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H. Martineau

THE

CHOLERA IN BERWICK STREET.

BY

THE SENIOR CURATE OF ST. LUKE'S,
BERWICK STREET.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
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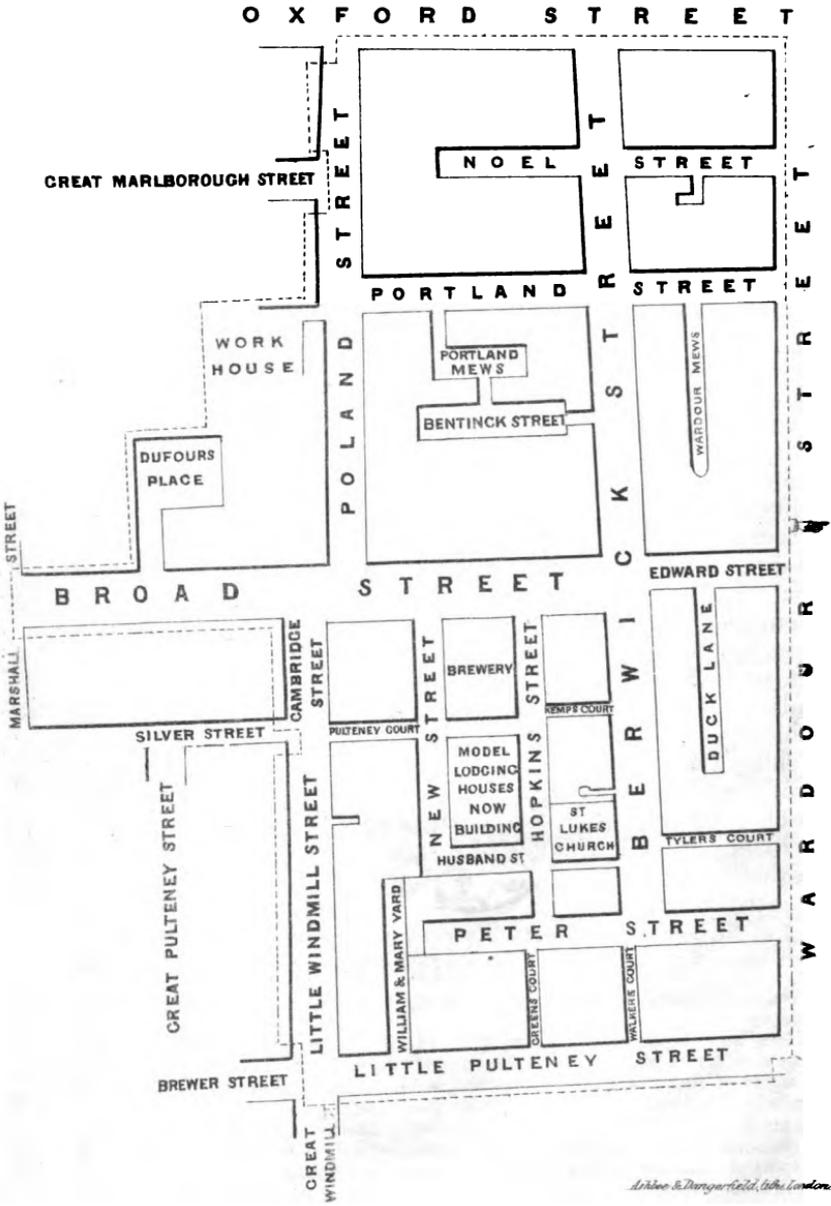
1854.

One Shilling.





DISTRICT PARISH OF ST LUKE'S BERWICK ST



Adrian & Thornton Field, 18th London

Boundary of the District
St Ann's Court Soho.

THE CHOLERA IN BERWICK STREET.

IF a person were to start from the western end of Broad Street, and, after traversing its whole length on the south side from west to east, to return as far as the brewery, and then, going down Hopkins Street, along Husband Street, and up New Street, to end by walking through Pulteney Court, he would pass successively forty-five houses, of which only six* escaped without a death during the recent outburst of cholera in that neighbourhood.

According to a calculation based upon the last census, those forty-five houses contained a population of about 1,000. Out of that number 104† perished by the pestilence.

Returning to Broad Street from Pulteney Court by way of Cambridge Street, he would indeed find a few houses in that short street which were spared, but he would still hear of its population being almost decimated, as it lost sixteen of its 179 inhabitants.

Taking a more comprehensive view, he would find the western half of Broad Street to have been about the centre of the infected district. Starting from thence, any one walking at a moderate rate in any direction might have gone beyond its limits in less than three minutes.

It is the writer's intention to confine his observations to the district ‡ of St. Luke's, Berwick Street, with the houses and people of which he has for more than three years been intimately acquainted.

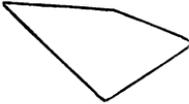
* And from three of these six, no less than 18 non-residents caught their deaths, 16 from one factory.

† Here, and throughout this narrative, the deaths recorded are only those of persons resident in the district at the time of the outburst of the pestilence, who died, many of them at their own houses, some in the workhouse, others at the hospitals, and a few in the country, having fled thither for security.

