



1665



Daniel Defoe:

A Journal of the Plague Year

&c. 1665

A JOURNAL
OF THE
Plague Year, &c.

*Being Observations or Memorials
of the most Remarkable Occurrences, both Publick
and Private, which happen'd in London during the
last Great Visitation in 1665. And written by a
Citizen who continued all the while in London.*

*Now newly Introduced to the Public
by Mr James Sutherland, of London & Berkshire,
and Embellish'd with notable Illustrations
by Signor Domenico Gnoli, of Rome.*

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The Color Plates

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MEMOIRS OF THE PLAGUE

IT was about the Beginning of *September* 1664, that I, among the Rest of my Neighbours, heard in ordinary Discourse, that the Plague was return'd again in *Holland*; for it had been very violent there, and particularly at *Amsterdam* and *Roterdam*, in the Year 1663, whither *they say*, it was brought, some said from *Italy*, others from the *Levant* among some Goods, which were brought home by their Turkey Fleet; others said it was brought from *Candia*; others from *Cyprus*. It matter'd not, from whence it come; but all agreed, it was come into *Holland* again.

We had no such thing as printed News-Papers in those Days, to spread Rumours and Reports of Things; and to improve them by the Invention of Men, as I have liv'd to see practis'd since. But such things as these were gather'd from the Letters of Merchants, and others, who corresponded abroad, and from them was handed about by Word of Mouth only; so that things did not spread instantly over the whole Nation, as they do now. But it seems that the Government had a true Account of it, and several Counsels were held about Ways to prevent its coming over; but all was kept very private. Hence it was, that this Rumour died off again, and People began to forget it, as a thing we were very little concern'd in, and that we hoped was not true; till the latter End of *November*,

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or the Beginning of *December* 1664, when two Men, said to be French-men, died of the Plague in *Long Acre*, or rather at the upper End of *Drury Lane*. The Family they were in, endeavour'd to conceal it as much as possible; but as it had gotten some Vent in the Discourse of the Neighbourhood, the Secretaries of State gat Knowledge of it. And concerning themselves to inquire about it, in order to be certain of the Truth, two Physicians and a Surgeon were order'd to go to the House, and make Inspection. This they did; and finding evident Tokens of the Sickness upon both the Bodies that were dead, they gave their Opinions publickly, that they died of the Plague: Whereupon it was given in to the Parish Clerk, and he also return'd them to the Hall; and it was printed in the weekly Bill of Mortality in the usual manner, thus,

Plague 2. Parishes Infected 1.

The People shew'd a great Concern at this, and began to be allarm'd all over the Town, and the more, because in the last Week in *December* 1664, another Man died in the same House, and of the same Distemper: And then we were easy again for about six Weeks, when none having died with any Marks of Infection, it was said, the Distemper was gone; but after that, I think it was about the 12th of *February*, another died in another House, but in the same Parish, and in the same manner.

This turn'd the Peoples Eyes pretty much towards that End of the Town; and the weekly Bills shewing an Encrease of Burials in *St Giles's* Parish more than usual, it began to be suspected, that the Plague was among the People at that End of the Town; and that many had died of it, tho' they had taken Care to keep it as much from the Knowledge of the Publick, as possible: This possess'd the Heads of the People very much, and few car'd to go thro' *Drury Lane*, or the other Streets suspected, unless they had extraordinary Business, that obliged them to it.

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This Encrease of the Bills stood thus: the usual Number of Burials in a Week, in the Parishes of *St Giles's* in the Fields, and *St Andrew's* Holborn, were from 12 to 17 or 19 each, few more or less; but from the Time that the Plague first began in *St Giles's* Parish, it was observ'd, that the ordinary Burials increased in Number considerably. *For Example,*

From <i>Dec.</i> 27th to <i>Jan.</i> 3	<i>St Giles's</i>	16
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	17
<i>Jan.</i> 3 to 10	<i>St Giles's</i>	12
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	25
<i>Jan.</i> 10 to 17	<i>St Giles's</i>	18
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	18
<i>Jan.</i> 17 to <i>Jan.</i> 24	<i>St Giles's</i>	23
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	16
<i>Jan.</i> 24 to 31	<i>St Giles's</i>	24
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	15
<i>Jan.</i> 30 to <i>Feb.</i> 7	<i>St Giles's</i>	21
	<i>St Andrew's</i>	23
<i>Feb.</i> 7 to 14	<i>St Giles's</i>	24

whereof one of the Plague.

The like Encrease of the Bills was observ'd in the Parishes of *St Brides*, adjoining on one Side of *Holborn* Parish, and in the Parish of *St James Clarkenwell*, adjoining on the other side of *Holborn*; in both which Parishes the usual Numbers that died weekly, were from 4 to 6 or 8, whereas at that time they were increas'd, as follows.

From <i>Dec.</i> 20 to <i>Dec.</i> 27	<i>St Brides</i>	0
	<i>St James</i>	8
<i>Dec.</i> 27 to <i>Jan.</i> 3	<i>St Brides</i>	6
	<i>St James</i>	9

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From <i>Jan.</i>	3	to	10		<i>St Brides</i>	11
					<i>St James</i>	7
	<i>Jan.</i>	17	to	24	<i>St Brides</i>	9
					<i>St James</i>	15
	<i>Jan.</i>	24	to	31	<i>St Brides</i>	8
					<i>St James</i>	12
	<i>Jan.</i>	31	to	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>St Brides</i>	13
				7	<i>St James</i>	5
	<i>Feb.</i>	7	to	14	<i>St Brides</i>	12
					<i>St James</i>	6

Besides this, it was observ'd with great Uneasiness by the People, that the weekly Bills in general encreas'd very much during these Weeks, altho' it was at a Time of the Year, when usually the Bills are very moderate.

The usual Number of Burials within the Bills of Mortality for a Week, was from about 240 or thereabouts, to 300. The last was esteem'd a pretty high Bill; but after this we found the Bills successively encreasing, as follows.

