



SOME ANCIENT HISTORY.



IN the pages that follow we give our readers fac-similes of some of the earliest English newspapers, through the courtesy of Rev. J. A. Turnbull, of Clanbrassil, Ont., to whom the originals belong. Rev. Mr. Turnbull is to be congratulated as the possessor of so rare and valuable a collection.

We have first given us a complete copy of *The Mercurius*, the earliest English journal, of the issue of July 23rd, 1588, giving an account of the attempted invasion of England by the Spaniards that year. Upon what a slender thread hangs the destinies of nations as well as individuals! Had England fallen into the hands of Spain, at that time the foremost maritime power of the world, what the result would have been to her people and the world at large can only be conjectured. We have next a detailed account of the trial and execution of the conspirators involved in what has been known for nearly three centuries as the "Gunpowder Plot." The horrible details of the wretched end of these enemies of the State, as given in the papers of that day, are enough to make the most callous shudder. That such inhuman butchery was sanctioned by law seems incredible.

Our readers will no doubt peruse with interest the tragic account of the execution of Charles I., contained in the *Intelligencer*, of Feb 5th, 1648. It will be seen that the newspapers of that date were not a whit behind their modern confreres in their effort to give the public every detail of a tragedy. We have not progressed much in this respect in the intervening three centuries. It is to be hoped that we shall

soon see the day when such revolting spectacles shall not be permitted to reach the eyes of our children even through a newspaper.

We have only given a page or two of the next paper, the *Gazette*, of Sept. 9th, 1658, but sufficient to afford a glimpse of the circumstances attending the death of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, who, like the ill-fated king whom the parliament hurried into the presence of the King of Kings, went at length the way of all flesh.

The issue of the *News* of July 6th, 1665, is interesting at the moment, as giving us some insight into the "black plague" that smote London and continental cities in so dire a manner in that year. The vast strides made in sanitation and therapeutics in recent times have, notwithstanding the tremendous increase in the population of cities like London, fortunately made such visitations well nigh impossible. The regulations for the care of the sick and the disposal of the dead are suggestive.

The great fire of London in 1666 came as a blessing in disguise, without doubt contributing in no small degree to the wiping out of the seeds of pestilence. Providence seems to have thus kindly, though rudely, interfered to accomplish results of which man at that time seemed incapable. An idea of the comparative smallness of London at that time is afforded by the details given of the fire and the devastation it wrought.

We feel sure our readers, standing as they do upon the threshold of the twentieth century, will appreciate by contrast the happy circumstances in which they are placed socially, morally, religiously, commercially and politically. In this golden age of thought, liberty and progress, the dark scenes portrayed in the following pages are altogether impossible.



BRIDGE OF INVALIDS AND THE STREET OF NATIONS.