‡ This is not identical with the Berwick-street district of the Bills of Mortality, as it includes more of the streets which have suffered, and fewer of those which have escaped, than are assigned by the Registrar to the latter.

It must also be borne in mind that St. Luke's district parish does not include the whole of the infected neighbourhood.

But an easy way suggests itself to his mind by which he may enable any one to ascertain for himself, almost by a glance at a map of London, the streets and parts of streets throughout which the disease may be said to have literally performed a *house-to-house visitation*. Take a point on the east side of Poland Street, half-way between Portland Street and the level of Great Marlborough Street; draw from thence two straight lines, one to the north-west corner of King Street, Regent Street, and the other to the east end of St. Anne's Court (a very long court), Soho. Join the two latter points, each by a straight line, to the south-west corner of Little Pulteney Street, and you have a four-sided figure, enclosing with singular exactness the area within which only a few houses escaped, and outside of which comparatively few suffered.



On previous occasions the cholera had visited St. Luke's but lightly, destroying no more than ten of its inhabitants in 1849, and about the same number in 1832. There was every reason, according to human calculations, to anticipate a similar immunity from its ravages during the present season. The people had watched with interest the elaborate construction of a new sewer, which, when finished, was deemed amply to atone for its recent interruption of business, by the supposed freedom from pestilence which it secured. The bills of mortality during the month of August encouraged this belief, announcing a total of only four deaths from cholera in four weeks. It is true that three of those deaths were of a startling nature. One morning, August 16th, a tradesman in Berwick Street, much respected by his neighbours, took down his shutters, to be replaced in the evening long before the usual hour as the signal of his decease. The same day, in the same street, the wife of a respectable mechanic expired after a short illness. Her husband survived only long enough to express his desire that he should be buried at the same time with her. A crowd assembled to witness the departure of the hearse with its double burden. Little conscious were they how soon the carrying off of husband and wife together to their last resting-place should cease to be a novelty in that neighbourhood. The impression made by this occurrence soon wore away, and, as no more deaths immediately followed, all apprehension was presently allayed. It is worthy of notice, however, that one night in August, the inhabitants of certain contiguous streets and courts—the very same which have just suffered so severely—were very generally attacked by diarrhoea, but as in no one instance did it prove fatal, it was rather prematurely concluded that the cholera had already come, done its worst, and retired.

The morning of Friday, the 1st of September, was destined to dispel any such delusion—a morning long to be remembered in this neighbourhood. The first intimation which the writer re-

ceived of the sad incidents of the night, came in the form of a summons to the death-bed of one with whom he had cheerfully conversed at a late hour on the preceding evening. A patient, gentle widow, she was an object of special interest to all who knew her. Many a pitying glance was cast that morning upon her little children, as they moved about scarce conscious of what was happening. What was to become of them? What *has* become of them? They have found an asylum, but it is in their mother's grave. A fearful tragedy was enacting in that one small house, when eight * of its twenty inmates died in quick succession before the night of the 4th of September. And one there was, who will be remembered by the survivors as one of God's own heroines, a truly Christian woman, who watched day and night at the bedsides of the dying, and by her calm and quiet demeanour sustained the spirits of the living, till she herself fell the eighth victim to the disease. The writer will not soon forget how, on the 5th or 6th evening of the month, he found the remnant gathered together in one room, in a state of anxiety and suspense concerning one of their number who complained of feeling sick and ill, and how their countenances lighted up with a gleam of satisfaction when he confidently assured them that the disease was subsiding, and its virulence abated, and that sickness was no longer the certain forerunner of death.

Elsewhere scenes as melancholy presented themselves in startling abundance. The tale that has just been told of one house is but given as a description of what was passing in many. In the very next that the writer entered, there lay at the point of death four persons, who the evening before had retired to rest in health and strength.

But as it is his desire to state facts which may be not only interesting but useful, he will at once put on paper some statistics taken from a list in his possession which contains the name and residence of each deceased person.

Population of St. Luke's, under 9,000 †; deaths by cholera since September 1st, 376, nearly all of which took place in the first fortnight, and 189, at least, in the first four days.

BROAD STREET.—Number of houses, exclusive of the brewery, 49; population, 869; deaths from cholera during the recent outbreak, 86 ‡; deaths in, or from, every house but one on its south side. Eleven houses on the north side escaped, among which

* Two other persons, non-residents, who came twice to this house to take away the furniture of a deceased friend, died of cholera in less than twenty-four hours after their second visit.

† Its population, in 1851, was 9,227; since which time a block of houses has been pulled down that contained considerably more inhabitants than the odd 227.

‡ In addition to these 86, no less than 30 workmen and other non-residents caught their deaths from this street.

were the six corner houses, which will be recognised by a reference to the map. Number of deaths on south side, 49; north side, 37.

DUFOUR'S PLACE.—Houses, 9; population, 170; deaths, 9; houses without any deaths, 4. Rumour sadly exaggerated the mortality in this place.

CAMBRIDGE STREET.—Houses, 14; population, 179; deaths, 16; deaths on west side, 10; east, 6, of which 3 were in one house. Five houses escaped.