	<i>Buried</i>	<i>Increased</i>
<i>Dec.</i> the 20th to the 27th	291	
27 to the 3 <i>Jan.</i>	349	58
<i>January</i> 3 to the 10	394	45
10 to the 17	415	21
17 to the 24	474	59

This last Bill was really frightful, being a higher Number than had been known to have been buried in one Week, since the preceding Visitation of 1656.

However, all this went off again, and the Weather proving cold, and the Frost which began in *December*, still continuing very severe, even till near the End of *February*, attended with sharp tho' moderate Winds, the Bills decreas'd again, and the City grew

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healthy, and everybody began to look upon the Danger as good as over; only that still the Burials in *St Giles's* continu'd high: From the Beginning of *April* especially they stood at 25 each Week, till the Week from the 18th to the 25th, when there was buried in *St Giles's* Parish 30, whereof two of the Plague, and 8 of the Spotted-Feaver, which was look'd upon as the same thing; likewise the Number that died of the Spotted-Feaver in the whole increased, being 8 the Week before, and 12 the Week above-named.

This alarm'd us all again, and terrible Apprehensions were among the People, especially the Weather being now chang'd and growing warm, and the Summer being at Hand: However, the next Week there seem'd to be some Hopes again, the Bills were low, the Number of the Dead in all was but 388, there was none of the Plague, and but four of the Spotted-Feaver.

But the following Week it return'd again, and the Distemper was spread into two or three other Parishes (*viz.*) *St Andrew's Holborn*, *St Clement's-Danes*, and to the great Affliction of the City, one died within the Walls, in the Parish of *St Mary-Wool-Church*, that is to say, in *Bearbinder Lane*, near *Stocks-market*; in all there was nine of the Plague, and six of the Spotted-Feaver. It was however upon Inquiry found, that this *French-man* who died in *Bearbinder-Lane*, was one who having liv'd in *Long-Acre*, near the infected Houses, had removed for fear of the Distemper, not knowing that he was already infected.

This was the beginning of *May*, yet the Weather was temperate, variable and cool enough, and People had still some Hopes: That which encourag'd them was, that the City was healthy, the whole 97 Parishes buried but 54, and we began to hope, that as it was chiefly among the People at that End of the Town, it might go no farther; and the rather, because the next Week which was from the 9th of *May* to the 16th there died but three, of which not one within the whole City or Liberties, and *St Andrew's* buried but 15, which was very low: 'Tis true, *St Giles's* buried two and thirty,

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but still as there was but one of the Plague, People began to be easy, the whole Bill also was very low, for the Week before, the Bill was but 347, and the Week above-mentioned but 343: We continued in these Hopes for a few Days, but it was but for a few; for the Peoples were no more to be deceived thus; they searcht the Houses, and found that the Plague was really spread every way, and that many died of it every Day: So that now all our Extenuations abated, and it was no more to be concealed, nay it quickly appeared that the Infection had spread it self beyond all Hopes of Abatement: that in the Parish of *St Giles's*, it was gotten into several Streets, and several Families lay all sick together; And accordingly in the Weekly Bill for the next Week, the thing began to shew it self; there was indeed but 14 set down of the Plague, but this was all Knavery and Collusion, for *St Giles's* Parish they buried 40 in all, whereof it was certain most of them died of the Plague, though they were set down of other Distempers; and though the Number of all the Burials were not increased above 32, and the whole Bill being but 385, yet there was 14 of the Spotted-Feaver, as well as 14 of the Plague; and we took it for granted upon the whole, that there was 50 died that Week of the Plague.

The next Bill was from the 23rd of *May* to the 30th, when the Number of the Plague was 17: But the Burials in *St Giles's* were 53, a frightful Number! of whom they set down but 9 of the Plague: But on an Examination more strictly by the Justices of the Peace, and at the Lord Mayor's Request, it was found there were 20 more, who were really dead of the Plague in that Parish, but had been set down of the Spotted-Feaver or other Distempers, besides others concealed.

But those were trifling Things to what followed immediately after; for now the Weather set in hot, and from the first Week in *June*, the Infection spread in a dreadful Manner, and the Bills rise high, the Articles of the Feaver, Spotted-Feaver, and Teeth, began to swell: For all that could conceal their Distempers, did it to pre-

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vent their Neighbours shunning and refusing to converse with them; and also to prevent Authority shutting up their Houses, which though it was not yet practised, yet was threatned, and People were extremely terrify'd at the Thoughts of it.

The Second Week in *June*, the Parish of *St Giles's*, where still the Weight of the Infection lay, buried 120, whereof though the Bills said but 68 of the Plague; every Body said there had been 100 at least, calculating it from the usual Number of Funerals in that Parish as above.

Till this Week the City continued free, there having never any died except that one *Frenchman*, who I mention'd before, within the whole 97 Parishes. Now there died four within the City, one in *Wood-street*, one in *Fenchurch-street*, and two in *Crooked-lane*: *Southwark* was entirely free, having not one yet died on that Side of the Water.

I liv'd without *Aldgate* about mid-way between *Aldgate-Church* and *White-Chappel-Bars*, on the left Hand or North-side of the Street; and as the Distemper had not reach'd to that Side of the City, our Neighbourhood continued very easy: But at the other End of the Town, their Consternation was very great; and the richer sort of People, especially the Nobility and Gentry, from the West-part of the City throng'd out of Town, with their Families and Servants in an unusual Manner; and this was more particularly seen in *White-Chapel*; that is to say, the Broad-street where I liv'd: Indeed nothing was to be seen but Waggons and Carts, with Goods, Women, Servants, Children, &c. Coaches fill'd with People of the better Sort, and Horsemen attending them, and all hurrying away; then empty Waggons, and Carts appear'd, and Spare-horses with Servants, who it was apparent were returning or sent from the Countries to fetch more People: Besides innumerable Numbers of Men on Horseback, some alone, others with Servants, and generally speaking, all loaded with Baggage and fitted out for travelling, as any one might perceive by their Appearance.

