

**TEMPLE BAR: THE CITY GOLGOTHA.  
A NARRATIVE OF THE HISTORICAL  
OCCURRENCES OF A CRIMINAL  
CHARACTER ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
PRESENT BAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649371112

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**JAMES HOLBERT WILSON**

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TEMPLE BAR

*The City Golgotha.*

# TEMPLE BAR

## The City Golgotha.

A NARRATIVE OF THE HISTORICAL OCCURRENCES OF A CRIMINAL  
CHARACTER ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRESENT BAR.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

James Holbert Wilson

"I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good.—O! there were desolation  
of gaolers and gallowses!"—*Cymbeline*, Act V. Scene 4.

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

LONDON: DAVID BOGUE, 86 FLEET STREET.

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## PART I.

FROM THE RESTORATION OF CHARLES II., 1660, TO THE  
DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE, 1714.

TEMPLE BAR, the only survivor of the City bars and gates, has, on many occasions, obtained no inconsiderable share of public attention.

Placed between the liberties of the cities of London and Westminster, it sets to each a limit.

It stands alone—a monument of bygone days, an enduring record of the power of the Crown, and of the passions of the people—a memorial of a period when, to insure the security of the throne, the terrors of the law were alone relied upon, and humanity and compassion for human imperfections constituted no part of the criminal jurisprudence of the country.

Replete as this every-day scene is with reminiscences of the past, we have considered that half an hour might not be unprofitably employed in recalling some of those historical occurrences with which it has been associated.

We have, however, no intention of indulging our readers with antiquarian lore, of dwelling for one moment on its architectural proportions. Neither do we propose accompanying the herald in those gorgeous processions to which, at the sound of his trumpet, its gates have opened to admit the Sovereign, encircled by the chivalry of the Court, within the most loyal of all cities, the good city of London!\* “May peace be within her walls.”

The historical occurrences to which our attention will be limited are of a much less attractive character. We have to contemplate the frown, not the smile of royalty; to direct our attention from the crowded thoroughfare to the gloomy summit of the arch, to behold there in the vividness of mental vision what our forefathers, in the distinct reality of form, were forced to regard—those livid heads and dismembered limbs which, as terrible examples of hostile resistance to the power of the throne, have from time to time been affixed upon it. A practical commentary, illustrating in characters of blood the words of Solomon,—“Curse not the king, no not in thy thoughts; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.”

\* A work, we believe, is in the course of preparation by a gentleman fully qualified for the task he has undertaken, which will embrace both these subjects.



If, from the contemplation of this mournful subject, any suggestions should arise having a tendency yet further to ameliorate the criminal institutions of our country, to render them still more in accordance with the improved feelings of the great community in which we are living, we shall reflect with much pleasure on the time we have passed near the City Bar.

Old London Bridge, the southern entrance to the metropolis, had for many centuries been considered a locality advantageously adapted, from its public position, for striking terror into the hearts of the rebellious, by the display of the lifeless heads of those who had fallen under the severity of the laws—laws ruthlessly administered, and carried into execution with a barbarity the conception of which it is difficult at the present day to realise.\*

The head of the Scottish patriot, Wallace, and, subsequently,

\* In the reign of Edward IV. Thomas Burdet, Esq., of Arrowe, in Warwickshire, was beheaded for having used a coarse expression, the application of which had been erroneously applied to the person of the king. In the same reign, a tradesman, who kept a shop at the sign of the *Crown*, having said he would make his son heir to the Crown, this harmless pleasantry was interpreted to be spoken in derision of Edward's assumed title, and he was condemned and executed for the offence.

In the reign of Henry VIII, April 5, 1531, Richard Rose, a cook, was *boiled to death* in Smithfield, for poisoning several persons in the family of the Bishop of Rochester; an *ex post facto* act had been passed for this express purpose. Margaret Davy subsequently, on March 17, 1541, suffered a simi-

the heads of Sir Thomas More and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, had, amidst many others of scarcely inferior note, *graced, not disgraced*, the stern battlements of the Drawbridge Tower.

The restoration of Charles II. to the throne—in whose reign our narrative commences—had been accompanied by little amendment either in the criminal law or practice of the country; with few exceptions, the same severe enactments continued on the statute book; the same means as those adopted in the days of the Plantagenets and Tudors were still deemed essential to punish treason, or to deter from its commission.

It was the misfortune of the king, on his arrival in England, to receive from all classes of his subjects the most servile adulation. Endeared to them by the recollection of his past adversities, no

lar death in Smithfield, “for poisoning three households that she had dwelled in.”

This Act was repealed in the following reign. Burning females to death, however, continued, within the memory of the present generation, to be inflicted by the law for the crimes of high and petty treason. For the latter crime, the last to suffer in London was Catherine Hayes, burnt to death at Tyburn, May 9, 1726, for the murder of her husband; for the former, Catherine Murphy, for colouring a piece of metal to resemble a shilling—made high treason by the 15th and 16th George II. c. 28—was burnt in the Old Bailey, on the 18th March, 1789; by the humanity of the sheriff, she was, however, first strangled. By the 30th Geo. III. c. 48, this barbarous mode of punishment was abolished, and hanging substituted.

measures, however humiliating, were neglected to convince him of their sincere contrition for their former rebellious conduct. The clergy hastened to place his dethroned and beheaded father in the martyrology of the saints; the legislature, to decree that the day on which the "Sons of Belial" had imbrued their hands in his blood should ever after be observed as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation; and the lower orders, frantic with loyalty and the wine running from the conduits, "to throw up their caps, and cry 'God save his Majesty.'"

In this excited state of feeling an Act was passed, by which the judges who condemned the deceased monarch, and some others who had taken a leading part in the civil commotions of the last reign, were excluded from an indemnity which exempted from punishment many who had been less actively engaged in the stirring events of that period.

For this exception the nation were indebted more to the clemency of the Crown than to the merciful disposition of the Parliament.

By the operation of this Act, several of the persons we have mentioned were soon afterwards tried, condemned, and executed, and their heads affixed, *in terrorem*, on London Bridge.

That the sword of justice should descend on those alone whose lives had been prolonged to this period, was, however,