LITTLE WINDMILL STREET, from its appearance, might have been expected to suffer more than those above mentioned. But such was not the case. Houses, 33; population, 595; deaths, 26; deaths on west side, 18; east, 8. West, only 4 houses escaped; east, only 4 were attacked.

PULTENEY COURT.—Houses (inclusive of two numbered in New Street), 9; population, nearly 200; deaths, 24. Only one house, a very small one, escaped.

NEW STREET.—Houses (exclusive of the two just mentioned), 9; deaths, 10. Only 1 house escaped.

HUSBAND STREET.—Houses, 5; deaths, 9. One* house escaped.

HOPKINS STREET.—Only 3 small houses; population, about 70; deaths, 13, of which 8 were in one house.

The three last-mentioned streets, or rather rows of houses, form three sides of a square, the fourth side of which is completed by the brewery. The back of St. Luke's Church, Berwick Street, adjoins Hopkins Street, and with it makes up the east side of the square. About two years ago there stood a large block of houses in the centre of this square, of the lowest and filthiest description, which have happily been pulled down to make way for some model houses now in course of erection. The number of inhabitants in those days used to be incalculable. What might have been the consequence had the old state of things continued to this time, it is frightful to contemplate. It is well that an influential society is now interested in this locality, for there is a sad need of a free circulation of air in these parts, which, it is to be hoped, may be provided for in some way or other. Any one who will take the trouble to explore them, will at once perceive the position of streets and houses to be the most effectual that could have been devised for the obstruction of any current of fresh air.

KEMP'S COURT.—Houses, 6; population, 78; deaths, 9; 3 houses escaped.

PETER STREET.—Houses, 32; population, 628; deaths, 20; deaths on its north side, 3; south, 17. All the three former occurred in those houses which lie between Hopkins Street and

* And that lost a non-resident, an errand boy.

the dead wall on the west. Of the latter, no less than 16 were in the four houses which stand between Green's Court and the same wall. It is remarkable, that when the parish authorities, in March 1849, instituted a searching investigation into the sanitary condition of the parish, these same four were found to be the only houses in Peter Street that were in a state to call forth commendation, all the rest being described as unwholesome, ill-ventilated, and some disgustingly filthy. They are certainly the best-looking houses in the street. Nowhere was more apparent than in Peter Street, the sharply defined outline of the infected district, for, whereas there were no less than twelve deaths in the house which stands at the north-west corner of GREEN'S COURT, there were only five in the court itself, out of a population of more than 200, though it is just the sort of place which might have been expected to suffer. The parallel court (WALKER'S) lost only one of its 76 inhabitants, a householder who went out of town for safety.

LITTLE PULTENEY STREET.—Houses, 28; population, 623; deaths, 7.

WILLIAM AND MARY YARD.—Consists chiefly of stables; deaths, 2.

BERWICK STREET.—Houses, 98; population, 1,526; deaths, 51; on the east side, 32; west, 19.

Of these 98 houses, 32 are between Broad Street and Peter Street. Population, 550; deaths, 28 (of the 51); east side, 22; west, 6. Greatest number of deaths in one house, 8.

Between Broad Street and Portland Street, are 26 houses of Berwick Street. Deaths, 21; west, 12; east, 9.

Between Portland Street and Noel Street, 1 death, on the west side.

Between Noel Street and Oxford Street, 1 death, on the east side.

TYLER'S COURT—although the 2 west corner houses (numbered in Berwick Street) suffered—lost only 1 of its 56 inhabitants.

OXFORD STREET.—Houses, 17; population, 117. Only 1 death.

NOEL STREET.—Houses, 27; population, 444; deaths, 4; all on the south side, and between Berwick Street and the dead wall.

PHILLIP'S COURT.—Runs out south from Noel Street; 1 death.

PORTLAND STREET.—Houses, 33; population, 525; deaths, 10.

PORTLAND MEWS.—Houses, 5; population, 58; deaths, 5.

BENTINCK STREET.—Houses, 14; population, 327; deaths, 21; on the north side, 5; south, 16, of which 8 were in one house.

EDWARD STREET.—Houses, 10; Population, 102; deaths, 4.

DUCK LANE (stables.)—Population, 26; deaths, 3.

POLAND STREET.—Houses, 65; population, 778; deaths, 29;

east side, 13; west, 16, including four* in the workhouse. Only 1 death in the part between Great Marlborough Street and Oxford Street.

WARDOUR STREET.†—Only the west side of it belongs to St. Luke's. Houses, 68; population, 731; deaths, 9, all of them, except two, between Edward Street and Tyler's Court.

In casting his eye over the list before him, the following observations occur to the writer:—

In	1 house there were	Deaths.	
In each of 3 others	.	12	= 12
" 2 "	.	8	= 24
" 9 "	.	6	= 12
" 6 "	.	5	= 45
" 6 "	.	4	= 24
" 23 "	.	3	= 69
" 45 "	.	2	= 90
" 96 "	.	1	= 96
In the Workhouse	"	4	= 4

TOTAL 376

There were no less than 21 instances of husband and wife dying within a few days of each other. In one case, besides both parents, 4 children also died. In another, both parents and 3 of their 4 children. In another, a widow and 3 of her children.