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This was a very terrible and melancholy Thing to see, and as it was a Sight which I cou'd not but look on from Morning to Night; for indeed there was nothing else of Moment to be seen, it filled me with very serious Thoughts of the Misery that was coming upon the City, and the unhappy Condition of those that would be left in it.

This Hurry of the People was such for some Weeks, that there was no getting at the Lord-Mayor's Door without exceeding Difficulty; there was such pressing and crouding there to get passes and Certificates of Health, for such as travelled abroad; for without these, there was no being admitted to pass thro' the Towns upon the Road, or to lodge in any Inn: Now as there had none died in the City for all this time, My Lord Mayor gave Certificates of Health without any Difficulty to all those who liv'd in the 97 Parishes, and to those within the Liberties too for a while.

This Hurry, I say, continued some Weeks, that is to say, all the Month of *May* and *June*, and the more because it was rumour'd that an order of the Government was to be issued out, to place Turn-pikes and Barriers on the Road, to prevent Peoples travelling; and that the Towns on the Road, would not suffer People from *London* to pass, for fear of bringing the Infection along with them, though neither of these Rumours had any Foundation, but in the Imagination; especially at first.

I now began to consider seriously with my Self, concerning my own Case, and how I should dispose of my self; that is to say, whether I should resolve to stay in *London*, or shut up my House and flee, as many of my Neighbours did. I have set this particular down so fully, because I know not but it may be of Moment to those who come after me, if they come to be brought to the same Distress, and to the same Manner of making their Choice, and therefore I desire this Account may pass with them, rather for a Direction to themselves to act by, than a History of my actings, seeing it may not be of one Farthing value to them to note what became of me.

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I had two important things before me; the one was the carrying on my Business and Shop; which was considerable, and in which was embark'd all my Effects in the World; and the other was the Preservation of my Life in so dismal a Calamity, as I saw apparently was coming upon the whole City; and which however great it was, my Fears perhaps as well as other Peoples, represented to be much greater than it could be.

The first Consideration was of great Moment to me; my Trade was a *Sadler*, and as my Dealings were chiefly not by a Shop or Chance Trade, but among the Merchants, trading to the *English Colonies in America*, so my Effects lay very much in the hands of such. I was a single Man 'tis true, but I had a Family of Servants, who I kept at my Business, had a House, Shop, and Ware-houses fill'd with Goods; and in short, to leave them all as things in such a Case must be left, that is to say, without any Overseer or Person fit to be trusted with them, had been to hazard the Loss not only of my Trade, but of my Goods, and indeed of all I had in the World.

I had an Elder Brother at the same Time in *London*, and not many Years before come over from *Portugal*; and advising with him, his Answer was in three Words the same that was given in another Case quite different, (*viz.*) *Master save thy self*. In a Word, he was for my retiring into the Country, as he resolv'd to do himself with his Family; telling me, what he had it seems, heard abroad, that the best Preparation for the Plague was to run away from it. As to my Argument of losing my Trade, my Goods, or Debts, he quite confuted me: He told me the same thing, which I argued for my staying, (*viz.*) *That I would trust God with my Safety and Health*, was the strongest Repulse to my Pretentions of losing my Trade and my Goods; for, says he, is it not as reasonable that you should trust God with the Chance or Risque of losing your Trade, as that you should stay in so imminent a Point of Danger, and trust him with your Life?

I could not argue that I was in any Strait, as to a Place where

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to go, having several Friends and Relations in *Northamptonshire*, whence our Family first came from; and particularly, I had an only Sister in *Lincolnshire*, very willing to receive and entertain me.

My Brother, who had already sent his Wife and two Children into *Bedfordshire*, and resolv'd to follow them, press'd my going very earnestly; and I had once resolv'd to comply with his Desires, but at that time could get no Horse; For tho' it is true, all the People did not go out of the City of *London*; yet I may venture to say, that in a manner all the Horses did; for there was hardly a Horse to be bought or hired in the whole City for some Weeks. Once I resolv'd to travel on Foot with one Servant; and as many did, lie at no Inn, but carry a Soldiers Tent with us, and so lie in the Fields, the Weather being very warm, and no Danger from taking cold: I say, as many did, because several did so at last, especially those who had been in the Armies in the War which had not been many Years past; and I must needs say, that speaking of second Causes, had most of the People that travelled, done so, the Plague had not been carried into so many Country-Towns and Houses, as it was, to the great Damage, and indeed to the Ruin of abundance of People.

But then my Servant who I had intended to take down with me, deceiv'd me; and being frighted at the Encrease of the Distemper, and not knowing when I should go, he took other Measures, and left me, so I was put off for that Time; and one way or other, I always found that to appoint to go away was always cross'd by some Accident or other, so as to disappoint and put it off again; and this brings in a Story which otherwise might be thought a needless Digression, (*viz.*) about these Disappointments being from Heaven.

I mention this Story also as the best Method I can advise any Person to take in such a Case, especially, if he be one that makes Conscience of his Duty, and would be directed what to do in it, namely, that he should keep his Eye upon the particular Providences which occur at that Time, and look upon them complexly, as they

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regard one another, and as altogether regard the Question before him, and then I think, he may safely take them for Intimations from Heaven of what is his unquestion'd Duty to do in such a Case; I mean as to going away from, or staying in the Place where we dwell, when visited with an infectious Distemper.

It came very warmly into my Mind, one Morning, as I was musing on this particular thing, that as nothing attended us without the Direction or Permission of Divine Power, so these Disappointments must have something in them extraordinary; and I ought to consider whether it did not evidently point out, or intimate to me, that it was the Will of Heaven I should not go. It immediately follow'd in my Thoughts, that if it really was from God, that I should stay, he was able effectually to preserve me in the midst of all the Death and Danger that would surround me; and that if I attempted to secure my self by fleeing from my Habitation, and acted contrary to these Intimations, which I believed to be Divine, it was a kind of flying from God, and that he could cause his Justice to overtake me when and where he thought fit.

These thoughts quite turn'd my Resolutions again, and when I came to discourse with my Brother again I told him, that I inclin'd to stay and take my Lot in that Station in which God had plac'd me; and that it seem'd to be made more especially my Duty, on the Account of what I have said.

