

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

John Gay

PEACHAM: 'Tis now high time to look about me for a decent execution against next sessions. I hate a lazy rogue, by whom one can get nothing till he is hanged. [Reading.] 'A Register of the Gang.' 'Crook-fingered Jack, a year and a half in the service.' Let me see how much the stock owes to his industry. One, two, three, four, five gold watches, and seven silver ones. A mighty clean-handed fellow! Sixteen snuff-boxes, five of them of true gold; six dozen of handkerchiefs, four silver-hilted swords, half a dozen of shirts, three tie-periwigs, and a piece of broadcloth. Considering these are only the fruits of his leisure hours, I don't know a prettier fellow; for no man alive hath a more engaging presence of mind upon the road. 'Wat Dreary, alias Brown Will.' An irregular dog! who hath an underhand way of disposing his goods. I'll try him only for a sessions or two longer upon his good behaviour. 'Harry Paddington.' A poor petty-larceny rascal, without the least genius! That fellow, though he were to live these six months, will never come to the gallows with any credit! 'Slippery Sam.' He goes off the next sessions; for the villain hath the impudence to have views of following his trade as a tailor, which he calls an honest employment. 'Mat of the Mint.' Listed not above a month ago; a promising sturdy fellow, and diligent in his way. Somewhat too bold and hasty, and may raise good contributions on the public, if he does not cut himself short by murder. 'Tom Tipple.' A guzzling, soaking sot, who is always too drunk to stand himself, or to make others stand! A cart is absolutely necessary for him. 'Robin of Bagshot, alias Gorgon, alias Bluff Bob, alias Carbuncle, alias Bob Booty'