At an average distance of 15 yards from St. Luke's Church, stand four houses, which collectively lost 33 persons.

Close to one of these houses, just to the north of the church, down a narrow passage, marked, but not named, in the map, is a small cottage, lately the residence of one whose timely removal from it, about two months before the outburst of pestilence, cannot but be regarded by his many friends as a special mercy of Divine Providence. He took up his abode there in July 1853, along with several destitute vagrant boys, whose only home for years had been the streets. Himself a poor and unknown man, he lived among them as a father, made them work and worked with them, gave them secular and religious instruction, and in course of time wrought in them so remarkable a change as to win both for himself and for them the most cordial sympathy of all his

* It is worthy of notice that there were only four deaths among the regular inmates of the workhouse, notwithstanding the great number of dying and dead that were constantly being carried in and out.

† The few deaths that took place on the east side of Wardour-street were confined to the vicinity of St. Ann's-court. The court itself was heavily visited, as it contains (including two smaller courts, which run out of it) 33 houses, and lost 43 of its inhabitants. No other court or street eastward of Wardour-street suffered at all severely.

neighbours. The tale of his self-denying labours in this place during a period of twelve months—at the end of which, by the aid of a continually increasing circle of supporters, he was enabled to establish an important institution in Lambeth—is told in a pamphlet,* where the following passage occurs, “There were now thirteen boys in the house, and a very unwholesome place for such a number it soon proved to be—seven being at one time seized with diarrhœa;” from which it may reasonably be concluded, that had they remained there, they might have played a conspicuous part in a tragedy unparalleled since the days of the Plague.

What class of persons did the disease principally destroy? is a question continually asked, and answered in different ways according to the point of view of the observer. The writer can only say that, after altering his mind at least a dozen times upon this subject, during the first four or five days of September, he was well-nigh settling down into the opinion that it attacked and destroyed all sorts and classes alike, till an attentive study of the memoranda which he had made seemed to suggest something like an exception in point of age. He had no notion then how remarkable an exception it really was. He merely called to mind the fact of a widow and her three youngest children dying, whilst the two eldest escaped; and it then struck him that of those who recovered from collapse during the few days when the epidemic was so alarmingly fatal, the greater number seemed to be of the same age. Shortly afterwards, however, he happened to be walking down Broad Street with Mr. French, the surgeon of the St. James’s Infirmary, and merely remarked, in passing a certain house, that there was a lad in it recovering. “How old?” he asked. “About sixteen or seventeen.” “It is contrary to my experience,” was his decisive answer, “that lads and girls of that age die of cholera.” This assertion, from one who, twenty-two years ago, propounded and published † the views which are now generally gaining ground, has led the writer to examine diligently the returns of the Registrar, from September 1st to October 7th, noting all the cases in St. Luke’s district.

The following table is the result of this examination:—

Aged	10 years and under	—	66 deaths.
Aged from 10 years to	20	—	24 ”
”	20 ”	30	— 44 ”
”	30 ”	40	— 50 ”
”	40 ”	50	— 56 ”

and so on to 80 and upwards, at the rate which might be expected.

* “A Home for the Outcast.” 6d. Hatchard, Piccadilly.

† “French on Cholera.” Churchill, Princes-street. 8cho.

The 24 deaths in the second decade are thus distributed:—

Aged 11 years, 5 deaths.				Aged 16 years, 1 death.			
”	12	”	5	”	17	”	0
”	13	”	4	”	18	”	2 deaths.
”	14	”	2	”	19	”	3
”	15	”	0	”	20	”	2

As to any other special liability or exemption of any particular class, there is very little to be said. One thing at least is certain, that the very old and the very poor have not supplied nearly so many victims as might have been anticipated, whereas the householders have supplied rather more than their due proportion.

Of the 376 deaths to which the writer confines his attention, no less than seventy-one were those of householders, or of members of their families. This mortality in the families of householders is especially noticeable on the east side of Berwick Street, being at the rate of 37 per cent. of the deaths. In Broad Street it was 14½ per cent.

This fact of itself disposes of a statement, which has gone the round of the papers, to the effect that the vast majority of the deaths occurred in the upper rooms, as it is notorious that in these streets householders and their families do not occupy the top, but rather the bottom of their houses. Even if that statement were true, the inference sought to be drawn from it, viz., that the habits of the people who occupy the top floors had more to do with the cause of the pestilence than any foul exhalations from beneath, would not be a fair one, both because every one knows that in a neighbourhood like this there are far more persons living on the 2nd and 3rd floors than in the kitchens, parlours, and 1st floors, and because it is plain that whilst very many who live at the top must have occasion to come downstairs in the course of the day, hardly any who live below are likely to go up; and so it might happen that the occupant of the garret should take the disease at such times when he was below. But the real truth is sufficiently at variance with the statement in question to lead to an inference—if such inferences be allowable—of a precisely opposite nature. The deaths of persons living and sleeping on the ground-floor were more numerous, in proportion to the number of its occupants, than those on any other floor, and that without counting the non-resident workmen, shopmen, &c., who must have taken the disease on the ground level, and who went, or were removed, to their own houses to die. But the writer does not choose to rest this statement on mere loose assertion. His previous acquaintance with the people and their houses, added to personal observation, and the observation of his colleagues, of the progress of the pestilence, has enabled him to ascertain—what, probably, for obvious reasons, no one else could or can ascertain—the name

of each deceased person, and the room in which he or she died, or, in case of removal or departure, the room hitherto occupied by the deceased.

