

to declare whether it was true that Guddal,\* spouse to Richard Watson, was an witch, as John Watson there alleged, or what evil likelihood they saw in her; Walter Watson, John Cowing, George Scott, James Scott, being inquired severally, as they would answer to God, what they knew, altogether agreed in one without contradiction that they saw never such things into her whereby they might suspect her of the same, but that she was an honest poor woman, who wrought honestly for her living, without whose help her husband Richard Watson would have been dead, who was an old aged man. Therefore the Minister and Elders ordain the Act of Slander to be put in execution against the said John Watson and Helen Watson his daughter.

*A Marriage Affair.* — November 10, 1589. Whilk day Robert Blackwood, in presence of the Minister and Elders, compeared, being the day assigned to him to shew the reasonable causes why the banns of marriage given up afore the kirk the 12th day of July 1587 betwixt John Lawrie and his daughter were not performed. He showed, first, that the great troubles and dangers in the which he has been since the upgiving of the said banns, with the great hazard and peril of his life, was one stop and hindrance; secondly, the ground whereon the civil contract was made betwixt the said John Lawrie and him was not performed as was contracted, and Isabel Blackwood his daughter, future spouse to the said John, was not infest in his lands according to contract and promise, which was done only upon Wednesday last, and how soon same was done their marriage is performed. The whilk reasons, being considered and tried, he being removed, are found reasonable, yet nothing to hurt the Order and Act of the Kirk; wherefore the Minister and Elders, with consideration more of the first cause than of the second, dispense with the rigour, and ordain, nottheless of any Acts passed of before, that he pay L.5 (Scots, or 8s. 4d. sterling) allenarly to Mr George Ruthven, collector of the poor's alms, to be given to the poor. December 30 — Forasmeikle as Robert Blackwood, the twelfth day of June año 1587, became cautioner for his daughter's marriage,

\* Sic in MS.

ungracious and ungodly speeches, for suppressing of the which it is ordained that the Bailies put the said Thomas Taylor in ward until farther order be taken, both for the glory of God and good example to others in time coming, so that vice may be suppressed. *November 13*—Whilk day, after sundry warnings and admonitions made from the pulpit, compeared Thomas Taylor, flesher, and humbly with confession of his offences in breaking of the Sabbath, and his disobedience to the voice of the Kirk, submits himself to the will and discipline of the Kirk; therefore the Minister and Elders ordain him to make his public repentance for away taking of the slander arisen on his foresaid offences, and ordain him to compear on Sunday next, and in time of preaching to stand bareheaded before my Lady Gowrie's desk, and, when he shall be required publicly to give an confession of his said offences, to do the same; and for performance of the premisses, Patrick Oliphant becomes cautioner under the penalty of L.40 (Scots, or L.3:6:8 sterling.)\*

*Promises to observe Sunday.*—*April 17, 1592.* Whilk day compeared John Tendall and George Jack younger, and promised that their bake-houses hereafter shall not gang (be used) on the Sabbath. *April 24*—Whilk day compeared Walter Kid, Andrew Wallace, and Thomas Murray, fleshers, and promised not to break flesh on the Sabbath. *May 1*—Compeared Mr George Ruthven, Archibald Steedman, and Robert Lamb, and promised hereafter on the Sabbath-day to use no muffing, polling, washing.† *May 8*—Compeared Patrick Anderson, Patrick Lamb, and John Hutson, fishers,

\* This was not the conclusion of Thomas Taylor's affair. He continued refractory, and on the 3d of July 1592 the Bailies were ordered to imprison him for his "contemption," and if they refused or were negligent, they were themselves to be excommunicated.

† Mr Scott volunteers the following explanation on this case:—"These gentlemen, as appears from other parts of the Register, were surgeons, and, according to the practice of the time, acted also as barbers. They promised, therefore, that on the Sabbath they would not exercise their trade by administering to those who were solicitous about their looks or dress delicate washes or perfumes, by polling or trimming into fashionable shape the beards of such persons, or by assisting them in muffing, or adjusting properly the large plaited ruffs they wore round their necks, and which sometimes they brought up in such a way as to conceal their faces."

if he knew anything concerning the conspiracy made by the Earl of Angus,\* confessed he knew nothing; and being accused for riding on the Sabbath-day, confessed the same, and promises not to do the like hereafter.

*An Act against Ante-Nuptial Intercourse.* — March 12, 1592-3. The Minister and Elders agree and conclude all in one voice that carnal deall betwixt man and woman before marriage is fornication, and therefore ordain that whatsoever persons contracted be found to have carnal deall together betwixt the giving up of their banns before the (Kirk)-Session and the solemnization of their marriage shall pay forty shillings (Scots, or 3s. 4d. sterling), and make their public repentance at the stool before the pulpit the day of their marriage, according to the act of our (Kirk) Session made the 8th of May 1581; and further it is ordained that the woman come to the stool with her head covered as a fornicatrix, seeing that her carnal deall before marriage is fornication indeed.

