



## Chapter 18

 A Newspaper Cutting

## EXTRACT FROM THE "FAYFIELD CHRONICLE"

*Our readers will have followed with painful interest, the accounts we have from time to time published of the terrible epidemic which has, during the last two months, carried off most of the inhabitants of the little fishing-harbour adjoining the village of Elveston. The last survivors, numbering twenty-three only, out of a population which, three short months ago exceeded one hundred and twenty, were removed on Wednesday last, under the authority of the Local Board, and safely lodged in the County Hospital: and the place is now veritably "a city of the dead", without a single human voice to break its silence.*

*The rescuing party consisted of six sturdy fellows--fishermen from the neighbourhood--directed by the resident Physician of the Hospital, who came over for that purpose, heading a train of hospital-ambulances. The six men had been selected--from a much larger number who had volunteered for this peaceful "forlorn hope"--for their strength and robust health, as the expedition was considered to be, even now, when the malady has expended its chief force, not unattended with danger.*

*Every precaution that science could suggest, against the risk of infection, was adopted: and the sufferers were tenderly carried on litters, one by one, up the steep hill, and placed in the ambulances which, each provided with a hospital nurse, were waiting on the level road. The fifteen miles, to the Hospital, were done at a walking-pace, as some of the patients were in too prostrate a condition to bear jolting, and the journey occupied the whole afternoon.*

*The twenty-three patients consist of nine men, six women and eight children. It has not been found possible to identify them all, as some of the children--left with no surviving relatives--are infants: and two men and one woman are not yet able to make rational replies, the brain-powers being entirely in abeyance. Among a more well-to-do race, there would no doubt have been names marked on the clothes; but here no such evidence is forthcoming.*

*Besides the poor fishermen and their families, there were but five persons to be accounted for: and it was ascertained, beyond a doubt, that all five are numbered with the dead.*

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*It is a melancholy pleasure to place on record the names of these genuine martyrs--than whom none, surely, are more worthy to be entered on the glory-roll of England's heroes! They are as follows:*

*The Rev. James Burgess, M.A., and Emma his wife. He was the Curate at the Harbour, not thirty years old, and had been married only two years. A written record was found in their house, of the dates of their deaths.*

*Next to theirs we will place the honoured name of Dr. Arthur Forester, who, on the death of the local physician, nobly faced the imminent peril of death, rather than leave these poor folk uncared for in their last extremity. No record of his name, or of the date of his death, was found: but the corpse was easily identified, although dressed in the ordinary fisherman's suit (which he was known to have adopted when he went down there), by a copy of the New Testament, the gift of his wife, which was found, placed next his heart, with his hands crossed over it. It was not thought prudent to remove the body, for burial elsewhere: and accordingly it was at once committed to the ground, along with four others found in different houses, with all due reverence. His wife, whose maiden name was Lady Muriel Orme, had been married to him on the very morning on which he undertook his self-sacrificing mission.*

*Next we record the Rev. Walter Saunders, Wesleyan Minister. His death is believed to have taken place two or three weeks ago, as the words "Died October 5" were found written on the wall of the room which he is known to have occupied--the house being shut up, and apparently not having been entered for some time.*

*Last--though not a whit behind the other four in glorious self-denial and devotion to duty--let us record the name of Father Francis, a young Jesuit Priest who had been only a few months in the place. He had not been dead many hours when the exploring party came upon the body, which was identified, beyond the possibility of doubt, by the dress, and by the crucifix which was, like the young Doctor's Testament, clasped closely to his heart.*

*Since reaching the hospital, two of the men and one of the children have died. Hope is entertained for all the others: though there are two or three cases where the vital powers seem to be so entirely exhausted that it is but "hoping against hope" to regard ultimate recovery as even possible.*