Deaths in or from Kitchens	.	.	.	14
" " Houses and Cottages, with no floor above the 1st	.	.	.	9
" " Ground floor	.	.	.	62
" " First floor	.	.	.	100
" " Second floor	.	.	.	113
" " Third floor	.	.	.	74
" " Workhouse	.	.	.	4
Total				376

It must be admitted that ten houses in which the deaths were numerous, and which have no third floor, are here reckoned; but when it is added that the deaths in them which took place on the ground-floor exceeded those on the second, the admission need not go for much. In Broad Street, if the kitchens and parlours be reckoned together, the deaths were as nearly as possible equally distributed, about twenty to each floor, the extra six to the ground and second. It is noticeable that the streets and parts of streets to the north of Broad Street, and those furthest removed from it on the south, as Peter Street, Green's Court, Little Pulteney Street, Little Windmill Street, and Wardour Street on the east, are those in which the deaths on the upper floors preponderate. In Little Pulteney Street three out of the seven deaths, and in Wardour Street four out of the nine, were on the third floor.

There are not wanting indications that the disease came, at least to St. Luke's district, eastward from the west end of Broad Street, as the writer heard of persons being seized before midnight (Aug. 31 and Sept. 1) out in that direction; whereas further east this was decidedly not the case. This, however, is a point which probably the medical men only can determine, as the returns of the Registrar will be no guide in a matter which turns upon half-hours. Neither do the few deaths at the latter end of August at all bear upon the question, as there was evidently something new and distinct that suddenly came into operation during the very last hours of that month. What that was, it is to be hoped that those who have knowledge of such matters will endeavour to ascertain. The writer believes that we shall not be discharging our duty either before our fellow-men or the All-wise Ruler of the Universe, unless we make the most strenuous exertions for this purpose. The plans of God must be so vast that we need not ascribe such a visitation to the sins of a particular district, whilst yet with reverence we may say that it is His visitation, and acknowledge it to be a chastisement for sin.

And assuredly it is a sin, a national sin, that the poor should be condemned to live in the way that they do. So that it may be in mercy, no less than in wrath, that the great and good God has thus startled us all into the conviction that we must be up and doing, to wipe away this reproach from among us. It is with the full force of this impression on his mind that the writer does not hesitate to risk the displeasure of some, that he may contribute to the welfare of all. He well knows that it is not the working man and working woman who will object to the most ample disclosure of all that has happened in the streets where they *must* dwell. Indeed, it was at the request of many of them that he undertook what has cost him a great deal more trouble and labour than he had anticipated.

And now, having fully discussed the question of the EXTENT* of the pestilence, he will, with the same care and attention, and scrupulous regard to accuracy, consider that of its DURATION.

It has been already stated, and is well known, that the epidemic burst out at midnight on the morning of the 1st of September. The deaths on that day (Friday) followed each other with frightful rapidity. On Saturday (September 2nd) they seemed to be, and were, more numerous still. Moreover, the inhabitants were more fully alive to the dread reality of what was taking place; so that, for many reasons, this day was the most tragic of all in appearance. The strange scenes that presented themselves have been ably described by other pens. The wild rush and eager inquiry for the nearest medical assistance—the astonishment of the stranger passing casually through the district—the varied demeanour of the resident population—the streets white with chloride of lime—the dead-cart and its followers—the midnight crowd unwilling to retire to rest, have not been unnoticed. Within doors, however, there were scenes far sadder than without on that memorable night. The writer well remembers one that he witnessed. It was on a ground-floor where three rooms communicated with each other. In the centre lay an interesting girl just recovering from collapse, feebly inquiring for her mother and sister. None dared to breathe a whisper that right and left lay a coffin in either room. Worn out by the fatigue of two harassing days and a sleepless night, either dozing or too broken-hearted to speak, sat the father by the corpse of his wife. Two grown-up sons were alternately nursing their sister and conversing with a friend and neighbour who had come to cheer their drooping spirits. The sequel to this sad narrative is fraught with far too much of melancholy interest to be passed over in silence. The poor girl seemed for a time to progress favourably, and it was deeply touching to see how the prospect of her recovery engrossed her father's

* That is, as far as its north, south, and eastern limits.

thoughts. If she were but spared to him, he frequently said, he could be content to live. But his own turn came to be laid low, and he was removed upstairs, there to be tenderly nursed by his sister-in-law and his sons. Meanwhile his daughter died of the consecutive fever. For a few days her death was kept from his knowledge, and he appeared to be slowly recovering, till one afternoon he somehow became acquainted with the truth, cast one look of anguish upon all present, turned his head on his pillow, and was dead before night. His sister-in-law, one of her children, and the friend whose midnight visit to the family was just now mentioned, all breathed their last about the same time.

