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An Account Of The Death Of John Reinhold Patkul.

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little there is here of justice, honesty, or public faith, proceeds rather from fear and compulsion, than from choice and free election. For the acknowledgment is very just, which *Ali Bashaw*, a late Dey, made to Consul *Cole*, upon complaining of the injuries that our vessels met with from his cruifers: The *Algerines*, says he, *are a company of rogues, and I am their captain.*

AN ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
DEATH OF JOHN REINHOLD PATKUL. \*)

JOHN REINHOLD PATKUL was born of a noble family in *Livonia*, a northern province belonging to the crown of *Sweden*. The *Livonians* having been stript of their privileges, and great part of their estates by *Charles XI.* *Patkul* was deputed to make their complaint, which he did with such eloquence and courage, that the king, laying his hand upon his shoulder, said, *You have spoken for your country as a brave man should, and I esteem you for it.*

*Charles*, however, who added the baseness of hypocrisy to the ferocity of a tyrant, was determined to punish the zeal and honesty which he thought fit to commend, and a few days afterwards caused *Patkul* to be declared guilty of high treason, and condemned to die. *Patkul*, however, found means to escape into *Poland*, where he continued till *Charles* was dead. He hoped, that his sentence would have been then reserved, as it had been declared unjust, even by the tyrant that procured it; but being disappointed in this expectation, he applied to *Augustus*, King of *Poland*, and solicited him to attempt the conquest of *Livonia* from the *Swedes*, which, he said, might be easily effected, as the people were ready to shake off their yoke, and the king of *Sweden* was a child incapable of compelling their subjection.

*Augustus* possessed himself of *Livonia*, in consequence of this proposal, and afterwards, when *Charles XII.* entered the province to recover it, *Patkul* commanded in the *Saxon* army against him. *Charles* was victorious, and

*Patkul,*

\*) Anecdotes of J. R. Patkul, now first printed from a Manuscript Account written by the Lutheran Clergyman who attended him in his preparation for his Death &c. Lond. 1761. 8.

*Patkul*, some time afterwards, being disgusted at the haughty behaviour of Gen. *Flemming*, *Augustus's* favourite, entered into the service of the Czar, with whom *Augustus* was in strict alliance, and a little before *Charles* compelled *Augustus* to abdicate the throne of *Poland*, and his subjects to elect *Stanislaus* in his stead. The Czar sent *Patkul*, with the title of his ambassador in *Saxony*, to prevail with *Augustus* to meet him at *Grodno*, that they might confer on the state of their affairs.

This conference took place, and immediately afterwards the Czar went from *Grodno*, to quell a rebellion in *Astracan*. As soon as the Czar was gone, *Augustus*, to the surprize of all *Europe*, ordered *Patkul*, who was then at *Dresden*, to be seized as a state criminal.

By this injurious and unprecedented action *Augustus* at once violated the law of nations, and weakened his own interest; for *Patkul* was not only an ambassador, but an ambassador from the only power that could afford him protection. The cause, however, was this; *Patkul* had discovered that *Augustus's* ministers were to propose a peace to *Charles* upon any terms, and had therefore formed a design to be before hand with him, and procure a separate peace between *Charles* and his new master the Czar. The design of *Patkul* was discovered, and to prevent its success, *Augustus* ventured to seize his person, assuring the Czar that he was a traitor, and had betrayed them both.

*Augustus* was soon after reduced to beg a peace of *Charles* at any rate, and *Charles* granted it upon certain conditions, one of which was that he should deliver up *Patkul*. This condition reduced *Augustus* to a very distressful dilemma, the Czar, at this very time, reclaimed *Patkul* as his ambassador, and *Charles* demanded, with threats, that he should be put into his hands. *Augustus*, therefore, contrived an expedient by which he hoped to satisfy both; he sent some guards to deliver *Patkul*, who was prisoner in the castle of *Koenigstein*, to the *Swedish* troops; but by secret orders, privately dispatched, he commanded the governor to let him escape. The governor, tho' he received this order in time, yet disappointed its intention by his villainy and his avarice; he knew *Patkul* to be very rich, and, having it now in his power to suffer him to escape with impunity, he demanded of *Patkul* a large sum for the favour; *Patkul* refused to buy that liberty, which he made no doubt, would be gratuitously restored, in consequence of the Czar's requisition and remonstrance, and

and, in the mean time, the *Swedish* guards arrived with the order for his being delivered up to them.