*The Perth Surgeons examined.* — March 19, 1592-3. Compears Mr George Ruthven, Andrew Brown, Thomas Lathrisk, and John Meling, chirurgeons, and being inquired if they or any one of them had any persons under cure for the present who had the goir,† answered all in one voice they had none; and further, at the request and command of the Minister and Elders promised, that if they shall have any such persons under their care in time coming they should reveal it to the Minister and Elders, for avoiding of contamination, which must ensue unto others by their company with persons in such a disease.

*The Pledge of the Midwives.* — March 19, 1592-3. Compears Marjory Russel, Marion Stewart, Bessy Lamberkin, and Agnes Thomson, midwives, promising not to help in time of birth any woman suspected either of adultery or fornication, until the time they confess and declare unto them who is the bairn's father.

\* William Douglas, tenth Earl of Angus, who had conformed to the Roman Catholic religion, and was concerned in some of the numerous plots to overthrow Presbyterianism, and restore the ancient Hierarchy. The suspected Noblemen engaged in this particular "conspiracy" had many adherents in and near Perth, and they were popular with the common people generally.

† Scotichè *glengore, glengour, grandgore, or lues veneua.*

Lowrie, and being inquired by the Ministers \* if in his last being out of this country he had been in Spain, answered, that he was in Portugal, but was never present at Mass, neither gave reverence to any procession, and that he was never demanded by them concerning his religion. The said Alexander being removed and censured, it was thought good by the Session that he should be admonished not to travel to these parts again except that they were otherwise reformed in religion.

*Sabbath-Breaking.*—*December 29, 1595.* Compears John Spens, who brake the Sabbath by absenting himself from the hearing of the Word, accused also for his unreverent behaviour to the Minister and Bailie being visiting the families, and therefore ordains him to be committed to ward, until he be humbled, and find caution to do his duty.—James Drummond, Elder, reports that John Wilson, merchant, with sundry others was at the Fair of Fowlis, where on the Sabbath-day they set forth their stands to sell and make merchandise; and likewise Constantine Melice, Elder, reports that the said John Wilson was at the mercat of Crieff, and travelled thither on the Sabbath; and therefore the Session ordains the said John Wilson, with the rest of his neighbours, profaners of the Sabbath, to compear before them the next day for trial of this matter.—Mr George Ruthven, chirurgion, gives in a bill of complaint upon Archibald Steedman, declaring and regretting that the said Archibald had profaned the Sabbath sundry and divers times by shaving and polling gentlemen and strangers on the said Lord's Day, as James Stewart of Achmadoes, the Laird of Redhall, and John Windiegates, katour† to his

\* Perth had now two Ministers who were colleagues—Mr John Malcolm, and Mr William Cowper, who had been previously minister of Bothkennar in Stirlingshire, and was afterwards Bishop of Galloway and Dean of the Chapel-Royal of Holyrood Palace. On the 23d of June 1595 it is recorded—"Whilk day the Session being convened, all in one voice, after sundry and divers times hearing of Mr William Cowper, nominate by the Commissioners of the General Assembly, Synodal, and Presbytery of Perth, have allowed his doctrine, and at his returning shall accept of him to be their minister and fellow-labourer with Mr John Malcolm their present minister." Mr William Cowper attended the Kirk-Session for the first time on the 29th of September.

† Caterer or provider.

Majesty. The said Archibald, being accused and tried, is found guilty of the breach of the Lord's Sabbath, and therefore the Session ordains him the next Sabbath to compare in the place of public repentance for the foresaid offence.

*Frail Confessions.* — *January 5, 1595-6.* Compears Isabel Elder, being charged to this day because she was suspected to have abused herself by whoredom with sundry men, and her formal deposition falsified and controuled; and now again, after long dealing by the Minister and Session on the one part, and constant denial by her on the other part, at last confesses her adultery committed with Henry Adamson,\* to whom she is presently with bairn, as she alleged, and confesses that the said Henry had carnal deall with her about Whitsunday last in Patrick Mathew's ale-house once and no more. The Session ordains Henry Adamson to be charged to compare before them how soon he comes to the town. *January 26, 1595-6*—Compears Henry Adamson, to whom it was declared that Isabel Elder had confessed and declared that she was with bairn to him, and that he had carnal deall with her, and therefore it was craved of him that simply he would declare the truth in that matter. He answered, that neither had he carnal deall with her, neither is the bairn his; and therefore the Session has ordained him to purge himself publicly by an oath before the congregation, according to the practice used, otherwise to be holden *pro confesso*. *February 9*—Compears Eupheme Burns, and confesses her adultery committed with Thomas Scott, and likewise confesses that she of before being put in the Thief's Hole by the Bailies, the lock and irons were broken by Jean Brown, spouse to Thomas Dow, and one Anne Duff. The Session ordains the said persons to be tried, that order may be taken with them.

*Keepers of disorderly Houses.*—*April 19, 1596.* Katherine Durinoch was delated by the visitors to have been absent from the kirk in time of preaching, who, being called, compeared, and confesses the same; and therefore the Session judge her to be a breaker of the Sabbath, and ordains her to be committed to ward until she pay an merk (Scots, or 1s. 1d.

\* The Dean of Guild, notorious as the paramour of Jean Thornton, the wife of Oliver Peebles.