Many other incidents, almost as touching, might be recorded; but in pursuance of the main object which he has in view, the writer must pass them by in order to give a clear idea of the duration of the pestilence.

On Sunday, September 3rd, many persons strove hard to persuade themselves that it was abating its violence, but reluctantly abandoned the notion before evening. There seemed to be somewhat more of uncertainty as to its ravages—there being no longer the incessant putting up of shutters to serve as an index. A feeling of mysterious solemnity pervaded the crowd at the thought of what might be passing behind those closed shutters, whilst the dismal spectacle of hearses, by this time in constant requisition, added a new and gloomy feature to the scene.

Monday came, and with it no apparent cause for hope. The deaths seemed, and were, as numerous as ever. All the strange scenes of the preceding days were renewed.

But at length, on Tuesday morning, the medical men, the clergy, missionaries, &c., who alone were able to take a comprehensive view of the rate of mortality, began to perceive a ray of sunshine piercing the dark clouds. Right glad were they to have it in their power, for the first time since Friday, to reassure the anxious multitudes who thronged about them, and bid them wait patiently, for the Lord God was withdrawing the scourge from among them. And verily, if ever there was a season when men felt that they were in the hands of the Lord, it was then, when all human aid appeared of no avail; for without disparagement to as gallant a body of men as ever discharged a duty, or disregarded a danger,* it may certainly be said that, at least at the outset, medical skill seemed to be baffled and set at nought by the deadly foe which it had to encounter.

Happily it was no delusive hope which, on the morning of the 5th of September, was held out to the eager inquiries of the inhabitants; for, as will presently be shown, the deaths on that day fell nearly 50 per cent., and the doctors, one and all, declared

* Mr. Harrison, surgeon, of No. 4, Berwick-street, died of cholera on Saturday, September 2nd.

that the disease had become much more manageable. The mortality then gradually decreased.

The following table of the daily rate of mortality among the resident inhabitants of St. Luke's is made from the Registrar's returns:—

Date.	Deaths.	Date.	Deaths
August (19th to 30th)	0	September 4th	43
" 30th	1	" 5th	23
" 31st	1	" 6th	21
September 1st	42	" 7th	17
" 2nd*	63	" 8th	16
" 3rd	41	" "	

And so on, regularly decreasing, till, by the 16th day of the month, the deaths had dwindled to 2 or 3 a day. In the week ending September 23rd, there is a return of only 8 deaths, and those mostly of consecutive fever. In the week ending September 30th, the return is only 4; and in the week ending October 7th, there was only 1 death from cholera in the whole parish of St. James.

From this it would at first sight appear as if the disease rapidly reached its climax on the 2nd, and then, subsiding to its original degree of intensity, remained stationary for two days, till it again abated its violence; and that is just how it appeared to be at the time, for there certainly was, as has been stated, a disposition on the Sunday to believe in its abatement, though the idea was afterwards given over by those who entertained it. But the real truth of the matter, as it now presents itself to the notice of one calmly examining the returns, is that the epidemic was at once at its height, *i. e.*, in its most virulent form, at the very moment of its outburst, and was ever afterwards on the wane. And this becomes especially evident when it is remembered that it was at least very late on the Thursday night, if not literally at midnight, that the outburst took place. Some hours had therefore to elapse on Friday morning before any deaths took place at all, whereas in the corresponding hours of Saturday morning numbers would be dying who must have taken the disease on Friday. And this must have been the case all through Saturday. And then the returns of Sunday and Monday would be swelled by the longer cases of Friday and Saturday in a way to which, as regards these latter days, there had been nothing to correspond. And as for Tuesday, no wonder the mortality was abated when the cases dating from Friday and Saturday had, with here and there an exception, already terminated fatally, and it was become apparent

* During this day the number of deaths within, and in the streets close adjoining, the four-sided area already described, was, according to the Registrar's return, 125!

that even collapse from Sunday or Monday was not necessarily fatal. This statement is fully borne out by the letter that appeared in the *Times*, giving such a graphic account of the cholera in the Middlesex Hospital, but it will be yet further established by the following table—which, however, is not quite complete, the duration of the illness being in some cases omitted in the returns, and no return for the first nine days of September appearing from one, at least, of the hospitals to which several of the patients were conveyed:—

TABLE OF DURATION OF ILLNESS.

Hours.	SEPT. 1st.	Deaths.	Hours.	SEPT. 2nd.	Deaths.	Hours.	SEPT. 3rd.	Deaths.	Hours.	SEPT. 4th.	Deaths.	Hours.	SEPT. 5th.	Deaths.
10 & under—	10		10 & under—	9		10 & under—	1		10 & under—	2		10 & under—	4	
10 to 20 —	23		10 to 20 —	23		10 to 20 —	14		10 to 20 —	11		10 to 20 —	8	
20 to 24 —	3		20 to 30 —	6		20 to 30 —	8		20 to 30 —	4		20 to 30 —	2	
Over 24 —	1		30 to 40 —	2		30 to 40 —	1		30 to 40 —	2		30 to 40 —	0	
			40 to 48 —	7		40 to 50 —	4		40 to 50 —	3		40 to 50 —	1	
Average						50 to 80 —	3		50 to 80 —	3		50 to 80 —	2	
13 hours.			Average			Average			Average			Average		
			20 hours.			28 hours.			37 hours.			Average 28 hrs.		