My Brother, tho' a very Religious Man himself, laugh'd at all I had suggested about its being an Intimation from Heaven, and told me several Stories of such fool-hardy People, *as he call'd them*, as I was; that I ought indeed to submit to it as a Work of Heaven, if I had been any way disabled by Distempers or Diseases, and that then not being able to go, I ought to acquiesce in the Direction of him, who having been my Maker, had an undisputed Right of Sovereignty in disposing of me; and that then there had been no Difficulty to determine which was the Call of the Providence, and which was not: But that I should take it as an Intimation from

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Heaven, that I should not go out of Town, only because I could not hire a Horse to go, or my Fellow was run away that was to attend me, was ridiculous, since at the same Time I had my Health and Limbs, and other Servants, and might, with Ease, travel a Day or two on foot, and having a good Certificate of being in perfect Health, might either hire a Horse, or take Post on the Road, as I thought fit.

Then he proceeded to tell me of the mischievous Consequences which attended the Presumption of the *Turks* and *Mahometans* in *Asia* and in other Places, where he had been (for my Brother being a Merchant, was a few Years before, as I have already observ'd, returned from abroad, coming last from *Lisbon*) and how presuming upon their profess'd predestinating Notions, and of every Man's End being predetermin'd and unalterably before-hand decreed, they would go unconcern'd into infected Places, and converse with infected Persons, by which Means they died at the Rate of Ten or Fifteen Thousand a-Week, whereas the *Europeans*, or Christian Merchants, who kept themselves retired and reserv'd, generally escaped the Contagion.

Upon these Arguments my Brother chang'd my Resolutions again, and I began to resolve to go, and accordingly made all things ready; for in short, the Infection increased round me, and the Bills were risen to almost 700 a-Week, and my Brother told me, he would venture to stay no longer. I desir'd him to let me consider of it but till the next Day, and I would resolve; and as I had already prepar'd every thing as well as I could, as to my Business, and who to entrust my Affairs with, I had little to do but to resolve.

I went Home that Evening greatly oppress'd in my Mind, irresolute, and not knowing what to do; I had set the Evening wholly apart to consider seriously about it, and was all alone; for already People had, as it were by a general Consent, taken up the Custom of not going out of Doors after Sun-set, the Reasons I shall have Occasion to say more of by-and-by.

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In the Retirement of this Evening I endeavoured to resolve first, what was my Duty to do, and I stated the Arguments with which my Brother had press'd me to go into the Country, and I set against them the strong Impressions which I had on my Mind for staying; the visible Call I seem'd to have from the particular Circumstance of my Calling, and the Care due from me for the Preservation of my Effects, which were, as I might say, my Estate; also the Intimations which I thought I had from Heaven, that to me signify'd a kind of Direction to venture, and it occur'd to me, that if I had what I might call a Direction to stay, I ought to suppose it contain'd a Promise of being preserved, if I obey'd.

This lay close to me, and my Mind seemed more and more encouraged to stay than ever, and supported with a secret Satisfaction, that I should be kept: Add to this that turning over the Bible, which lay before me, and while my Thoughts were more than ordinarily serious upon the Question, I cry'd out, *Well, I know not what to do, Lord direct me!* and the like; and at that Juncture I happen'd to stop turning over the Book at the 91st Psalm, and casting my Eye on the second Verse, I read on to the 7th Verse exclusive;



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and after that, included the 10th, as follows. *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisom pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day: Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine Eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation: There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, &c.*

I scarce need tell the Reader, that from that Moment I resolv'd that I would stay in the Town, and casting my self entirely upon the Goodness and Protection of the Almighty, would not seek any other Shelter whatever; and that as my Times were in his Hands, he was as able to keep me in a Time of the Infection as in a Time of Health; and if he did not think fit to deliver me, still I was in his Hands, and it was meet he should do with me as should seem good to him.

With this Resolution I went to Bed; and I was farther confirm'd in it the next Day, by the Woman being taken ill with whom I had intended to entrust my House and all my Affairs: But I had a farther Obligation laid on me on the same Side; for the next Day I found my self very much out of Order also; so that if I would have gone away, I could not, and I continued ill three or four Days, and this intirely determin'd my Stay; so I took my leave of my Brother, who went away to *Dorking* in *Surry*, and afterwards fetch'd a Round farther into *Buckinghamshire*, or *Bedfordshire*, to a Retreat he had found out there for his Family.

It was a very ill Time to be sick in, for if any one complain'd, it was immediately said he had the Plague; and tho' I had indeed

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no Symptoms of that Distemper, yet being very ill, both in my Head and in my Stomach, I was not without Apprehension, that I really was infected; but in about three Days I grew better, the third Night I rested well, sweated a little, and was much refresh'd; the Apprehensions of its being the Infection went also quite away with my Illness, and I went about my Business as usual.

These Things however put off all my Thoughts of going into the Country; and my Brother also being gone, I had no more Debate either with him, or with my self, on that Subject.

It was now mid-*July*, and the Plague which had chiefly rag'd at the other End of the Town, and as I said before, in the Parishes of *St Giles's*, *St Andrews Holbourn*, and towards *Westminster*, began now to come *Eastward* towards the Part where I liv'd. It was to be observ'd indeed, that it did not come strait on towards us; for the City, that is to say within the Walls, was indifferent healthy still; nor was it got then very much over the Water into *Southwark*; for tho' there died that Week 1,268 of all Distempers, whereof it might be suppos'd above 900 died of the Plague; yet there was but 28 in the whole City, within the Walls; and but 19 in *Southwark*, *Lambeth* Parish included; whereas in the Parishes of *St Giles*, and *St Martins in the Fields* alone, there died 421.

But we perceiv'd the Infection kept chiefly in the out-Parishes, which being very populous, and fuller also of Poor, the Distemper found more to prey upon than in the City, as I shall observe afterward; we perceiv'd I say, the Distemper to draw our Way; (*viz.*) by the Parishes of *Clerken-Well*, *Cripplegate*, *Shoreditch*, and *Bishopsgate*; which last two Parishes joining to *Aldgate*, *White-Chapel* and *Stepney*, the Infection came at length to spread its utmost Rage and violence in those Parts, even when it abated, at the *Western* Parishes where it began.

