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An authentic Narrative of the Death of Mark Anthony Calas, and of the Trial an Execution of his Father, John Calas for the supposed Murder of his Son.

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frock and leather waistcoat. He was always an enemy to all sort of innovation, and so steady in uniformity, that he wore for above twenty years a silver watch. His Queen insisted often upon his changing it for a better, but to no purpose. Yet to get rid of her importunity and incessant jokes, resolved at last to have a gold-case to it, which he made himself on the lathe.

When he resolved to give the kingdom of Naples to his son, every body expected that he would send to Spain all the antique monuments that had been dug out of Herculaneum. But little did they know him that formed such conjectures, as on the same day that he crowned that son, he went to the place where those monuments were deposited, and there left a ring he had worn many years, which had been found in those ruins, saying, that he had no right to any thing that belonged to another Monarch.

The place where the King hunts is called the Pardo; the situation is very romantic, having an easy hill on one side, and an extensive forest all round; the trees are chiefly green oaks, and their sweet acorns afford plenty of food to the innumerable animals that live in it. When the King is there, the neighbouring peasants get up before day, at the ringing of their church bells, and men, women and children, run about the country, hooting and beating the bushes, in order to fright the game towards the Pardo, that the King may have plenty, for which each of them is paid two reals, about elevenpence sterling, a day. It is said that the King can hit the smallest bird on the wing with a single ball.

An authentic Narrative of the Death
of
MARK ANTHONY CALAS,
and
of the Trial and Execution of his Father,
JOHN CALAS,
for the supposed Murder of his Son.

John Calas was a merchant of the city of *Toulouse*; where he had been settled, and lived in good repute, forty years: He married an *English* woman of *French* extraction

extraction, her grand-mother being of the family of *Garde-Montesquieu*, and related to the chief noblesse of *Languedoc*.

Calas and his wife were Protestants, and had five sons, whom they educated in the same religion: But *Lewis*, one of the sons, some time since became a Roman Catholic; his father's maid-servant, a religious Catholic, who had lived thirty years in the family, having greatly contributed to his conversion; but the father was so far from expressing any resentment or ill-will on the occasion, that he settled an annuity upon *Lewis*, and still kept the maid in his family.

In *October* 1761, the family seems to have consisted of the father *John Calas* and his wife, one woman servant, *Mark Anthony Calas* the eldest son, and *Peter Calas*, the second son. *Mark Antony* had been educated as a scholar, with a view to his becoming an advocate or counsellor at law; but he was not able to get himself admitted as a licentiate, because he must either have performed some acts, which, as a Protestant, he could not have performed: or have purchased certificates, which he either thought unlawful, or found too expensive. He could not follow the business of a merchant, because he was not qualified for it by his education, nor his turn of mind; he therefore became discontented and melancholy, and endeavored to dissipate the gloom of his mind by playing at billiards, and other expensive pleasures, of which his father often expressed his disapprobation with some warmth, and once threatened, that if he did not alter his conduct, he would turn him out of doors; or expressed himself in words to that effect. The young man's discontent and melancholy still increased, and he seems to have entertained thoughts of putting an end to his life, as he was continually selecting and reading passages from *Plutarch*, *Seneca*, *Montaigne*, and many other authors on *suicide*, and could say by heart a *French* translation of the celebrated soliloquy in *Hamlet*, which he frequently repeated, with some passages from a *French* Tragy-Comedy, called *Sidney*, to the same effect.

On the 13th of *October* 1761, *M. Gober la Vaisse*, a young gentleman about nineteen years of age, the son of *La Vaisse*, a celebrated advocate of *Toulouse*, having been some time at *Bordeaux*, came back to *Toulouse*, to see his father; but finding that his father was gone to

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his country house, at some distance from the city, he went to several places, endeavouring to hire a horse to carry him thither. No horse, however, was to be hired; and about five o'clock in the evening he was met by *John Calas*, the father, and the eldest son *Mark Anthony*, who was his friend. *Calas*, the father, invited him to supper, as he could not set out for his father's that night, and *La Vaisse* consented. All three therefore proceeded to *Calas's* house together, and when they came thither, finding that *Mrs. Calas* was still in her own room, which she had not quitted that day, *La Vaisse* went up to see her. After the first compliments, he told her, he was to sup with her by her husband's invitation; she expressed her satisfaction, and a few minutes afterwards left him, to give some orders to her maid. When that was done, we went to look for her son *Anthony*, whom she found sitting alone in the shop, very pensive; she gave him some money, and desired him to go and buy some *Roquefort* cheese, he being always the market man for cheese, as he knew how to buy it better than any other of the family.

She then returned to her guest *La Vaisse*, who very soon after went again to the livery-stable, to see if any horse was come in, that he might secure it for the next morning.