By this party he was first carried to *Charles's* head quarters at *Alt Ranstadt*, where he continued three months bound to a stake with a heavy chain of iron; he was then conducted to *Casimir*, where *Charles* ordered him to be tryed, and he was by his judges found guilty. His sentence depended upon the king, and after having been kept a prisoner some months, under a guard of *Mayerfeldt's* regiment, uncertain of his fate, he was on the 8th of *September* 1707, towards the evening delivered into the custody of a regiment of dragoons, commanded by *Col. Nicholas Hielm*. On the next day, the 29th, the colonel took the chaplain of his regiment aside, and telling him that *Patkul* was to die the next day, ordered him to acquaint him with his fate, and prepare him for it. About this very time he was to have been married to a *Saxon* lady of great quality, virtue, and beauty, a circumstance which renders his case still more affecting. What followed, in consequence of the Colonel's order to the minister will be related in his own words:

Immediately after evening service I went to his prison, where I found him lying on his bed. The first compliments over, I entered upon the melancholy duty of my profession, and turning to the officer who had him in charge, told him the colonel's orders were, that I should be alone with his prisoner.

The officer having withdrawn, *Patkul* grasping both my hands in his, cry'd out, with most affecting anxiety and distress, My dear pastor! What are you to declare? what am I to hear?

I bring you, replied I, the same tidings that the prophet brought to king *Hezekiah*, *Set thine house in order for thou must die*. To-morrow, by this time, thou shalt be no longer in the number of the living! At this terrible warning, he bowed himself upon his bed, and burst into tears.

I attempted to comfort him, by saying, that he must without all doubt, have often meditated on this subject: *Yes, cried he, I know, alas! too well, that we must all die; but the death prepared for me will be cruel, and insupportable.*

I assured him, that the manner of his death was to me totally unknown; but, believing that the would be prepared for it, I was sure his soul should be received into the number of happy spirits. Here he rose up, and folding his hands together, *Merciful God! let me then die the death of*  
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*the righteous!* A little after, with his face inclined to the wall, where stood his bed, he broke out into this soliloquy: *Augustus! O Augustus, what must be thy lot one day? Must thou not answer for all the crimes thou hast committed?*

He then observed that he was driven out from his country, by a sentence against his life pronounced for doing what the king himself encouraged him to do, saying to him one day, in terms of much kindness, *Patkul*, maintain the rights of your country like a man of honour, and with all the spirit you are capable of. That flying into an enemy's country was also unavoidable, as the country of an ally would not have afforded him protection; but that he was in *Saxony* a wretched exile, not a counsellor, or adviser; that, before his arrival, every thing was already planned; the alliance with *Muscovy* signed; and the measures with *Denmark* agreed upon.

My inclinations, said he, after a pause, were always to serve *Sweden*, tho' the contrary opinion has prevailed. The elector of *Brandenbourg* owed his title of king of *Prussia*, to the services I did him, and when, in recompense, he would have given me a considerable sum of money, I thanked him, and rejected the offer; adding, that the reward I most wished for, was to regain the king of *Sweden's* favour by his intercession. This he promised, and tried every possible method to succeed, but without success. After this I laboured so much for the interest of the late emperor in his *Spanish* affairs, that I brought about what scarce any other man could have affected: The Emperor, as an acknowledgment gave me an assignment for 50,000 crowns, which I humbly laid at his feet, and only implored his imperial majesty's recommendation of me to my king's favour: This request he immediately granted, and gave his orders accordingly, but in vain. Yet, not to lose any opportunity, I went to *Moscow* while the *Swedish* ambassadors were at that court, but even the mediation of the Czar had no effect. After that I distributed among the *Swedish* prisoners at *Moscow*, at least 100,000 crowns, to show the ardent desire I had, by all ways, to regain the favour of their sovereign. Would to heaven I had been equally in earnest to obtain the grace of God. — At these words another shower of tears fell from his eyes, and he remained for some moments silent, overwhelmed with grief.