It was very strange to observe, that in this particular Week, from the 4th to the 11th of *July*, when, as I have observ'd, there died near 400 of the Plague in the two Parishes of *St Martin's*, and

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St *Giles in the Fields* only, there died in the Parish of *Aldgate* but four, in the Parish of *White-Chapel* three, in the Parish of *Stepney* but one.

Likewise in the next Week, from the 11th of *July* to the 18th, when the Week's Bill was 1,761, yet there died no more of the Plague, on the whole *Southwark* Side of the Water than sixteen.

But this Face of things soon changed, and it began to thicken in *Cripplegate* Parish especially, and in *Clerken-Well*; so, that by the second Week in *August*, *Cripplegate* Parish alone, buried eight hundred eighty six, and *Clerken-Well* 155; of the first, eight hundred and fifty, might well be reckoned to die of the Plague; and of the last, the Bill it self said, 145 were of the Plague.

During the Month of *July*, and while, as I have observ'd, our Part of the Town seem'd to be spar'd, in Comparison of the *West* Part, I went ordinarily about the Streets, as my Business requir'd, and particularly went generally, once in a Day, or in two Days, into the City, to my Brother's House, which he had given me charge of, and to see if it was safe; And having the Key in my Pocket, I used to go into the House, and over most of the Rooms, to see that all was well; for tho' it be something wonderful to tell, that any should have Hearts so hardned, in the midst of such a Calamity, as to rob and steal; yet certain it is, that all Sorts of Villanies, and even Levities and Debaucheries were then practis'd in the Town, as openly as ever, I will not say quite as frequently, because the Numbers of People were many ways lessen'd.

But the City it self began now to be visited too, I mean within the Walls; but the Number of People there were indeed extreamly lessen'd by so great a Multitude having been gone into the Country; and even all this Month of *July* they continu'd to flee, tho' not in such Multitudes as formerly. In *August* indeed, they fled in such a manner, that I began to think there would be really none but Magistrates and Servants left in the City.

As they fled now out of the City, so I should observe, that the

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Court removed early, (*viz.*) in the Month of *June*, and went to *Oxford*, where it pleas'd God to preserve them; and the Distemper did not, *as I heard of*, so much as touch them; for which I cannot say, that I ever saw they shew'd any great Token of Thankfulness, and hardly any thing of Reformation, tho' they did not want being told that their crying Vices might, without Breach of Charity, be said to have gone far, in bringing that terrible Judgment upon the whole Nation.

The Face of *London* was now indeed strangely alter'd, I mean the whole Mass of Buildings, City, Liberties, Suburbs, *Westminster*, *Southwark*, and altogether; for as to the particular Part called the City, or within the Walls, that was not yet much infected; but in the whole, the Face of Things, I say, was much alter'd; Sorrow and Sadness sat upon every Face; and tho' some Part were not yet overwhelm'd, yet all look'd deeply concern'd; and as we saw it apparently coming on, so every one look'd on himself, and his Family, as in the utmost Danger; were it possible to represent those Times exactly to those that did not see them, and give the Reader due Ideas of the Horror that every where presented itself, it must make just Impressions upon their Minds, and fill them with Surprise. *London* might well be said to be all in Tears; the Mourners did not go about the Streets indeed, for no Body put on black, or made a formal Dress of Mourning, for their nearest Friends; but the Voice of Mourning was truly heard in the Streets; the shrieks of Women and Children at the Windows, and Doors of their Houses, where their dearest Relatives were, perhaps dying, or just dead, were so frequent to be heard, as we passed the Streets, that it was enough to pierce the stoutest Heart in the World, to hear them. Tears and Lamentations were seen almost in every House, especially in the first Part of the Visitation; for towards the latter End, Mens Hearts were hardned, and Death was so always before their Eyes, that they did not so much concern themselves for the Loss of their Friends, expecting, that themselves should be summoned the next Hour.

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Business led me out sometimes to the other End of the Town, even when the Sickness was chiefly there; and as the thing was new to me, as well as to every Body else, it was a most surprising thing, to see those Streets, which were usually so thronged, now grown desolate, and so few People to be seen in them, that if I had been a Stranger, and at a Loss for my Way, I might sometimes have gone the Length of a whole Street, I mean of the by-Streets, and see no Body to direct me, except Watchmen, set at the Doors of such Houses as were shut up; of which I shall speak presently.

One Day, being at that part of the Town, on some special Business, Curiosity led me to observe things more than usually; and indeed I walk'd a great Way where I had no Business; I went up *Holbourn*, and there the Street was full of People; but they walk'd in the middle of the Street, neither on one Side or other, because, as I suppose, they would not mingle with any Body that came out of Houses, or meet with Smells and Scents from Houses that might be infected.

The Inns-of-Court were all shut up; nor were very many of the Lawyers in the Temple, or *Lincolns-Inn*, or *Greyes-Inn*, to be seen there. Every Body was at peace, there was no Occasion for Lawyers; besides, it being in the Time of the Vacation too, they were generally gone into the Country. Whole Rows of Houses in some Places, were shut close up; the Inhabitants all fled, and only a Watchman or two left.

When I speak of Rows of Houses being shut up, I do not mean shut up by the Magistrates; but that great Numbers of Persons followed the Court, by the Necessity of their Employments, and other Dependencies: and as others retir'd, really frighted with the Distemper, it was a mere desolating of some of the Streets; But the Fright was not yet near so great in the City, abstractly so called; and particularly because, tho' they were at first in a most inexpressible Consternation, yet as I have observ'd, that the Distemper intermitted often at first; so they were as it were, allarm'd, and

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unallarm'd again, and this several times, till it began to be familiar to them; and that even, when it appear'd violent, yet seeing it did not presently spread into the City, or the *East* and *South* Parts, the People began to take Courage, and to be, as I may say, a little hardned: It is true, a vast many People fled, as I have observ'd, yet they were chiefly from the *West* End of the Town; and from that we call the Heart of the City, that is to say, among the wealthiest of the People; and such People as were unincumbred with Trades and Business: But of the rest, the Generality stay'd, and seem'd to abide the worst; So that in the Place we call the Liberties, and in the Suburbs, in *Southwark*, and in the *East* Part, such as *Wapping*, *Ratclif*, *Stepney*, *Rotherhith*, and the like, the People generally stay'd, except here and there a few wealthy Families, who, as above, did not depend upon their Business.

