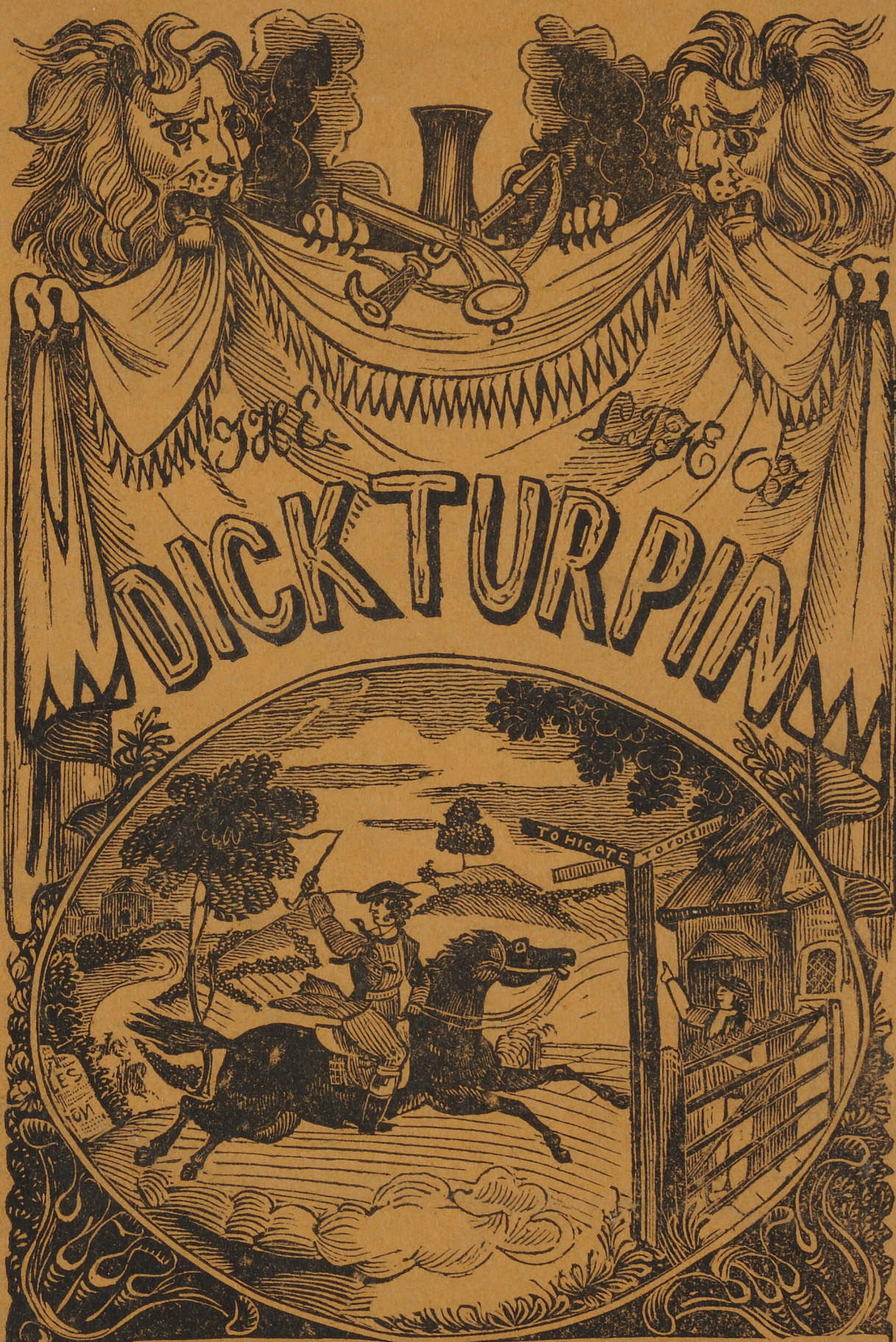


PRINTED BY S. & J. KEYS, DEVONPORT.



TURPIN BILKING THE HORNSEY TOLL-BAR



LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF
DICK TURPIN.



RICHARD TURPIN was born in Essex, where his father kept the Bell Inn, and, after having been the usual time at school, he was bound apprentice to a butcher, in Whitechapel; but he did not serve out his time, his master discharging him from his house, for his brutality, and the impropriety of his conduct generally. Turpin was not a little encouraged by his parents, who improperly indulged him and supplied him with money, whereby he was enabled to cut a figure in the town, among the blades of the "road" and "turf," whose company he affected to keep.

Very early in life he was taken up for poaching on the grounds of Sir Litton Weston. The principal evidence against him was Black Dennis, the gamekeeper. He was tried, and the case not having been proved very clearly against him, he was remanded for further examination.

