

But he says that the way proposed in Parliament by Coll. Birch would have been the best, to have chosen some persons in trust and sold the whole ground, and let it be sold again by them with preference to the old owner; which would have certainly caused the City to be built where these trustees pleased; whereas now, great differences will be and the streets built by fits, and not entire till all differences be decided. This, as he tells it, I think would have been the best way. I enquired about the Frenchman¹ that was said to fire the City, and was hanged for it by his own confession that he was hired for it by a Frenchman of Roane, and that he did with a stick reach in a Fireball in at a window of the house – whereas the maister of the house, who is the King's Baker, and his son and daughter do all swear there was no such window – and that the fire did not begin thereabouts. Asking Sir R. Viner what he thought was the cause of the fire, he tells me that the Baker, son and his daughter did all swear again and again that their Oven was drawn by 10 a-clock at night. That having occasion to light a candle about 12, there was not so much fire in the bakehouse as to light a match for a candle, so as they were fain to go into another place to light it. That about 2 in the morning they felt themselves almost choked with smoke; and rising, did find the fire coming upstairs – so they rose to save themselves; but that at that time the bavins were not on fire in the yard. So that they are, as they swear, in absolute ignorance how this fire should come – which is a strange thing, that so horrid an effect should have so mean and uncertain a beginning. By and by called in to the King and Cabinet and there had a few insipid words about money for Tanger, but to no purpose. Thence away, walked to my boat at Whitehall, and so home and to supper; and so to my Journall and to bed.

This night, going through bridge by water, my waterman told me how the mistress of the Beare tavern at the bridge foot did lately fling herself into the Thames and drowned herself; which did trouble me the more when they tell me it was she that did live at the White Horse tavern in Lumbard street; which was a most beautiful woman, as most I have seen. It seems hath had long melancholy upon her, and hath endeavoured to make away with herself often.

25. Lay long in bed, talking with pleasure with my poor wife how

1. Robert Hubert, hanged in October 1666.