

went for; and so back and to the Tower several times about the business of the pressed men, and late at it, till 12 at night, shipping of them. But Lord, how some poor women did cry, and in my life I never did see such natural expression of passion as I did here – in some women's bewailing themselfs, and running to every parcel of men that were brought, one after another, to look for their husbands, and wept over every vessel that went off, thinking they might be there, and looking after the ship as far as ever they could by moonelight – that it grieved me to the heart to hear them. Besides, to see poor patient labouring men and housekeepers, leaving poor wifes and families, taken up on a sudden by strangers, was very hard; and that without press-money, but forced against all law to be gone. It is a great tyranny. Having done this, I to the Lieutenant of the Tower and bade him good-night, and so away home and to bed.

4. Up, and visited very betimes by Mr. Sheply, who is come to town upon business from Hinchingbrooke, where he left all well. I out, and walked along with him as far as Fleetestreete, it being a fast-day, the usual fast for the plague, and few coaches to be had. Thanks be to God, the plague is as I hear encreased but two this week. But in the country in several places it rages mightily, and perticularly in Colchester, where it hath long been, and is believed will quite depopulate the place. To St. James's, and there did our usual business with the Duke, all of us. Among other things, discoursing about the places where to build ten great ships, the King and Council have resolved on none to be under third-rates; but it is impossible to do it – unless we have more money towards the doing it then yet we have in any view. But however, the show must be made to the world. Thence home and dined; and then to the office, where busy all day. And in the evening Sir W. Pen came to me, and we walked together and talked of the late fight. I find him very plain that the whole conduct of the late fight was ill, and that that of truth's all, and he tells me that it is not he, but two-thirds of the commanders of the whole fleet have told him so – they all saying that they durst not oppose it at the council of war, for fear of being called Cowards, though it was wholly against their judgment to fight that day with that disproportion of force; and then we not being able to use one gun of our lower tire, which was a greater disproportion then the other. Besides, we might very well have stayed in the Downs without fighting, or anywhere else, till the