The ponderous prison lock was turned upon him, and the vision of his early days recurred to his memory, which presented a painful distinctness and reality to his mind's eye.

He paced round his narrow cell; the image of Dennis recurred to him; he seized him, and, in imagination, tore him with the ferocity of a caged tiger—he stamped him to the earth, and struggled till the cold drops of perspiration started from every pore.

The possibility of an escape presented itself to his view, and in less than an hour he succeeded in effecting it. Skirting the shady side of the hedges, and occasionally making his way along a dry ditch, at the expense of a few scratches from the brambles, he took the direction of his foster-mother's house. He went to the back part of it. Selecting a few small pebbles, he threw them cautiously against the glass. After repeating this several times he ventured upon trusting his voice in a low whisper. "Hist, dear mother, it is I—your son Richard," said he. No reply, however, came from the direction in which his voice was directed; but at length his ear caught the sound of the fastenings of the back-door being cautiously removed.

"Come in, for God's sake!" said a female voice—(it was that of a girl, who acted in the capacity of a servant)—"all the people said you were committed to prison."

They entered the house, Turpin knew too well the value of every moment, and the danger of his situation, to risk his liberty by remaining long; he, therefore, after making up a small bundle of immediate necessaries, and leaving a promise that his mother should soon hear from him, bade farewell to his home, and again took to the fields.

Though well aware of his liability to apprehension, he could not quit Hempstead without one farewell of the scene of his joys—the garden of Esther Bevis. Thither he cautiously directed his steps. The house of Dennis rose upon his view: he thought of revenge. While thus lurking in the shadow of the trees he fancied he heard the hum of men's voices: the sounds approached—and, as he lay close to the trunk of a tree, two men neared the spot. Turpin's blood boiled, as the voice of Dennis met his ear, and he caught the following part of the conversation.

"Why, what a precious hurry you're in. You're a bigger fool than I took you to be; but I'd advise you not to ride rusty with your friends. We're all in it; and if so be you can't do as I do, I'll take care you don't get the best of me. But I'll show you as how I'll act honourable. Why, the valley (value) of what them cups and spoons 'ud fetch, now, is nothink; put your price on 'em, and I'll make up the reg'lars; I'd scorn to have it said I done a pal. Hows'ever, when we've got this younker out of the way—an' I think I've spun his hemp for him—you shan'n't find me backward; but it

might be as well as if yer comed no nearer to the house nor this, for there's that old affair still out agin yer. Here's all I have just now, but meet me on Monday, at Sam's hovel, in the marsh, and I'll make it all right. Good bye."

So saying, Dennis put some silver into the hands of his scoundrel-looking accomplice, who stealthily moved off among the trees. "I don't half like that vagabound," said he, soliloquising; "but I must sweeten him a trifle just now. I guess Master Dick is sorry by this time as how he has made me his enemy."



Dennis began to examine the priming of his guu. At this moment a rustle among the leaves struck on his ear, and while he was looking for its cause, the very object of his thoughts rushed towards him. The gun was half raised to his shoulder, when, with one hand, Turpin struck down the weapon, and fixing the other with a gripe, strong as his hatred, on the throat of Dennis, dashed him violently against the bole of a tree. His senses reeled, as Richard compressed the villain's throat; and clutching the barrel of the gun, the trigger caught some part of his dress, exploded, and lodged the charge in the body of Dennis. The man leaped from the ground with a piercing shriek, and fell heavily at the feet of Turpin, while

the blood from his side changed the green turf into a dull red. He cast the gun from him, and feeling that he was a murderer, fled with speed, which he slackened not until he had placed some miles between himself and his murdered victim.

He now resolved to make his way into London for a while, and then betake himself to some foreign land.