In a short time *Anthony* returned, having bought the cheese, and *La Vaisse* also coming back about the same time, the family and their guest sat down to supper in a room up one pair of stairs, the whole company consisting of *Calas* the father and his wife, *Anthony* and *Peter Calas*, the sons, and *La Vaisse* the guest, no other person being in the house, except the maid-servant, who has been already mentioned.

It was now about seven o'clock; the supper was not long; but before it was over, or, according to the *French* expression, *when they came to the desert*, *Anthony* left the table, and went into the kitchen, which was on the same floor, as he used to do; the maid asked him if he was a-cold; he answered, *Quite the contrary, I burn*; and then left her. In the mean time his friend and the family left the room they had supped in, and went into a bed-chamber: the father and *M. La Vaisse* sat down together on a sofa; the younger son *Peter* in an elbow-chair, and the mother in another chair; and without making any enquiry after *Anthony*, continued in conversation

versation together till between nine and ten o'clock, when *La Vaiffe* took his leave, and *Peter*, who had fallen asleep, was awaked to attend him with a light. *)

On the ground floor of *Calas's* house was a shop and a warehouse; the warehouse was divided from the shop by a pair of folding doors: When *Peter Calas* and *La Vaiffe* came down stairs into the shop, they were extremely shocked to see *Anthony* hanging in his shirt, from a bar which he had laid across the top of the two folding doors, having half opened them for that purpose. Upon discovery of this horrid spectacle, they shrieked out, and the cry brought down *Calas* the father, the mother being seized with such a terror as kept her trembling in the passage above. The unhappy old man rushed forward, and taking the body in his arms, the bar to which the rope that suspended him was fastened, slipped off from the folding doors of the warehouse, and fell down: Having placed the body on the ground, he loosed and took off the cord in an agony of grief and anguish not to be expressed, weeping, trembling, and deploring himself and his child. The two young men, his second son and *La Vaiffe*, who had not had presence of mind enough to attempt taking down the body, were standing by, stupid with amazement and horror; in the mean time the mother, hearing the confused cries and complaints of her husband, and finding no-body come to her, found means to get down stairs. At the bottom she found *La Vaiffe*, and hastily and eagerly demanded what was the matter; this question roused him in a moment, and instead of answering her, he urged her to go again up stairs, to which, with much reluctance she consented; but the conflict of her
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*) This little narrative contains a picture of domestic life, which must be altogether new to an *English* reader. A merchant who had bred his eldest son a scholar, in order to have him called to the bar, sends this son out to buy cheese, having only one servant in the family, who, after preparing the supper, sets in upon the table at seven o'clock, and leaves the company to wait upon themselves: This supper, however, had what they call a desert, but before it is over, *Anthony*, the eldest son, the particular friend of the guest, leaves the table, and goes into the kitchen; no enquiry was made about him, though the company continued together above two hours afterwards; they spent their evening in a bedchamber, having left the eating room with the table still covered; as soon as they had supped, son *Peter* goes to sleep, and is not disturbed till he is wanted to wait upon the guest with a light.

mind being such as could not be long borne, she sent down the maid, *Jannet*, to see what was the matter: when the maid discovered what had happened, she continued below, either she feared to carry an account of it to her mistress, or because she busied herself in doing some good office to her master, who was still embracing the body of his son, and bathing it in his tears. The mother therefore, being thus left alone, went down, and mixed in the scene, that has been already described, with such emotions as it would naturally produce. In the mean time, *Peter* had been sent for *La Moire*, a surgeon in the neighbourhood; *La Moire* was not at home, but his apprentice, *M. Grosse*, came instantly. Upon examination, he found the body quite dead; and upon taking off the neckcloth, which was of black taffety, he saw the mark of the cord, and immediately pronounced, that the deceased had been strangled. This particular had not been told; for the poor old man, when *Peter* was going for *La Moire*, cried out, "Save at least the honour of my family; do not go and spread a report that your brother has made away with himself."

By this time a croud of people was gathered about the door, and one *Casing*, with another friend or two of the family were come in; some of those who were in the street had heard the cries and exclamations of the father, the mother, the brother and his friend, before they knew what was the matter; and having by some means learnt that *Anthony Calas* was suddenly dead, and that the surgeon who had examined the body, declared he had been strangled, they took it into their heads that he had been murdered; and as his family were Protestants, they presently supposed that the young man was about to abjure their religion, and had been put to death for that reason. The cries they had heard, they fancied were those of the deceased, while he was resisting the violence that was offered him. The tumult in the street increased every moment; some said that *Anthony Calas* was to have abjured the next day; others, that Protestants are bound by their religion to strangle or cut the throats of their children, when they are inclined to become Catholics. Others, who had found out that *La Vaisse* was in the house when the accident happened, very confidently affirmed, that the Protestants, at their last assembly, appointed a person to be their common executioner on these occasions; and that

that *La Vaisse* was the man, who, in consequence of the office to which he had been appointed, had come to *Calas's* to hang his son.

