

- 4 Read the story *In Eyam Men Still Talk* and say what relic the people of Eyam think to be the most touching.

In Eyam Men Still Talk

In the quiet

Eyam [i:m]; Derbyshire ['da:bʃɪ]

Derbyshire village of Eyam, men still talk about the Plague¹ of London as though it happened last week. Eyam is the last place in England with a vivid² memory of the terrible happening of 1665.

Eyam is a mile-long street of stone houses set in a cosy corner of the wild Peakland moors. There is a church, a manor-house behind a wall, and the remains of the village stocks.

The great Plague of London, which came before the Fire of London, lives for Englishmen now only in the fine journalism of Defoe's *Plague Year*. So many things have happened to London since the reign of Charles II that the Plague is not even a memory! But it was the last thing that happened to Eyam!

Daniel Defoe [dɪ'fou] (1663—1731), an English writer, whose most famous novel is *Robinson Crusoe*. He gave a vivid description of the Plague of London in his *Journal Of The Plague Year* (1722).

This is the story.

In the autumn of 1665, a box of clothes was sent from London to a tailor³ in this village. They were damp⁴. The servant who dried them at a fire became ill and died of the plague. So also did others in the house. The horrible thing had taken root among the clean, windy moors of Derbyshire.

No one knew where the next plague death would

¹ **plague** ['pleɪg] — чума

² **vivid** ['vɪvɪd] — яркий

³ **tailor** ['teɪlə] — портной

⁴ **damp** [dæmp] — сырой





take place. No one knew when he or she might develop the symptoms which were signs of death. People wanted to get away, to reach the windy moors, to put miles behind them and the village which had suddenly become a place of horror.

Then an extraordinary thing happened which must give Eyam an important place among the courageous villages of England.

The rector of the church of Eyam, William Mompesson, saw that the stampede¹ from Eyam might spread the plague through the north of England. He gathered the villagers and persuaded² them to remain and defy³ the plague. He promised that he would stand by them to the end. He drew a line round the village a mile from its centre, and beyond this boundary no man, woman, or child from Eyam was to move. At different points along the line were established food dumps. People from other villages would come up at given times with supplies, which they left on the boundary. So Eyam was fed.

¹ **stampede** [stæm'pi:d] — паническое бегство

² **to persuade** [pə'sweɪd] — убедить

³ **to defy** [dɪ'faɪ] — бросать вызов

When Mompesson appealed to the courage of the people of Eyam, three hundred and fifty villagers remained with him. The plague continued for over twelve months and when it ended, as it did suddenly, two hundred and sixty-seven had died. Only eighty-three remained to tell the story of a year's horror.

Surely there are few villages in England which can point to a braver story.

The most touching plague relic in Eyam is a cluster of graves¹ in a field some distance from the village. They are protected from the wandering cattle by a low small stone wall. They are very lonely, with the wind blowing over them, the green moss eating into them, and about them still an air of tragedy.

5 *Answer the questions.*

- 1 What terrible event took place in England in 1665?
- 2 What kind of place is Eyam?
- 3 What tragic story do the people of Eyam still remember?
- 4 How did it happen that the village of Eyam suddenly became a place of horror?
- 5 What frightened the rector of Eyam which made him gather the villagers and persuade them not to leave the place?
- 6 How did the rector act?
- 7 How many people remained in the village ?
- 8 For how long did the plague continue? How many people were alive when it ended?

6 *Try and explain the following words:*

“Surely there are few villages in England which can point to a braver story.”

¹ **cluster** ['klʌstə] **of graves** — скопление могил