I used my best endeavours to comfort him, with the assurance that his grace would not be denied him, provided

vided he spent the few hours still left, in earnestly imploring it; for the door of heaven's mercy was never shut, tho' that of men might be cruelly so. *This*, replied he, *this is my consolation; for thou art God. and not man to be angry for ever.*

He then inveighed bitterly against *Augustus*, and reproached himself for having any connection with a wretch who was wholly destitute of all faith and honour, an atheist, without piety, and without virtue.

While he was at *Warsaw*, said he, and heard the king was advancing to attack him, he found himself extremely distressed. He was absolutely without money, and therefore obliged to dismiss some of his troops. He had recourse to my assistance, and intreated me, for the love of God, to borrow whatever sum I could. I procured him 400,000 crowns; 50,000 of which, the very next day, he squandered on trinkets, and jewels, which he gave in presents to some of his women. I told him plainly my thoughts of the matter; and by my importunity prevailed, that the *Jews* should take back their toys, and return the money they had been paid for them. The ladies were enraged; and he swore that I should, one time or other, suffer for what I had done; there indeed he kept his word. Would to God he had always done so with those he employed!

I now left him for a short time, and at seven in the evening I returned; and the officer being retired, he accosted me with a smiling air, and an appearance of much tranquility:—Welcome, dear Sir, the weight that lay heavy on my heart is removed, and I already feel a sensible change wrought in my mind. I am ready to die; death is more eligible than the solitude of a long imprisonment. Would to heaven only, that the kind of it were less cruel. Can you, my dear sir, inform me in what manner I am to suffer? I answered, that it had not been communicated to me; but that I imagined it would pass over without noise, as only the colonel and myself had notice of it.

That, reply'd he, I esteem as a favour, but have you seen the sentence? Or must I die, without being either heard or condemned? My apprehensions are of being put to intolerable tortures. I comforted him in the kindest manner I could: but he was his own best comforter from the word of God, with which he was particularly acquainted; quoting among many other passages

sages, the following in Greeck, *We must enter into the kingdom of heaven thro' many tribulations.*

He then called for pen and ink, and intreated me to write down what he should dictate. I did so, as follows:

*Testamentum, or, my last Will, as to the disposition of my effects after my death.*

I. *His majesty king Augustus, having first examined his conscience thoroughly, will be so just as to pay back to my relations the sum he owes me; which, being liquidated, will amount to 50,000 crowns; and as my relations are here in service of Sweden, that monarch will probably obtain it for them.*

At this he said, Let us stop here a little; I will quickly return to finish this will; but now let us address ourselves to God by prayer. Prayers being ended, "Now, cry'd he, I find myself yet better, yet in a quieter frame of mind. Oh! were my death less dreadful, with what pleasure would I expiate my guilt by embracing it! —

Yes, cry'd he, after a pause, I have friends in different places, who will weep over my deplorable fate. What will the mother of the king of *Prussia* say? What will be the grief of the Countess *Levolde*, who attends on her? But what thoughts must arise in the bosom of HER, to whom my faith is plighted? Unhappy woman! the news of my death will be fatal to her peace of mind. My dear pastor, may I venture to beg one favour of you? I assured him he might command every service in my power: "Have the goodness then, said he, pressing my hand, the moment I am no more, to write—Alas! how will you set about it? a letter to Madam *Einsiedlern*, the lady I am promised to — Let her know that I die her's; inform her fully of my unhappy fate! Send her my last and eternal farewell! My death is in truth disgraceful; but my manner of meeting it will, I hope, by heaven's and your assistance, render it holy and blessed. This news will be her only consolation. Add farther, dear Sir, that I thanked her with my latest breath, for the sincere affection she bore me: May she live long and happy: This is my dying wish.," — I gave him my hand in promise that I would faithfully perform all he desired.