The poor father, therefore, who was overwhelmed with grief for the loss of his child, was advised by his friends to send for the officers of justice, to prevent his being torn to pieces for having murdered him.

This was accordingly done: One was dispatched to the Capitoul, one *David*, the first magistrate of the police, or principal civil magistrate of the place; and another to an inferior officer, called an assessor. The Capitoul was already set out, having been alarmed by the rumour of a murder, before the messenger sent from *Calas's* got to his house. He entered the house with 40 soldiers, took the father, *Peter* the son, the mother, *La Vaisse*, and the maid, all into custody, and set a guard over them: He sent for M. *de la Tour*, a physician, and M. *La Marque* and *Perronet*, surgeons, who examined the body for marks of Violence, but found none except the mark of the ligature on the neck; they found also the hair of the deceased done up in the usual manner, perfectly smooth, and without the least disorder; his cloaths also were regularly folded up, and laid upon the counter, nor was his shirt either torn or unbuttoned.

Notwithstanding these appearances, *David* thought fit to give into the opinion of the mob, and took it into his head, that old *Calas* had sent for *La Vaisse*, telling him he had a son to be hanged, that *La Vaisse* had come to perform his office as executioner, and that the father and the brother had assisted him in it.

The body, by order of this poor ignorant bigot, was carried to the town-house with the cloaths. The father and son were thrown into a dark dungeon; and the mother, *La Vaisse*, the maid, and *Casing* into one that admitted the light. The next day, what is called the *verbal process* was taken at the Town-house, instead of the spot where the body was found, as the law directs, and was dated at *Calas's* house, to conceal the irregularity. This *verbal process* is somewhat like our *Coroner's Inquest*; witnesses are examined, and the magistrate makes his report, which is the same there as the verdict of the Coroner's Jury with us. The witnesses examined by this Capitoul were the physician and surgeon, who proved *Anthony Calas* to have been strangled; the surgeon having been ordered to examine the stomach,

mach of the deceased, deposed also, that the food which was found there had been taken four hours before his death: As no proof of the supposed fact could be procured, the Capitoul had recourse to a Monitory, in which the crime was taken for granted, and all persons were required to give such testimony concerning it as they were able, particularizing the points to which they were to speak. This Monitory recites, that *La Vaisse* was commissioned by the Protestants to be their executioner in ordinary, when any of their children were to be hanged for changing their religion; it recites also, that when Protestants thus hang their children, they compel them to kneel, and one of the interrogatories was, whether any person had seen *Anthony Calas* kneel before his father when he strangled him; it recites too, that *Anthony* died a Roman Catholic, and requires evidence of his Catholicism. These ridiculous opinions being thus adopted and published by the principal magistrate of a considerable city, the church of *Geneva* thought itself obliged to send an attestation of its abhorrence of opinions so abominable and absurd, and of its astonishment that they should be suspected of such opinions, by persons whose rank and office required them to have more knowledge and better judgment.

But before the Monitory was published, the mob had got a notion that *Anthony Calas* was the next day to have entered into the fraternity of the White Penitents. The Capitoul immediately adopted this opinion also, without the least examination, and ordered *Anthony's* body to be buried in the middle of St. *Stephen's* church, which was done; forty priests, and all the white penitents assisting in the funeral procession.

Four days afterwards, the White Penitents performed a solemn service for him in their chapel; the church was hung with white, and a tomb was raised in the middle of it, on the top of which was placed a human skeleton, holding in one hand a paper, on which was written *abjuration of heresy*, and in the other a palm, the Emblem of Martyrdom.

The next day the Franciscans performed a service of the same kind for him, and it is easy to imagine how much the minds of the people were inflamed by this strange folly of their magistrates and priests.

The Capitoul continued the prosecution with unrelenting severity, and though the grief and distraction of
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the family when he first came to the house, were alone sufficient to have convinced any reasonable being that they were not the authors of the event which they deplored, yet having publicly attested that they were guilty in his monitory without proof, and no proof coming in, he thought fit to condemn the unhappy father, mother, brother, friend and servant to the torture, and put them all into irons on the 18th of *November*. *Casing* was enlarged upon proof that he was not in *Calas's* house till after *Anthony* was dead.

From these dreadful proceedings the sufferers appealed to the parliament, which immediately took cognizance of the affair, annulled the sentence of the Capitoul as irregular, and continued the prosecution.