It must not be forgot here, that the City and Suburbs were prodigiously full of People, at the time of this Visitation, I mean, at the time that it began; for tho' I have liv'd to see a farther Encrease, and mighty Throngs of People settling in *London*, more than ever, yet we had always a Notion, that the Numbers of People, which the Wars being over, the Armies disbanded, and the Royal Family and the Monarchy being restor'd, had flock'd to *London*, to settle in Business; or to depend upon, and attend the Court for Rewards of Services, Preferments, *and the like*, was such, that the Town was computed to have in it above a hundred thousand people more than ever it held before; nay, some took upon them to say, it had twice as many, because all the ruin'd Families of the royal Party, flock'd hither: All the old Soldiers set up Trades here, and abundance of Families settled here; again, the Court brought with them a great Flux of Pride, and new Fashions; All People were grown gay and luxurious; and the Joy of the Restoration had brought a vast many Families to *London*.

I often thought, that as *Jerusalem* was besieg'd by the *Romans*, when the *Jews* were assembled together, to celebrate the Passover,

by which means, an incredible Number of People were surpriz'd there, who would otherwise have been in other Countries: So the Plague entered *London*, when an incredible Increase of People had happened occasionally, by the particular Circumstances above-nam'd: As this Conflux of the People, to a youthful and gay Court, made a great Trade in the City, especially in every thing that belong'd to Fashion and Finery; So it drew by Consequence, a great Number of Work-men, Manufacturers, and the like, being mostly poor People, who depended upon their Labour. And I remember in particular, that in a Representation to my Lord Mayor, of the Condition of the Poor, it was estimated, that, there were no less than an Hundred Thousand Ribband Weavers in and about the City; the chiefeſt Number of whom, lived then in the Parishes of *Shoreditch*, *Stepney*, *White-chapel*, and *Bishopsgate*; that namely, about *Spittle-fields*; that is to say, as *Spittle-fields* was then; for it was not so large as now, by one fifth Part.

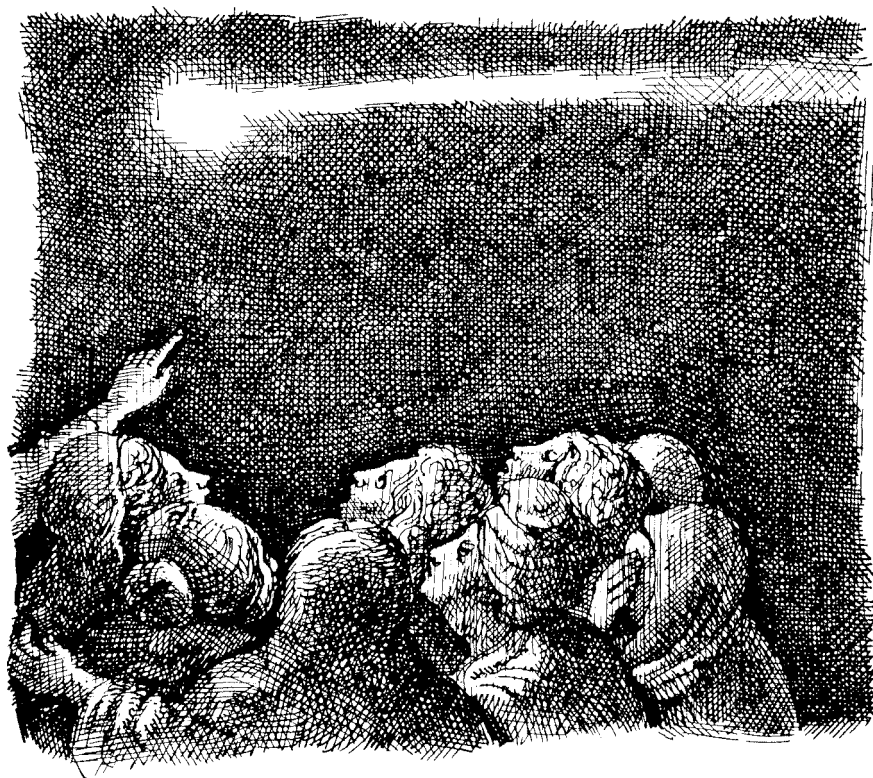
By this however, the Number of People in the whole may be judg'd of; and indeed, I often wondred, that after the prodigious Numbers of People that went away at first, there was yet so great a Multitude left, as it appear'd there was.

But I must go back again to the Beginning of this Surprising Time, while the Fears of the People were young, they were encreas'd strangely by several odd Accidents, which put altogether, it was really a wonder the whole Body of the People did not rise as one Man, and abandon their Dwellings, leaving the Place as a Space of Ground designed by Heaven for an Akeldama, doom'd to be destroy'd from the Face of the Earth; and that all that would be found in it, would perish with it. I shall Name but a few of these Things; but sure they were so many, and so many Wizards and cunning People propagating them, that I have often wonder'd there was any, (Women especially) left behind.