Afterwards he took up a book: "This, said he, is of my own writing. Keep it in remembrance of me, and as a proof of my true regard for religion. I could wish it might have the good fortune to be presented to the king, that

that he may be convinced, with what little foundation I have been accused of Atheism., Taking it from his hand I assured him, that my colonel would not fail to present it, as soon as opportunity offered.

The rest of his time was employed in prayer, which he went thro' with a very fervent devotion.

On the 30th of *September* I was again with him at four in the morning. The moment he heard me he arose, and rendering thanks to God, assured me he had not slept so soundly for a long time. We went to prayers, and in truth his piety, and devout frame of mind, were worthy of admiration.

About six he said he would begin his confession, before the din and clamour of the people without could rise to disturb his thoughts. He then kneeled down, and went through his confession in a manner truly edifying.

The sun beginning to appear above the horizon, he looked out of the window, saying, *Salve festa dies!* This is my wedding-day. I looked, alas! for another, but this is the happier; for to-day shall my soul be introduced into the assembly of the blessed!

He then asked me, whether I yet knew in what way he was to die? I answered, that I did not. He conjured me, not to forsake him; for that he should find in my company some consolation even in the midst of tortures.

Casting his eye on the paper that lay upon the table, *This will*, said he, *can never be finished.* I asked him, whether he would put his name to what was already written? *No*, replied he with a deep sigh, *I will write that hated name no more. My relations will find their account in another place; salute them from me.*

He then addressed himself again to God in prayer, and continued his devotions till the lieutenant entered, to conduct him to the coach. He wrapped himself up in his cloak, and went forward a great pace, guarded by 100 horsemen. Being arrived at the place of execution, we found it surrounded by 300 foot soldiers; but at the sight of the *stakes* and *wheels*, his horror is not to be described. Claspng me in his arms, *Beg of God*, he exclaimed, *that my soul may not be thrown into despair, amidst these tortures!* I comforted, I adjured him to fix his thoughts on the death of *Jesus Christ*, who, for our sins, was nailed to a cross.

Being now on the spot where he was to suffer, he bid the executioner to do his duty well, and put into his



hands some money, which he got ready for that purpose. He then stretched himself out upon the wheel; and while they were stripping him naked, he begged me to pray that God would have mercy on him, and bear up his soul in agony. I did so; and turning to all the spectators, said to them: "Brethren, join with me in prayer for this unhappy man. *Yes, cry'd he, assist me, all of you, with your supplications to heaven.*

Here the executioner gave him the first stroke. His cries were terrible. *O Jesus! Jesus, have mercy upon me.* This cruel scene was much lengthened out, and of the utmost horror; for as the headsmen had no skill in his business, the unhappy victim received upwards of 15 different blows, with each of which were intermixed the most piteous groans, and invocations of the name of God. At length, after two strokes given on the breast, his strength and voice failed him. In a faltering dying tone, he was just heard to say, *Cut off my head!* and the executioner still lingering, he himself placed his head on the scaffold: After four strokes with an hatchet, the head was separated from the body, and the body quartered. Such was the end of the renowned *Patkul*; and may God have mercy on his soul!

LORENS HAGAR.

*Chaplain of a Regiment.*

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#### THE STORY OF LE FEVER. \*)

It was some time in the summer of that year, in which *Dendermond* was taken by the Allies, — which was about seven years before my father came into the country, — and about as many, after the time, that my uncle *Toby* and *Trim* had privately decamped from my father's house in town, in order to lay some of the finest sieges to some of the finest fortified places in *Europe* — when my uncle *Toby* was one evening getting his supper, with *Trim* sitting behind him at a small sideboard, that the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlour with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or two of sack: 'Tis for a poor gentleman, — I think of the army, said the landlord, who has been taken ill at my house four days ago, and has never held up his head since, or had a desire to taste any thing, till just now, that

\*) The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (by Mr. Sterne) Lond. 1763-66. 9 Vol. 8. Altenburg 1772. 6 Vol. 8.