Soon after this his friends tried to persuade him to marry, hoping it would reclaim him; but it was to no purpose, for he joined a desperate gang of thieves, with whom he committed several daring robberies on the highway, and afterwards they turned housebreakers. One of the most cruel of those transactions was the robbery of an old woman at Loughton, who, refusing to tell where her money was hidden, was put by Turpin upon the fire, where she was held till she made a disclosure, when they took her off the grate, and robbed her of all they could find. They next robbed a farmer at Ripple-side, near Barking, and got about £700, which amounted to about £80 a man. They also attacked the house of Mr. Mason, the keeper of the Epping Forest, where, in revenge for his former zeal in detecting their poaching, they destroyed every thing. But Turpin was not in this affair. After plundering Mr. Saunders's house, and committing numerous other crimes, Turpin and his companions resolved to appear, in future, on horseback. They accordingly hired horses at the Old Leaping Bar, in High Holborn, and went to Stenmore, where they robbed the house of Mr. Lawrence, using great brutality, but got little plunder. These actions alarmed the country, and a reward of £50 was offered to any of them who would impeach his accomplices. Shortly afterwards several of the gang were taken and hanged; and Turpin, being left to himself, hastened to Cambridge, as the safest place, where he turned highwayman. Near Alton he met with a comical adventure, which gained him a very merry companion—Tom King, the highwayman, who was returning from this place to London. Turpin seeing him to be well drest and mounted, and to have the appearance of a gentleman, rode up to him, and presenting his pistols, bade him stand and deliver, when King, laughing, said, "What! dog rob dog? Come, come, brother Turpin, if you don't know me I know you, and shall be glad of your company." After a mutual communication of circumstances, they agreed to keep company in future. They proceeded to make themselves a cave in the earth, on the Waltham side of Epping, near the sign of the King's Oak. Through several holes they could discover the passengers in the road, and would issue forth and rob them. Upon one occasion Turpin and King stopped a person of very decent appearance, near Hackney, and demanded his money; but the gentleman, bursting into tears, said he was in great distress, and possessed only eighteen-pence, upon which, instead of robbing him, they made him a present of a half-a-crown.



Turpin had for a long while gone on in the most daring way. A reward having been offered for his apprehension, many were induced to attempt his capture: among the rest was the ranger, Thomson's man, who, in company with a biggler, whom he heard advancing, sought to discover the spot of Turpin's retirement. Having reached the thicket in which the cave was concealed, Thomson's man proceeded to reconnoitre. Turpin was at this time unarmed, and standing alone. Not knowing the man, he took him for one poaching for hares, and told him he would get no hares in that thicket. "No," said the fellow, "but I've got a Turpin!" and, presenting his gun, commanded him to surrender. Turpin stood talking with him, and, receding to the cave, laid hold of his carbine and shot him dead, at which the biggler made off. Affairs wore a very serious aspect for a short time; Turpin was obliged to be very cautious in his approaches to the metropolis. Turpin and King next joined one Potter, a desperate roadsman, and performed many robberies; Turpin being sometimes disguised in a miller's frock, and at others drest like a waggoner. Thus disguised he rode a good horse towards London, and, when near the Green Man, met one Mr. Major, (owner of White Stockings, the race-horse) whom he robbed, and took from him his whip. Finding Mr. Major had a better horse than his own, he made him quickly dismount, and change saddles,

also, when he rode on to London. On the Monday following, Mr. Bayes, landlord of the Green Man, heard that such horse as Mr. Major had lost was left at the Red Lion Inn, in Whitechapel. Going thither, he found it to be the same, and resolved to wait till somebody came to fetch it. About eleven o'clock at night King's brother came for the horse. He was immediately taken into custody, when he told the constable, who was charged with him, that a lusty man, in a white duffel coat, had sent him for the horse, and that he was then waiting for it in Red-Lion-street. Mr. Bayes immediately went out, found it was King, and attacked him. King clapped a pistol to Mr. Baye's breast, but it luckily flashed in the pan.



Turpin, who was waiting at a short distance, now came up, when King cried out, "Damn ye, shoot him Dick, or we shall be taken." and instantly Turpin let fly one of his pistols, which wounded King severely in two places, who said, "Why, Dick, you have killed me, or nearly so." Turpin, alarmed, rode off as fast as he could; and it was then that the thoughts of executing his extraordinary ride to York first flashed across him; his bosom throbbed high with rapture, and he involuntarily exclaimed aloud, as he raised himself in the saddle, "By G—, I will do it!"

He took one last look at the great Babel that lay buried in a world of trees beneath him ; and as his quick eye ranged over the magnificent prospect, lit up by the gorgeous sunset, he could not help thinking of Tom King's last words. " Poor fellow ! " thought Dick, he said, truly, " he should never see another sunset. " Aroused by the approaching clatter of his pursuers, who were but little behind him, Dick struck into a lane which lies on the right of the road now called Shoot-up-hill-lane, and set off at a good pace, in the direction of Hempstead.

His pursuers were now within a hundred yards, and shouted to him to stand. Pointing to a gate which seemed to bar their farther progress. Dick, unhesitatingly, charged it, clearing it in beautiful style. Not so with Coate's party ; and the time they lost in unfastening the gate, which none of them liked to leap, enabled Dick to put additional space between himself and them.

The whole neighbourhood was alarmed by the cries, and by the tramp of horses. The men of Hornsey rushed into the road to seize the fugitive ; and suddenly three horsemen appear in the road ; they hear the uproar and din. " A highwayman—a highwayman ! " cry the voices, " stop him—stop him ! " but it was no such easy matter. With a pistol in each hand, and his bridle in his teeth, did Turpin boldly pass on. The horsemen gave way, and only to swell the list of the pursuers.