In the first Place, a blazing Star or Comet appear'd for several Months before the Plague, as there did the Year after another, a

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little before the Fire; the old Women, and the Phlegmatic Hypochondriac Part of the other Sex, who I could almost call *old Women* too, remark'd (especially afterward tho' not, till both those Judgments were over,) that those two Comets pass'd directly over the City, and that so very near the Houses, that it was plain, they imported something peculiar to the City alone; that the Comet before the Pestilence, was of a faint, dull, languid Colour, and its Motion very heavy, solemn, and slow: But that the Comet before the Fire, was bright and sparkling, or as others said, flaming, and its Motion swift and furious; and that accordingly, One foretold a heavy Judgment, slow but severe, terrible and frightful, as was the Plague; but the other foretold a Stroak, sudden, swift, and fiery as the Conflagration; nay, so particular some People were, that as they look'd



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upon that Comet preceding the Fire, they fancied that they not only saw it pass swiftly and fiercely, and cou'd perceive the Motion with their Eye, but even they heard it; that it made a rushing mighty Noise, fierce and terrible, tho' at a distance, and but just perceivable.

I saw both these Stars; and I must confess, had so much of the common Notion of such Things in my Head, that I was apt to look upon them, as the Forerunners and Warnings of God's Judgments; and especially when after the Plague had followed the first, I yet saw another of the like kind; I could not but say, God had not yet sufficiently scourg'd the City.

But I cou'd not at the same Time carry these Things to the heighth that others did, knowing too, that natural Causes are assign'd by the Astronomers for such Things; and that their Motions, and even their Revolutions are calculated, or pretended to be calculated; so that they cannot be so perfectly call'd the Fore-runners, or Fore-tellers, much less the procurers of such Events, as Pestilence, War, Fire, and the like.

But let my Thoughts, and the Thoughts of the Philosophers be, or have been what they will, these Things had a more than ordinary Influence upon the Minds of the common People, and they had almost universal melancholly Apprehensions of some dreadful Calamity and Judgment coming upon the City; and this principally from the Sight of this Comet, and the little Allarm that was given in *December*, by two People dying at *St Giles's*, as above.

The Apprehensions of the People, were likewise strangely encreas'd by the Error of the Times; in which, I think, the People, from what Principle I cannot imagine, were more adicted to Prophecies, and Astrological Conjurations, Dreams, and old Wives Tales, than ever they were before or since: Whether this unhappy Temper was originally raised by the Follies of some People who got Money by it; that is to say, by printing Predictions, and Prognostications, I know not; but certain it is, Books frighted them terribly; such as *Lilly's Almanack*, *Gadbury's Astrological Predictions*; Poor *Rob-*

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in's Almanack and the like; also several pretended religious Books; one entituled, *Come out of her my People, leaſt you be partaker of her Plagues*; another call'd, *Fair Warning*; another, *Britain's Remembrancer*, and many ſuch; all, or moſt Part of which, foretold directly or covertly the Ruin of the City: Nay, ſome were ſo Enthuſiaſtically bold, as to run about the Streets, with their Oral Predictions, pretending they were ſent to preach to the City; and One in particular, who like *Jonah* to *Nineveh*, cry'd in the Streets, *yet forty Days, and L O N D O N ſhall be deſtroy'd*. I will not be poſitive, whether he ſaid yet forty Days, or yet a few Days. Another run about Naked, except a pair of Drawers about his Waſte, crying Day and Night; like a Man that *Joſephus* mentions, who cry'd, woe to *Jeruſalem!* a little before the Deſtruction of that City: So this poor naked Creature cry'd, *O! the Great, and the Dreadful God!* and ſaid no more, but repeated thoſe Words continually, with a Voice and Countenance full of horror, a ſwift Pace, and no Body cou'd ever find him to ſtop, or reſt, or take any Suſtenance, at leaſt, that ever I cou'd hear of. I met this poor Creature ſeveral Times in the Streets, and would have ſpoke to him, but he would not enter into Speech with me, or any one elſe; but held on his diſmal Cries continually.

THESE Things terrified the People to the laſt Degree; and eſpecially when two or three Times, as I have mentioned already, they found one or two in the Bills, dead of the Plague at *St Giles*.

NEXT to theſe publick Things, were the Dreams of old Women: Or, I ſhould ſay, the Interpretation of old Women upon other Peoples Dreams; and theſe put abundance of People even out of their Wits: Some heard Voices warning them to be gone, for that there would be ſuch a Plague in *London*, ſo that the Living would not be able to bury the Dead: Others ſaw Apparitions in the Air; and I muſt be allow'd to ſay of both, I hope with out breach of Charity, that they heard Voices that never ſpake, and ſaw Sightſ that never appear'd; but the Imagination of the People was really turn'd way-

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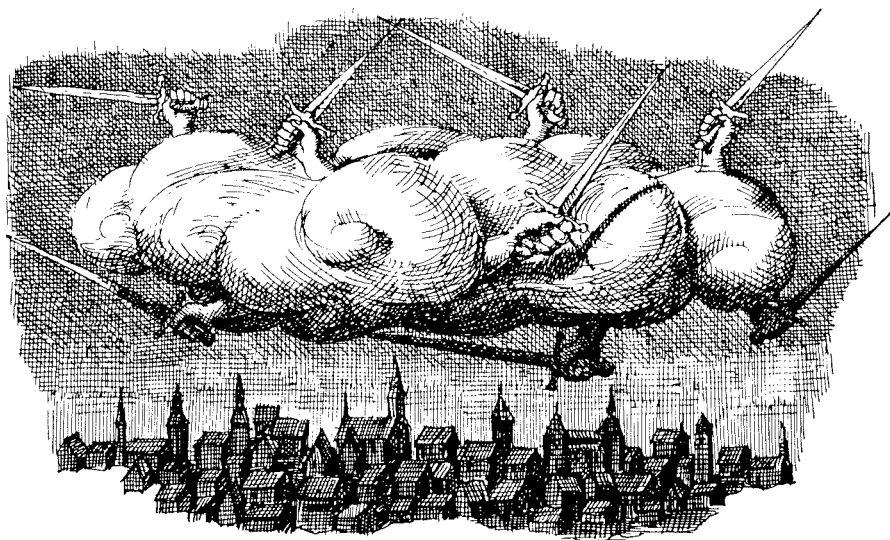
ward and possess'd: And no Wonder, if they, who were poreing continually at the Clouds, saw Shapes and Figures, Representations and Appearances, which had nothing in them, but Air and Vapour. Here they told us, they saw a Flaming-Sword held in a Hand, coming out of a Cloud, with a Point hanging directly over the City. There they saw Horses, and Coffins in the Air, carrying to be buried. And there again, Heaps of dead Bodies lying unburied, and the like; just as the Imagination of the poor terrify'd People furnish'd them with Matter to work upon.

