

*Some account of John Collington, who was executed at Maidstone in Kent, April 7, 1750, for hiring John Stone and William Luckhurst, to burn the Barns, &c. of Mr. John Clarke, of Throleigh.*

This man, whose whole life was a series of enormities, was notwithstanding seduced by no other temptation than the gratification of malice. It may be said of almost all other persons who have incurred capital punishment, either that they were actuated by the hope of getting money, which must be considered as a capacity to gratify every other desire, or that they were under the influence of some sudden and irresistible impulse, which hurried them into the commission of a crime, from which, if it had been delay'd a few minutes, they wou'd have been delivered by the predominance of humanity, or the return of reason: But Collington persisted in the exercise of deliberate, inflexible malevolence, and as far as it was in his power, to the last moment of his life.

He was the son of Mr. Collington, rector of Pluckley in Kent, a living, worth near 300 l. per Annum, who, besides, had a considerable paternal estate. At about 14 years of age he was put apprentice to a grocer in London, and for his misbehaviour turn'd over to another master, where he soon became insupportable, and was turn'd away; he afterwards lived with a grocer at Maidstone, who endured him 3 quarters of a year; his father next set him up in a well accustomed grocer's and chandler's shop in Rye, but he soon lost the trade, and removed to Charing in Kent, where the same ill conduct produced the same effect, and he was universally shunned and despised.

About this time, being a personable man, he married the daughter of counsellor Wheeler, who brought him 10 considerable a fortune, that a jointure of 1200 l. per Annum was settled upon her; by this wife he had 10 children, 4 of which are now living.

He wou'd not suffer his children to be baptised, and he buried the six that died in his own orchard, to save charges; he frequently beat his wife till her life was in danger, and kept her many days in a saw pit without any sustenance; to which he had no other provocation than her having interceded for her children, on whom he exercised great cruelty. Mrs. Collington being with child desired him to get her a partridge, which he did; but soon after it was brought in, he beat one of his children unmercifully, and resented the mother's intreaties to forbear, with such brutal cruelty, that he took the partridge when brought in to the table and gave it to his dogs. This treatment caused a miscarriage, and the next time she was pregnant he kicked her down stairs, and afterwards stamp'd on her breast; the bruise terminated in a cancer, and the cancer in her death; for this murder he would have been prosecuted, if he had not silenced the persons who alone were able to prove the fact, by giving them money.

About 14 years ago on the death of his father he removed to Throleigh, where great part of the estate to which he succeeded lay; at this place he lived as a gentleman farmer, and about 9 years ago married a second wife, the daughter of Mr. Franklyn of Rye. His behaviour here was such as made him feared and hated; he shot at many persons who came on his estate to seek for game, yet he constantly poached in other parts, particularly in the lady Rockingham's, who built a little house on her walk for a person to live in, to prevent his depredations; this house Collington hired Luckhurst, the evidence against him, to burn; who accordingly set it on fire, and was consumed to ashes.

The series of events that brought on his death, is equally wicked and astonishing. Collington not only refused to give his children any education, but even to provide them with the necessities of life; his eldest son, now about 16, who was heir to his mother's jointure and his father's real estate, he banished out of doors very young; and after begging some time the rest of the children were forced to do, he was employed the farmers, and is now a waggoner's mate; his second son, when about 22 years of age, he put into his saw-pit, and professedly intended to starve him to death; for discovering that he had been secretly conveyed to him by his servants, he banished the child out of doors in a transport of rage, and could not prevail upon, either by argument or intreaty, to give him again; the parish therefore had orders to provide the child, and Mr. Clark, the churchwarden, took him to his house; money for the child's maintenance was demanded of Collington, and upon his refusal to pay it, the

bench of justices granted a warrant of distress, which was levied by Mr. Clark and others. For this Collington vowed revenge, and accordingly soon after hired some outlaw'd smugglers to carry off Mr. Clark by force, and bring him to an appointed place, where they were to be met by Collington; this scheme was executed, Mr. Clark was forced out of his barn, and mounted behind one of the ruffians, from whom however he found means to escape into a farmer's house, tho' a carbine and pistol were discharged at him in his flight.

For this assault Collington was taken up, and as he refused to find securities for his appearance at the sessions, he was committed to Canterbury goal; while he was prisoner, he hired Stone and Luckhurst to burn Mr. Clark's barns, &c. which was accordingly effected, and for which Collington and Stone upon the evidence of Luckhurst, were convicted and executed.

Collington at his trial behaved with all the petulance of disappointed malice, he turned his back on the court, threatened his prosecutors, and insulted the judge. After his condemnation he continued implacable, and wish'd for life only that he might gratify his revenge.

April 12. Came on at Salisbury the tryal of 12 of the 18 Bristol rioters, removed hither by habeas corpus; the first Isaac Coles, after very full and clear evidence of his being one of the most active in cutting down a turnpike, was notwithstanding acquitted by the jury; next day William Denmeades, another principal rioter, was try'd by a new jury, and acquitted. Upon this the king's council found it was in vain to try any more. William Davis, being very old and deaf, was discharged, but the other 11 were bound over to appear at the next assizes to be held at Taunton to answer for misdemeanors. No bills were found against the other six.

#### PUBLIC AFFAIRS, March 31.

As to the affairs of the Dutch, and their reflections on what passes in the rest of Europe, we have nothing to offer concerning them than what is contained in the following extract of a letter from Amsterdam, dated March 30.

Our merchants now begin to hope that their grievances, which are without number, will be redress'd, since the prince Stadtholder has laid open the conduct of the Financiers, and has begun to cause report to be made to the States General, of the petitions which have been presented to him by different bodies of Tradesmen and Manufacturers, and are more than five hundred in number.

Our affairs in France go on but very indifferently, the ministers there shewing great backwardness to revive the Treaty of 1739, as we have been made to hope they would, in order to lull us asleep as usual. They now make our ships pay 50 sols per ton, and four sols per cent. They moreover prohibit the entry of our dry'd Herrings. What can we do in these affairs? We must submit, at least for a time, not being in a condition of doing ourselves justice. People are much surprized, that the court of France deters so long, under frivolous Pretences of ceremony, to send its ambassadors to Vienna and the Hague, and that these two courts have shewn no Impatience to send theirs to Paris; whereas the courts of Madrid, Versailles, and London, have already made each other this compliment.

The ministers of France, who reside in the several courts of the Empire, prove by their conduct, that the king their master foresees an event which will give fresh disturbance to all the powers of Europe. They labour with much more activity than ever to draw the courts where they reside, into the interest of France, and M. Follard goes from time to time to assist them therein; but it's confirm'd he has lost his labour at Munich, where there is no inclination shewn to come into the views of France.

March 26. They write from Malorslang, in the Parish of Kirbystevan, that one Richard Atkinson of that town, who is upwards of 100 years of age, has been married six times, and each time to a young woman, has now his present wife a downlying with child.

#### N. Y. - YORK, June 11.

Thursday last as Col. William Rickett, of Elizabeth-town, with his wife and family, were going home from this city in his own boat, accompanied by some of his friends, they unfortunately left the burgee flying at their mast head; and on their coming abreast of his majesty's ship Greyhound, then lying in North-river, a gun was fired from the Greyhound at her; but not apprehending it to be at them, took no notice of it, on which a second directly followed; and the shot passing thro' the