This table speaks for itself, and, allowing for the hours which must have elapsed on Friday morning before its earliest victims died, plainly shows that day to have been the most destructive, whilst it also proves the abatement on the 5th day, as compared with the 4th, to have been more apparent than real, and assigns it rather to the 3rd (Sunday), though, of course, the medical men could not speak positively on this point till there was visible evidence of their patients recovering from collapse. Probably if we could have the returns hour by hour, instead of day by day, the process of abatement would be seen to have been more gradual even between Saturday and Sunday. The fall of the average on the Tuesday is decisive testimony to the virulence of the pestilence at its first outburst.

The writer has little to add, in the way of useful information, respecting this most terrible calamity. Neither will he venture—as it is not his province, and is not in his power—to hazard even a guess at the one determining cause which, with infallible obedience to the laws of God, has operated, to use a common expression, like a spark upon the train, here as elsewhere, so palpably awaiting and inviting its approach. One thing he perceives clearly enough, that the atmosphere, all over the world, is at this time favourable to the production of a most formidable plague. That is a fact which he does not suppose any one can account for. It may be, as one writer has philosophically and reverently suggested, that great and universal atmospheric changes periodically occur, fraught with ultimate benefit to the whole human race,

compared to which the premature death of thousands, nay millions, is but as a grain of dust in the balance. And this view has the recommendation of accounting for the final extinction of plagues, upon the hypothesis of its requiring successive generations to acclimatise the human frame to the altered conditions of the atmosphere. It has also the recommendation of intelligibly ascribing a beneficent purpose to the vast and inscrutable decrees of Providence. In the mean time, whilst God's ways are equal, man's ways are unequal; and another fact, less difficult to be accounted for, presents itself to our notice, even the unequal accumulation of filth and dirt, the overcrowding together of human beings, the culpable sufferance of ill-constructed streets and ill-ventilated houses, indifference to first principles of drainage and sewage, all aggravating the pestilence in particular localities, but attracting little attention and exciting little alarm, till here and there a mine explodes, revealing to the startled population of an ill-managed city the peril of a position which admits of any one street or parish, and that none of the lowest and filthiest, becoming a huge charnel-house in a day or an hour.

It will indeed be a sad thing if this matter be not thoroughly sifted to the bottom, and possibly the following circumstance may have some weight in producing a searching inquiry:—"The list of the dead at the fourth and fifth return of the pest (the plague) showed that the higher classes, and particularly the nobles, suffered excessively, the malady not reaching their varlets and the poorer orders—results diametrically opposed to those of the first visitation. The expression '*pauperum ne unicum quidem*' is too explicit to leave a doubt about the matter. Besides, Friend gives the daily amount at the culminating point, and notices that two of the sons of Charles Brandon, themselves both Dukes of Suffolk, died on the same day, so that three persons possessed that title within twenty-four hours."* It has already been stated that the recent visitation of Cholera was by no means confined to the lowest classes.

The writer does not know whether he will be accused of endeavouring to create alarm. For his own part, he is by no means sure that he does not desire to create alarm. As for panic, having witnessed none in September, he does not expect any in November; neither does he at all hold with those who insult the memory of the dead by assigning fear as the main, and even sole, cause of Cholera. He laments the loss of many—very many—brave men and women, whose stout hearts shrank not from the performance of duties, the discharge of which could bring them no reward but an approving conscience, and the avoidance of which would have entailed on them neither discovery nor dis-

* Quoted in "The Examiner," October 14th.

grace. To the memory of one such noble woman the writer has already paid his tribute of honourable mention. With heartfelt pleasure he records that the subject of the following brief narrative still lives to smooth the pillow for many an aching head. A woman was watching by the bed—the death-bed, she imagined—of a kind and affectionate husband. Her children were with her, already orphans in her sight. She had passed one long night of sleepless anxiety; another was before her—the shades of evening fast closing upon the silent group—when a gentle tap summoned her to the door to welcome the sympathising countenance of a stranger. “Your husband is ill,” said this unknown friend, “and you sat up last night with him. I will sit by him to-night. Hush!” (motioning to discourage the expressions of gratitude that were forthcoming) “We must not disturb him!” and then she proceeded at once to the bedside to nurse the sick man as only a woman—and not every woman—can. It is notorious that for this disease by far the best remedy is an indefatigable and skilful nurse; and so we may believe that, under the blessing of God, this kind, good woman had much to do with the favourable turn taken by her patient in the course of the night. “There, he is better now,” she said in the morning, “I think you will be able to manage,” and then withdrew as quietly as she came. Two or three times afterwards she presented herself at the door, but only to ask after the object of her tender care and solicitude, and immediately to retire. “To be sure she escaped,” the advocate of the *fear* theory* will point out, “for she was not afraid;” and assuredly it was no coward that was thus gliding about unscathed by the pestilence. Neither was the wife, to whose aid she came, a coward; but was she not most terribly afraid for her husband? Or will it be maintained that the fear which deserves the name of cowardice has some mysterious affinity for Cholera, irrespective of its weakening the frame? Confident persons talk and write as if they supposed some such strange connection, though, if pressed upon the subject, they would probably say they mean nothing more than that fear weakens the frame. It is certain, however, that the multitude make no such distinctions; and so it comes to pass that the dissemination of this theory is attended with a result directly opposed to the purpose of its authors. A man who is afraid at all, becomes ten times more so when he believes his fear to be such a powerful predisposing cause of the disease. Tell him anything—tell him everything—but that. For is it not as certain a principle as any in the philosophy of the human heart, that fear is