*So Hypochondriac Fancy's represent
Ships, Armies, Battles, in the Firmament;
Till steady Eyes, the Exhalations solve,
And all to its first Matter, Cloud, resolve*

I could fill this Account with the strange Relations, such People gave every Day, of what they had seen; and every one was so positive of their having seen, what they pretended to see, that there was no contradicting them, without Breach of Friendship, or being accounted rude and unmannerly on the one Hand, and prophane and impenetrable on the other. One time before the Plague was begun, (otherwise than as I have said in *St Giles's*,) I think it was in *March*, seeing a Crowd of People in the Street, I join'd with them to satisfy my Curocity, and found them all staring up into the Air, to see what a Woman told them appeared plain to her, which was an Angel cloth'd in white, with a fiery Sword in his Hand, waving it, or brandishing it over his Head. She described every Part of the Figure to the Life; shew'd them the Motion, and the Form; and the poor People came into it so eagerly, and with so much Readiness; YES, *I see it all plainly*, says one. *There's the Sword as plain as can be*. Another saw the Angel. One saw his very Face, and cry'd out, What a glorious Creature he was! One saw one thing, and one another. I look'd as earnestly as the rest, but, perhaps, not with so much Willingness to be impos'd upon; and I said indeed, that *I*

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could see nothing, but a white Cloud, bright on one side, by the shining of the Sun upon the other Part. The Woman endeavour'd to shew it me, but could not make me confess, that I saw it, which, indeed, if I had, I must have lied: But the Woman turning upon me, look'd in my Face, and fancied I laugh'd; in which her Imagination deceiv'd her too; for I really did not laugh, but was very seriously reflecting how the poor People were terrify'd, by the Force of their own Imagination. However, she turned from me, call'd me prophane Fellow, and a Scoffer; told me, that it was a time of God's Anger, and dreadful Judgments were approaching; and that Despisers, such as I, should *wander and perish*.



The People about her seem'd disgusted as well as she; and I found there was no perswading them, that I did not laugh at them; and that I should be rather mobb'd by them, than be able to undeceive them. So I left them; and this Appearance pass'd for as real, as the Blazing Star itself.

Another Encounter I had in the open Day also: And this was in going thro' a narrow Passage from *Petty-France* into *Bishopsgate*

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Church Yard, by a Row of Alms-Houses; there are two Church Yards to *Bishopsgate* Church, or Parish; one we go over to pass from the Place call'd *Petty-France* into *Bishopsgate* Street, coming out just by the Church Door, the other is on the side of the narrow Passage, where the Alms-Houses are on the left; and a Dwarf wall with a Palisadoe on it, on the right Hand; and the City Wall on the other Side, more to the right.

In this narrow Passage stands a Man looking thro' between the Palisadoe's into the Burying Place; and as many People as the Narrowness of the Passage would admit to stop, without hindring the Passage of others; and he was talking mighty eagerly to them, and pointing now to one Place, then to another, and affirming, that he saw a Ghost walking upon such a Grave Stone there; he describ'd the Shape, the Posture, and the Movement of it so exactly, that it was the greatest Matter of Amazement to him in the World, that every Body did not see it as well as he. On a sudden he would cry, *There it is: Now it comes this Way:* Then, *'Tis turned back;* till at length he persuaded the People into so firm a Belief of it, that one fancied he saw it, and another fancied he saw it; and thus he came every Day making a strange Hubbub, considering it was in so narrow a Passage, till *Bishopsgate* Clock struck eleven; and then the Ghost would seem to start; and as if he were call'd away, disappear'd on a sudden.

I look'd earnestly every way, and at the very Moment, that this Man directed, but could not see the least Appearance of any thing; but so positive was this poor man, that he gave the People the Vapours in abundance, and sent them away trembling, and frighted; till at length, few People, that knew of it, car'd to go thro' that Passage; and hardly any Body by Night, on any Account whatever.

This Ghost, as the poor Man affirm'd, made Signs to the Houses, and to the Ground, and to the People, plainly intimating, or else they so understanding it, that Abundance of the People, should come to be buried in that Church-Yard; as indeed happen'd:

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But that he saw such Aspects, I must acknowledge, I never believ'd; nor could I see any thing of it my self, tho' I look'd most earnestly to see it, if possible.

These things serve to shew, how far the People were really overcome with Delusions; and as they had a Notion of the Approach of a Visitation, all their Predictions run upon a most dreadful Plague, which should lay the whole City, and even the Kingdom waste; and should destroy almost all the Nation, both Man and Beast.

To this, as I said before, the Astrologers added Stories of the Conjunctions of Planets in a malignant Manner, and with a mischievous Influence; one of which Conjunctions was to happen, and did happen, in *October*; and the other in *November*; and they filled the Peoples Heads with Predictions on these Signs of the Heavens, intimating, that those Conjunctions fortold Drought, Famine, and Pestilence; in the two first of them however, they were entirely mistaken, For we had no drougthy Season, but in the beginning of the Year, a hard Frost, which lasted from *December* almost to *March*; and after that moderate Weather, rather warm than hot, with refreshing Winds, and in short, very seasonable Weather; and also several very great Rains.

Some Endeavors were used to suppress the Printing of such Books as terrify'd the People, and to frighten the dispersers of them, some of whom were taken up, but nothing was done in it, as I am inform'd; The Government being unwilling to exasperate the People, who were, *as I may say*, all out of their Wits already.

Neither can I acquit those Ministers, that in their Sermons, rather sunk, than lifted up the Hearts of their Hearers; many of them no doubt did it for the strengthening the Resolution of the People; and especially for quickning them to Repentance; but it certainly answer'd not their End, at least not in Proportion to the injury it did another Way; and indeed, as God himself thro' the whole Scriptures, rather draws to him by Invitations, and calls to