" We have him now—we have him now ! " cried Paterson exultingly. " Shout for your lives—the turnpike-man will hear us—shout again, again :—the fellow has heard it—the gate is shut ; we have him—ha, ha ! "

The old Hornsey toll-bar was a high gate, with *cheveux de frize* in the upper rail. The gate was swung in its lock, and the turnpike-man ensconced within his doorway, ready to spring upon the runaway ; but Dick kept steadily on. He looked to the right and to the left ; nothing better offered ; he spoke a few words of encouragement to Bess, gently patted her neck, then struck spurs into her sides, and cleared the spikes by an inch. Out rushed the amazed turnpike-man, thus unmercifully bilked, and was nearly trampled to death under the feet of Paterson's horse.

The pursuers lost considerable time by waiting for the turnpike-man to open the gate.

A few more miles hard riding tired the volunteers, and before the chase reached Edmonton, most of them were " no where. "—Unlike the men of Tottenham, the people received him with acclamations, thinking, no doubt, that, " like the citizen of famous London town, " he rode for a wager. Presently, however, borne on the wings of the blast, came the cries of " Turpin, Dick Turpin ! " and the hurrahs were changed to hootings ; but such was the rate at which our highwayman rode, that no serious opposition could be offered to



him. A man in a donkey-cart, unable to get out of the way, drew himself up in the middle of the road ; but Turpin treated him as he had done the dub at the knapping-jigger, and cleared the driver and his little wain with ease. He finally reached York, without being overtaken by his pursuers.

For the last two years of his life Turpin seems to have confined his residence mostly to the county of York, where, taking the name of Palmer, he appears to have been so little known, that his company was chiefly with the best yeomen of the county. At length suspicion was somehow raised that he was the outlaw Turpin ; and two persons coming from Lincolnshire, to claim a mare and a foal, and a horse, which he had stolen in that county, he was committed to York Castle. He had two trials, upon both of which he was convicted on the most conclusive evidence.

The unfortunate prisoner, who received no assistance to secure him from the inclemency of the law, was hanged, as previously sentenced, on the 7th of April, 1739.

115975

ON BLACK BESS, TURPIN'S FAVORITE MARE.

LET the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse,
And laud her attractions in languishing verse;
Be it mine in rude strains, but with truth to express,
The love that I bear to my bonny Black Bess.
From the west was her dame, from the east was her sire,
From the one came her swiftness, the other her fire;
No peer of the realm better blood can possess,
Than flows in the veins of my bonny Black Bess.

Look! look how that eye-ball glows bright as a brand,
That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand!
Mark that wide-flowing mane, of which each silken tress
Might adorn prouder beauties—though none like Black Bess.
Mark that skin sleek as velvet, and dusky as night,
With its jet undisfigured with one lock of white;
The throat branched with veins, prompt to charge or caress,
Now, is she not beautiful!—bonny Black Bess!

Over highway and byeway, in rough and smooth weather,
Some thousands of miles have we journeyed together!
Our couch the same straw, and our meal the same mess,
No couple more constant than I and Black Bess.
By moonlight, in darkness, by night, or by day,
Her headlong career there is nothing can stay;
She cares not for distance, she knows not distress,
Can you show me a courser to match with Black Bess?

Once it happened in Cheshire, near Durham, I popped
On a horseman alone, whom I speedily stopped;
That I lightened his pockets you'll readily guess—
Quick work makes Dick Turpin when mounted on Bess.
Now it seems that man knew me: "Dick Turpin," said he,
"You shall swing for this job, as you live, d'ye see;"
I laughed at his threats and his vows of redress,
I was sure of an *alibi* then with Black Bess.

Brake, brook, meadow, ploughed field, Bess fleetly bestrode;
As the crow wings her flight, we directed our road;
We arrived at Hough Green in five minutes or less,—
My neck it was saved by the speed of Black Bess.
Stepping carelessly forward, I lounge on the green,
Take excellent care that by all I am seen:
Some remarks on time's flight to the 'squire I address,
But I say not a word on the flight of Black Bess.

I mention the hour—it was just about four—
Play a rubber at bowls, think the danger is o'er;
When athwart my next game, like a checkmate at chess,
Comes the horsemen in search of the rider of Bess.
What matter details? Off with triumph I came,
He swears to the hour, and the 'squires swear to the same;
I robbed him at four; while at four they profess
I was quietly bowling, all thanks to Black Bess.
Then one halloo, boys, one loud cheering, halloo,
To the swiftest of coursers, the gallant, the true!
For the sportsman unborn shall the memory bless
Of the horse of the highway, bonny Black Bess.