

1665. Dr. Hodges, Dr. Boghurst and Dr. George Thomson, along with 40 other medical men worked strenuously to combat the terrible epidemic and, strangely enough, only six doctors actually died from plague so far as we can discover. There was a large death-rate among churchwardens and parish clerks, who loyally remained at their posts, and as for the Court, it behaved with the greatest cowardice and moved to Oxford. But all the aristocracy could not be accused of indifference to the plight of the citizens of London. The Earl of Craven presented a pest house at Tothill Fields, and George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, also did what he could to establish relief for those suffering from plague. The Craven Pest House Charity comes down from the beneficence of the former. Sir John Lawrence, the Lord Mayor, also established a worthy record for his great office at that time.

One of the most terrible means resorted to to control the plague was to lock the sick and well up together in the houses where it occurred. Women "Searchers of the dead" were employed to seek out those affected by plague. They were paupers appointed by the parish and were probably ready to take bribes to allow their discoveries to remain uncommunicated. The death cart passed through the streets with the melancholy cry, "Bring out your dead, bring out your dead," while a bell heralded its coming. The summer of 1665 was one of the hottest on record and a severe frost about the end of October played a part in controlling the disease. The King had promised the sum of £1,000 towards the work of combating the awful visitation but there is no evidence that he paid it. The Church has not much to its credit either for Deans and Bishops fled, and the pulpits were filled by those who had been put out of them by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and they and other Nonconformists preached to crowded congregations. The dead were thrown into what were known as plague pits, many without so much as a shroud. There was always an element of secrecy about this, but two plague pits are still to be seen, one outside Tattersall's Gate in Kensington and another at Bunhill Fields, green patches enclosed by iron railings. There are no monuments or tablets to the Great Plague and nothing is erected to show that any person in particular died from it; Dr. Alexander Davies, a scrivener whose monument is in St. Margaret's, Westminster, was one of the early victims although his epitaph does not give the cause of his death. Major Rigg gave a short account of how the visitations of plague gradually led to the establishment of the great voluntary hospitals. Several questions were put at the close of the lecture and among them one relating to the treatment used by the medical men. The lecturer stated that there is little or no evidence to show what was done in this direction; cupping and scarifying were resorted to, but these had, it was agreed, little or no effect.

Very warm appreciation was expressed of Major Rigg's most interesting lecture which we cannot report quite so fully as we should have desired owing to the limitations of space.

#### THE RAMBLERS' CLUB.

Early in October the Ramblers made their last long pilgrimage for the season. The woods and hedges were still rich and beautiful, just showing the early tints of the autumn. Perhaps the sight that pleased us best was a perfectly gorgeous and ever-changing sunset. We are apt to make too little of the Michaelmas season, but Nature does not forget to do homage to the Archangel, and the glorious flaming sunset effects were both inspiring and suggestive.

Despite the colder weather almost every seat in the largest charabanc we could find was filled, and we made first for The Blue Idol, famous for its associations with the Founder of Pennsylvania. The house is most attractive,

with its timber frame and its stone, lichen-covered roof, surrounded by an old English orchard and a large garden. It was strange to find a tiny graveyard among the apple trees and within sight of the windows. The age of the house is unknown, but it was spoken of as "The Old House" even at the time when the Quakers bought it, in the seventeenth century, from some yeoman farmer. The origin of the name of the house (*i.e.*, The Blue Idol) is lost in antiquity; it may have arisen in early Reformation times from some blue-robed statue of the Virgin, and at least the Friends hold that it belonged to the house before Penn acquired it. It was interesting in the timber-beamed meeting house, to reflect that on the raised platform, he had presided over his little community when they drafted the laws for the government of Pennsylvania.

After a delicious tea of home-made cakes we continued our way to the Roman remains at Bignor. We traversed on foot a field track to the site of the old Roman Villa. Fifty-two rooms it is calculated to have contained, and it was only when a ploughshare struck the edge of the fountain rim in the central hall that its remains were discovered in the last century. The mosaics are beautiful, and in the floors and walls there was evidence of a very effective system of central heating. The mansion is believed to date from the earlier part of the second century. It was a wonderful experience to visit it in the falling twilight, with the blazing sky beyond and surrounded by beautiful woods and hills, to try in imagination to reconstruct it round the square. Now the sheep graze peacefully where horses and chariots used to wait for the wealthy Romans.

#### DANCE.

The annual dance took place early this year as a young member, who has stayed at the Club during the greater part of the summer, had to leave in October for South Africa; we had agreed to have the dance before her departure. It seemed more than usually gay this year and, except during the supper interval, full advantage was taken of the good music provided. There were many exceedingly pretty frocks and a number of gentlemen came in Highland dress which added colour to a scene which appeared to afford as much pleasure to those who preferred to be lookers on as to those who danced. Two of the guests brought their bagpipes so that a twice repeated demand for a reel was easily met. Mr. Macaulay, in full Highland dress, performed two solo dances (to the accompaniment of the pipes), which were enthusiastically applauded. Someone asked how it happened that heavily built men danced so lightly and we heard the reply: "Well, you know, they're used to the spring of the heather."

#### SALE OF WORK.

We would remind our Members that the Sale of Work will take place as usual on December 7th, the birthday of the Association. The proceeds of this sale are always allocated to the House Beautiful Fund and we hope to receive many gifts from the Members of their Association on its Birthday, in order that the Club may look its best during the coming year, when we shall be entertaining so many visitors from our Dominions, both during Coronation week and during the Congress. Also we have to bear in mind the fact that the Association will celebrate its Jubilee next year, and we should "think ahead" as there will be a double weight put upon our efforts to raise money; the Members will wish to contribute something towards the expenses of the Congress as well as to some form of celebration of the fiftieth year of the Association's activity.

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