

is made more real and more awful to us, accustomed to read of this scourge as we read of other past events, with a certain grim indifference because all that was long ago, consequently not so dreadful as if an occurrence of to-day, but as we scan the *News* published "for the information of the people (with privilege)" we see, as no historian could make us see, how great was the desolation of London town during those days when "grass grew in the great thorough-fares." The number for July 6, 1665, states some of the precautionary measures to be taken "for the prevention of the further spread of the contagion," (that was before the microbe theorists had their say—more's the pity!) English surgeons in those days were nearer their French cousins than now, being called 'chirurgeons.' "Blotches and pimples" were the first outward signs of inward calamity, and "every master of a house must, on the first appearance" of said signs on any one in his domicile, "give knowledge thereof to the Examiners of health within two hours of appearance of the signs," "every house visited is to be marked with a Red Cross, one foot long, in the middle of the door, evident to be seen, with the printed words—LORD HAVE MERCY ON US!" A dismal sight it must have been to see the "Examiners' carriers," etc., going through the streets with a "Red Rod" three feet long, in their hands, which symbolism being interpreted in modern English meant this: "hands off, we be quarantined;" it is easy to believe, there were few sight-seers abroad and no particular call for constables. The "ads" all bear on powders and perfumes *versus* the Plague.

In the "*Weeklie*" called "*Mercurie*," published for the Prevention of False Reports (ye stars! and comets!) We learn how the loyal subjects of the Virgin Queen looked upon the adventurous Spanish sailors of Armada renown. The genuine, British phlegmatic contempt of all that is not British, is unmistakably perceptible in these cool views of a pretty hot scare.

The last paper which can be alluded to in this, already too long ramble 'midst relics and ruins, is a copy of the *Weeklie News*, dated 31st January, 1606. A certain serio-comic feeling grows almost very comical as we read of the trial and execution of Guy Fawkes and as many of his

ilk as were caught. The tragic story is told in the rude and crude language of the times, hotly seasoned with anti-Jesuitical pepper and salt; a few extracts from this paper, will more than suffice to show that these were not delectable times. The "Vile Traytors" richly deserved their fate, that's been agreed upon hasn't it? but as the "Scotch beggars were not blown back to their mountains," as the gunpowder man meant they should be, there's no need of over-doing righteous indignation, let the eight executed Traytors rest in peace, if they can. Here are a few bits concerning some of them as given at great length in the *News*, "The eight Traytors, four of which were executed in St. Paul's Church-yard in London, and the other four in the old Parliament Yard, Westminster. Digby, it seems, craved "mercy or favor neither of God nor of the king," but he made four requests, three of which refer to his money matters, and the last is a request to be beheaded and not hanged. "Rob Winter, in like manner thinking himself half a saint for his whole villany, said little to any purpose," (mind-readers are of all ages) "but only made a request to the king for mercy toward his brother, in regard of his offence; his brother said little, but swallowed up a concealed grief with little show of sorrow." Grant, "stubborn in his idolatry seemed nothing penitent for his villany, asked little mercy, but, as it were, careless of grace, received the doom of his desert." Rokewood "out of studied speech would fain have made his idolatry and bringing up an excuse for the foul deed, but, he had the judgment with the rest of the Traytors." The reporter enlarges with considerable *gusto* on the "doggedness of face and lack of prayerfulness of these poor devils, never seeming to pray unless by the dozen on their beads, taking tobacco, as if hanging were no trouble to them." The deportment on the scaffold of each condemned man, is given with a view to sensationalism worthy of a western scribe of to-day. Digby, a man of "goodly personage and manly aspect went up first, with a vain supercilious signing of himself he betook himself to his Latin prayers, mumbling to himself, refusing to have the prayers of the chaplain, he went up the ladder and with the help of the hangman he made an end of his wicked ways."