* The propounders of this theory will have difficulty to make it square with the small number of deaths in St. James's workhouse. “Weren't you afraid,” said the writer to some of the old paupers, “when they kept bringing in so many to die!” “We just were,” was the answer.

the least voluntary, the least controllable, of all its affections? So convinced is the writer of the folly and cruelty of the loud and boastful talk so prevalent on this subject, that he made a point of assuring the people that fear itself is no otherwise a cause of the malady than so far as it debilitates the system; and he is satisfied that this is the only rational way of deprecating fear upon such occasions. This may seem a trivial matter to sound and sensible thinkers, who are in the habit of well weighing their assertions; but it is well worth the attention of those who contrive to frighten, whilst they believe they are encouraging, each other, by fostering a notion which can only tend to augment the apprehension which even the brave may, without discredit, entertain and avow concerning so mysterious a danger.

With a few additional observations upon this subject of public alarm, the writer will bring his remarks to a close. That there should have been so little of it was the one gratifying feature, amid scenes that in all other respects were ghastly and dismal to the last degree. With scarce an exception, the people stood by one another, in this season of peril and perplexity, with unflinching and admirable courage. Panic there was none; but it was a most trying time, all the more trying by reason of the uncertainty that prevailed at the first as to the area of the pestilence, and its probable duration. What, for instance, could be more appalling than the idea which naturally occurred to every one during the first two days, that the work of devastation must be going on at the same rate all over the metropolis? And then the thought, how long was it to last, forced itself painfully upon every mind. "If it goes on at this rate," said a man in Broad Street to the writer on the Saturday, "there will soon be none left to tell the tale." Most welcome was the ray of hope which, on the Tuesday morning, beamed upon the anxious gaze of those who in any way felt themselves responsible for the conduct of the people. And happily they had gained their confidence by not attempting hitherto to make light of the calamity. Therefore, when they affirmed that it was subsiding, their word was not questioned. Had they gone about asserting that none but the intemperate and the craven-hearted were in danger, they would assuredly have found it hard to gain credit for any thing else they might say. Many persons accosted the writer in the streets on the Wednesday and Thursday, to ask if there were any necessity for them to remove out of the district, and followed his advice when he told them to stay where they were. And yet, for want of some public and easily accessible information as to the precise state of the case, the inhabitants, though by no means panic-struck, were now decamping in such numbers, that it was possible to find whole houses completely deserted. In one house the writer found no one but a bed-ridden woman, and a man and his wife packing up

to depart. Upon asking why they did so, they answered that the man was to lose his employment if he continued to reside in the neighbourhood. Now, would not all this have been prevented if a daily return of the deaths had circulated as widely as possible the acceptable news that the epidemic was so soon and so rapidly disappearing? There used surely to be such a return upon former occasions. Why has it been discontinued, unless in deference to the panic-mongers, *i.e.*, the real panic-mongers, who, by concealment of the truth, contrive to intensify and prolong the alarm which they pretend to allay? It was very mortifying to persons interested in the welfare of the neighbourhood, to see the papers teeming with letters describing whole streets as having hundreds lying dead in them, at a time when the deaths in each street were really no more than one or two a day; and equally unsatisfactory was it to hear of employers refusing work to the inhabitants, long after the disease had disappeared—as if, too, a coat or a pair of boots would carry it into a shop, when scores of dead and dying failed to infect the hospitals and the workhouse. Neither was it as it ought to have been, that, when danger was nearly at an end, we should have had letters pouring in upon us from the country, from friends who had free access to the papers, condoling on account of black flags and plague-pits, and written in the firm belief that the pestilence was still raging with unabated fury. It is true that here and there a hint was dropped about its subsiding, but nothing except a daily statistical return can possibly be satisfactory on this head. Whenever a similar disaster again befalls a London parish, it is to be hoped that some such intelligent and gallant men as represented the press on the heights of the Alma, will at once repair to the scene, and publish day by day the result of their observations. Such a course of proceeding may, at the first, be more startling to persons at a distance, but its ultimate benefits will fully compensate for its immediate unpleasantness. And as for the inhabitants of the infected district, they will, from the very first, be only agreeably surprised at finding the mortality less than they expected.

It is not by keeping silence on these matters that future epidemics—and no one supposes we have seen the last of the cholera—are to have their horrors mitigated. One thing, at least, the writer ventures to hope—that his experience as an eye-witness of the recent visitation will not have been recorded in vain, if it at all contributes to make patent to the public the fact—long known to the medical profession—that this kind of terrific outburst is at once limited in its extent, brief in its duration, and continually on the wane from the very first moment of its appearance.

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