

**M0001918: Reproduction of a woodcut captioned "Burning plague-spreaders"**

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Holy Year was being celebrated. Not only was absolution given, but the souls of those who died were to be carried straight to heaven without first passing through purgatory. By Easter 1,200,000 people from all parts of Europe had gathered at Rome. Some of these



BURNING PLAGUE-SPREADERS

From an old woodcut. During epidemics of the plague anyone accused of spreading the disease was dealt with summarily. The absurdity of the evidence upon which such accusations were based made little difference; even a suspicion was sufficient to excite the frightened people to a frenzy of revenge.

pilgrims brought the plague with them; it spread rapidly through the crowded people. Scarcely 10 per cent lived to return to their homes. But the offerings that the pilgrims made to the Church amounted to an enormous sum. The pope did not contract the plague. He was at Avignon, which he had just purchased from Queen Jane of Naples, and when the plague reached that city he