

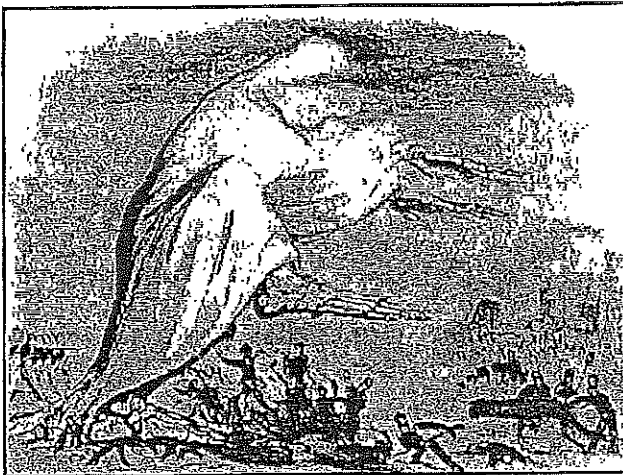
DISEASE AND DEATH RATE FROM CHOLERA

The cholera germ enters the body via the mouth, usually in contaminated water or food and sets up an infection in the small intestine. The incubation period is short, never longer than 5 days and sometimes less than one.

The disease usually developed in three relatively well defined stages; the stage of evacuation, the stage of collapse and the stage of reaction. The onset was invariably abrupt and characterized by a purging diarrhoea and copious vomiting which emptied the stomach and was followed by exhausting retching and hiccupping. As the body became dehydrated, agonizing cramps afflicted legs, arms, abdomen and back.

As the patient passed into the stage of collapse his physical appearance changed completely-his skin became lax, wrinkled, cold and clammy to touch, his eyes sunken, his cheeks hollow, and there was blueness about the eyes and lips. The voice became husky, the expression anxious and apathetic. His blood pressure fell and he was unable to urinate. At this stage death could occur from circulatory failure or failure of bodily functions.

If the patient was lucky, he survived the second stage; his blood pressure was restored, his urine flow was restored and he slowly recovered, though heart failure could still follow the slightest exertion.



Painting depicting the London cholera epidemic
U.S. National Library of Medicine
photographic archive

[1832] Mr. John Kale, basket maker of South Street, aged 23 years and his wife, aged 21 years died on the 12th of October. They were both in perfect health when they arose in the morning, but soon after the wife complained of being unwell; not suspecting anything materially amiss, he went on his business to Hucknall and on returning through Bulwell in the afternoon, was taken ill, and was so bad that he died on the road and so rapid was the decomposition of the body that it was obliged to be buried the same evening at Basford. In the meantime the wife sickened and died the same night of cholera at South Street in Nottingham.

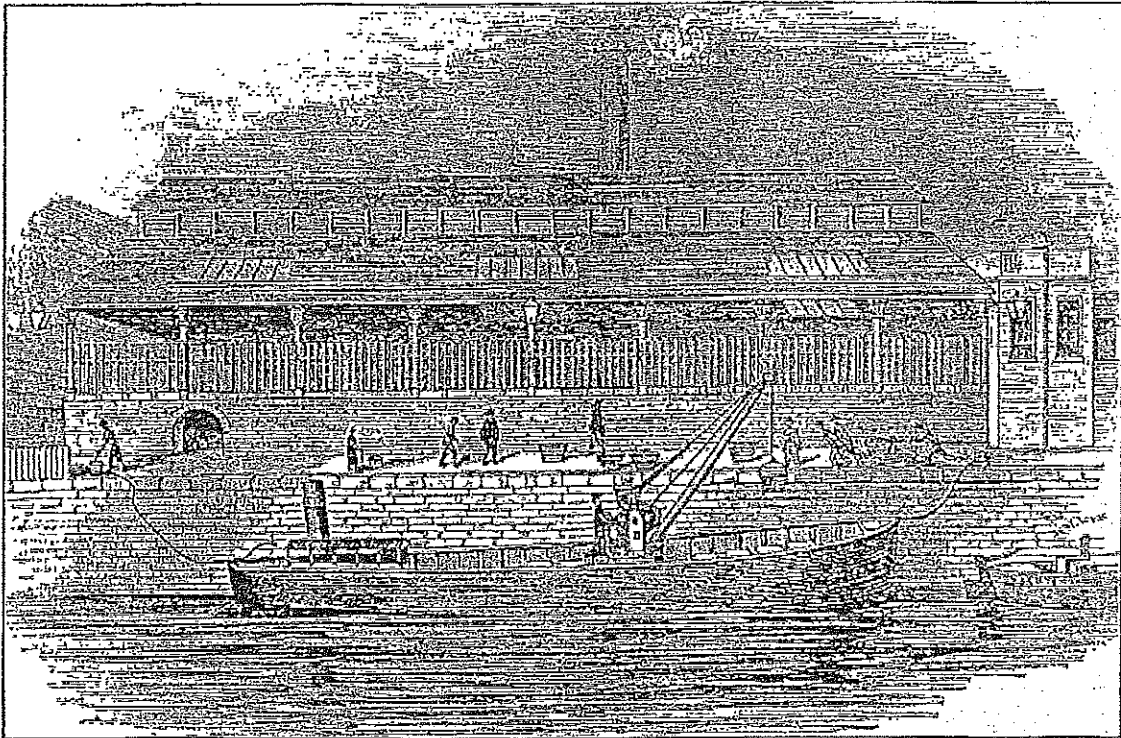
Source: John B. Sutton, *The Date-Book of Remarkable and Memorable Events Connected with Nottingham and Its Neighbourhood. 1750-1850* (Nottingham: Simpkin & Marshall, 1852).

SEWERAGE: NOTTINGHAM'S LABYRINTH

In all the parishes there are numbers of streets to be found of the worst construction as regards ventilation, construction of habitation, sewerage, supply of water, paving, and lighting; but as might be expected these defects are most conspicuous in the older quarters, and in the lower levels, as under the Castile and down to the Narrow Marsh, Canal Street, Leenside and in the greater part of St. Ann's and Byron wards.

I believe that nowhere else shall we find so large a mass of inhabitants crowded into courts, alleys and lanes as in Nottingham, and those too of the worst possible construction. . . . The courts are almost always approached through a low-arched tunnel of some 30 or 36 inches wide, about 8 feet high, and from 20-30 feet long. . . . They are noisome, narrow, unprovided with adequate means for the removal of refuse, ill-ventilated, and wretched in the extreme, with a gutter or surface drain, running down the center, they have no back yards and no privies are common to the whole court; altogether they present scenes of a deplorable character, and of surpassing filth and discomfort. It is just the same with lanes and alleys. . . . In all these confined quarters, too, the refuse is allowed to accumulate until, by its mass and its advanced putrefaction, it shall have acquired value as manure; and thus it is sold and carted away by the "much majors" as the collectors of manure are called in Nottingham.

Source: J. R. Martin, Report on the State of Nottingham and Other Towns (1845), 3-4



Sewage disposal: Steam barge collection in Manchester
Illustrated London News, 1877. Available: <<http://www.victorianimes.org>>