When the tryal came on, the hangman, who had been carried to *Calas's* house, and shewn the folding doors and the bar, deposed, that it was impossible *Anthony* should hang himself as was pretended; another witness swoore that they looked through the key hole of *Calas's* door into a *dark* room, where they saw men running to and fro; a third swore, that his wife had told him, that a woman, named *Mandrill*, had told her, that a certain woman unknown had declared she heard the cries of *Mark Anthony Calas* at the farther end of the city. Upon such evidence as this, the majority of the parliament were of opinion, that the father and mother ordered *La Vaiffe* to hang their son, and that another son and a maid servant, who was a good Catholic, had assisted him to do it.

One *La Borde* presided at the tryal, who had zealously espoused the popular prejudices, and though it was manifest to demonstration that the prisoners were either all innocent, or all guilty, he voted that the father should first suffer the torture ordinary and extraordinary, to discover his accomplices, and be then broken alive upon the wheel, to receive the last stroke when he had lain two hours, and than to be burnt to ashes. In this opinion he had the concurrence of six others, three were for the torture alone, two were of opinion, that they should endeavour to ascertain upon the spot whether *Anthony* could hang himself or not, and one voted to acquit the prisoner. After long debates, the majority was for the torture and the wheel, and probably condemned the father by way of experiment, whether he was guilty or not, hoping he would,

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in his agony, confess the crime, and accuse the other prisoners, whose fate, therefore, they suspended. It is, however, certain, that if they had had evidence against the father that would have justified the sentence they pronounced against him, that very evidence would have justified the same sentence against the rest, and that if they could not justly condemn the rest, they could not justly condemn him, for they were all in the house together when *Anthony* died, all concurred in declaring he hanged himself, which those who did not help to hang him, if hanged by others, could have had no motive to do, nor could any of the prisoners have hanged him by violence without the knowledge of the rest.

Poor *Calas*, however, an old man of sixty-eight, was condemned to this dreadful punishment alone; he suffered the torture with great constancy, and was led to execution in a frame of mind, which excited the admiration of all that saw him.

Two Dominicans, Father *Bourges* and Father *Galdaques*, who attended him in his last moments, wished, "that their latter end might be like his," and declared, that they thought him not only wholly innocent of the crime laid to his charge, but an exemplary instance of true christian patience, fortitude and charity.

One single shriek, and that not very violent, escaped him when he received the first stroke; after that he uttered no complaint. Being at length placed on the wheel, to wait for the moment which was to end his life and his misery together, he expressed himself with an humble hope of an happy immortality, and a compassionate regard for the judges who had condemned him. When he saw the executioner preparing to give him the last stroke, he made a fresh declaration of his innocence to Father *Bourges*, but while the words were yet in his mouth, the Capitoul, the author of this catastrophe, and who came upon the scaffold merely to gratify his desire of being a witness of his punishment and death, ran up to him and bawled out, *Wretch, there are the faggots which are to reduce your body to ashes; speak the truth.* *Calas* made no reply, but turned his head a little aside, and that moment the executioner did his office.

Though the testimony of a dying man had thus acquitted the rest of the prisoners, yet the judges, that they might act with a uniform absurdity through the whole

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affair

affair, banished *Peter Calas* for life, and acquitted the rest. The widow and the other sufferers are seeking such redress from the king as can now be had, to whom the sentence of the judges was not sent for confirmation as it ought to have been.

The judges have thought fit to suppress the trial; the widow petitions that it may be ordered to be laid before the parliament of *Paris* for a revision.

ANSON'S VOYAGE TO ASIA. *)

The *Centurion* and *Gloucester* left the coast of *America* the 6th of May 1742. The first land in *Asia* which they could reach was the Islands *Ladrones*, which are separated from *America* by near one third of the globe's circumference. But as the N. E. winds, which are favourable for this voyage, usually blow between the tropics, the *English* could not think that they could be longer about it than the *Spaniards*, who generally perform it in two months. In this confidence they put to sea, and stood for the latitude where the most regular winds are expected; but contrary to their expectations, the wind shifted so often, and they had so many strong gales at W. that, in seven weeks, they had not proceeded one fourth of the voyage. Several misfortunes happen'd during this tedious delay. Both ships sprung their masts in several places, and being obliged to keep their pumps continually going, on account of the leaks, it was an insupportable fatigue to the men, the greatest part of whom were weakened by the scurvy.

Tho' they had plenty of provisions, and tho' the rains constantly supplied them with water, and all possible care was taken to keep the ships cool and clean; yet the scurvy continued its havock, notwithstanding all their skill and precaution: and even when the fair winds set in towards the end of *June*, the voyage was far from being so speedy as might have been hoped. The *Gloucester* having lost her main-mast, sail'd heavily, and the *Centurion* lost near a month in waiting for her. When they were within 300 leagues of the port, the *Gloucester's* other masts were all carried away by some contrary gales

*) A Voyage round the World by George Anson Esq. compiled by R. Walter. Lond. 1748. 8. Gentleman's Magazine 1749.