

## DOCUMENT 17-I (Online Companion)

### One of the earliest newspaper accounts of an unusual outbreak of cholera in St. James, Westminster

This is a complete excerpt from the article published in the *Observer* on the outbreak underway since Thursday evening. The article appeared prior to the Registrar-General's *Return* for the week ending 2 September, which was published on Tuesday 5 September.

#### The Cholera.

Up to the present time there is no appearance of any diminution of the pestilence. On the contrary, from information that has reached us, it appears to be making much more rapid progress during the last few days than during any previous period. This is especially the case in the metropolis....

In St. James's, Westminster, in the week ending 26 August, there were only six deaths. In two days, Thursday and Friday last, no fewer than fifteen persons died in an area comprised in two or three streets. It is said that Friday night will long be remembered by the inhabitants of Silver Street and Berwick Street. Seven persons were in good health on Friday night, and on Saturday morning they were all dead. Throughout the night people were running here and there for medical aid. It seemed as if the whole neighbourhood was poisoned....

We have given the mortality in several of the principal parishes [Belgravia, Marylebone, Chelsea, Bermondsey, St. Olave's, St. George's, Southwark, Newington, Camberwell, Rotherhithe, and Lambeth in addition to St. James, Westminster] and we now recur to the question—what the local authorities done? ... The parish of Marylebone forms a bright exception to the generality of the parishes. In this parish a considerable number of additional medical men have been appointed. The people are visited, and are instructed where to apply for immediate relief; and the exertions of the sanitary committee of the vestry are worthy of commendation and imitation. The city of London, under the direction of the able officer of health, Mr. [John] Simon, has been well cared for, and, as a consequence, the mortality even in the very worst districts has been very trifling as compared to 1849. The mortality along the banks of the pestiferous Thames has been very marked, thus affording additional evidence, if evidence were required, that the river, instead of being an adjunct of health, is, on the contrary, only productive of disease.

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<sup>1</sup> "The cholera," *Observer* (3 September 1854): 5, b.