement with great ability.

The Lords ordered the objections and answers to be recorded, and delayed consideration of them till Friday the 25th.

On that day the Lords delivered their opinions at considerable length, on the objections stated by the counsel for Gadesby, and unanimously repelled them.

William Gadesby was then, with the usual awful solemnities, condemned to be hanged on Wednesday the 2d of February, 1791.

A P P E N D I X.

GADESBY, during his trial, behaved with seemingly great unconcern. About a fortnight preceding the day appointed for his execution, he gave hints that he would make discoveries of importance to the country before he died. He had been urged by a worthy clergyman, who attended Falconer and Bruce while in prison, who were hanged for robbing the Dundee bank, in February 1788, to say, if he knew any thing of that transaction:—Gadesby said, that in proper time he should have information*.——The
night

* On the 10th of January, Gadesby wrote a letter to Tenant, in which he says, “I must inform you, *that I nick Molly Blood.*” In the slang language this means, I shall cheat the gallows, or escape being hanged. From this it appears, that he had then hatched some scheme of escaping punishment.—In the same letter he mentions, “*A churey I have planked in my cefs:*” —that is, A knife, or instrument, I have concealed in my room. A search was made, and a piece of an iron hoop was found.

night immediately preceding the day for his execution, he desired to be furnished with pen, ink, and paper. He that night wrote a confession of his being concerned in the robbery of the Dundee bank, and named his accomplices. This written confession was given to the Lord Provost in the morning.—It demanded attention, as a rumour had been prevalent; that Falconer and Bruce were innocent of the crime for which they had suffered.

Gadesby's confession was conveyed to the crown lawyers, and from them to the Lords of Justiciary. The Lord Provost, and Sheriff of the county, were requested to examine Gadesby on this written confession. They did so, and Gadesby was pointed and circumstantial with regard to the robbery of the bank. He said he had but an hour or two to live, and could have no motive in deceiving them. He even offered to swear upon the Bible, that what he said was true; for, as a dying man, he wished to unburden his conscience.—The train of circumstances he narrated, the condescending on the persons concerned, and the manner in which he behaved

behaved himself within an hour or two of the time of his execution, induced the Lords of Justiciary very properly to suspend the execution till Wednesday the 23d of February, to give time to enquire into the truth of so singular a confession, and under such a combination of circumstances *.

Gadesby

* Whether the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary had a power by law, of suspending the sentence, has been much agitated; but surely the singularity of the case made it *expedient*: and it is somewhat extraordinary, that no case of a similar kind has occurred in the criminal records of this country. If the law has not provided for such a case, it certainly should. An innocent person by a train of evidence may be condemned, and within an hour of his execution his innocence may be made apparent:— Would any person say that a suspension of the sentence should not take place? It would require a week at least to apply to the royal prerogative, and have an answer, and the exigency of such a case would render that impossible:— is it not then common sense, that a suspension should be granted; and if the causes for granting it, are afterwards proved to be ill-founded, must there not be a power of taking it off?

The case of Tennant was very different: respite was granted by the secretary of state, on the 3d of February, 1790, to a certain day, to give time for receiving and considering the report of the Court. The report of the Court was sent up, but no answer was received on the day appointed for the execution, agreeable to the tenor of the respite.

The execution was therefore suspended till an answer was made.

Gadesby knew nothing of this resolution of the Lords of Justiciary to grant a respite. The guard surrounded the place of execution at the usual hour, and the whole apparatus, as on such solemn occasions, was ready: an immense multitude of spectators attended.

At the usual time that criminals come upon the platform, Gadesby said he was ready, and wished to die,—it was the happiest day of his life.—Three quarters of an hour after this, the respite was intimated to him, and he expressed dissatisfaction at it.—So extraordinary a case never before happened.

Mr George Williamson, king's messenger, was dispatched with a warrant to take up, and bring for examination, the persons named in Gadesby's information.—There were four persons named as concerned in the robbery of the bank: two at Dundee, one at Arbroath, and Gadesby himself.—Mr Williamson reached Dundee at five in the morning, the 3d of February. The watchman shewed him to the house he wanted, and the man was found quietly sleeping in his house, not dreaming of such a waking. He was conveyed

conveyed to prison, and Mr Williamson afterwards proceeded to Arbroath. There the person against whom he had a warrant was gone to sea. He returned to Dundee, where the streets were immenfely crowded from what had happened a few hours before. Mr Williamson brought his prisoner to Edinburgh next morning.—The other person in Dundee, against whom he had a warrant, was not to be found: he had left the place some time before.

The suspected person brought to Edinburgh by Mr Williamson, was examined in the Sheriff's chambers, on the forenoon of the 4th of February. Gadesby was brought from prison, hand-cuffed, in a chair, and was desired to pick out his accomplice, or accomplices, from a dozen of people assembled, the person from Dundee making one of them.

He was told to examine deliberately the whole people there assembled. He looked round and pitched upon one man. This person being removed, he pitched upon another. That one also being removed, he was desired to see if there were any more:—Looking
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ing round, he said, No more.—The two persons condescended on belonged to Edinburgh, His alledged accomplice from Dundee he did not know.

Nothing could prove more decisively, that all he had said was an artful contrivance to delay his execution.—He never afterwards spoke on this subject.

On Tuesday the 15th of February, the Lords of Justiciary met in the robing room, to take into consideration a petition, which had been presented to them by the council for Gadesby, stating,—That as William Gadesby had not been executed on Wednesday the 2d of February according to his sentence, he could not be proceeded against, unless upon a trial and conviction for a different crime than that for which he had formerly been tried: and, therefore, praying the Court, to recal their interlocutor, ordaining him to be hanged on the 23d of February.

The Court unanimously refused the desire of the petition.

On Tuesday the 22d of February he wrote his last speech and dying words, which he delivered to the inner keeper of the jail.—

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It coincides exactly with the foregoing Narrative, and is a strong testimony of the truth of what he has written.

On Wednesday the 23d of February, at two o'clock, afternoon, the guard, as usual, surrounded the place of execution. The prisoner was soon after brought on the platform.

The Magistrates attended about a quarter after two, and soon after Gadesby was brought upon the scaffold. He addressed the multitude in a long speech, delivered in a loud, firm tone of voice.—He went over almost the whole circumstances in the foregoing Narrative. He advised the officer on guard at the castle, to examine all chairs that went out at night, for he had often gone out in a chair unsuspected, and committed many thefts and robberies in and about Edinburgh which he had not before mentioned. He persisted to the last moment, that what he had said respecting the Dundee bank was true, and that Falkoner, Bruce, and Dick, were innocent of the crime. And this he again repeated when the night-cap was drawn over his eyes, and not a minute before the platform dropped.

