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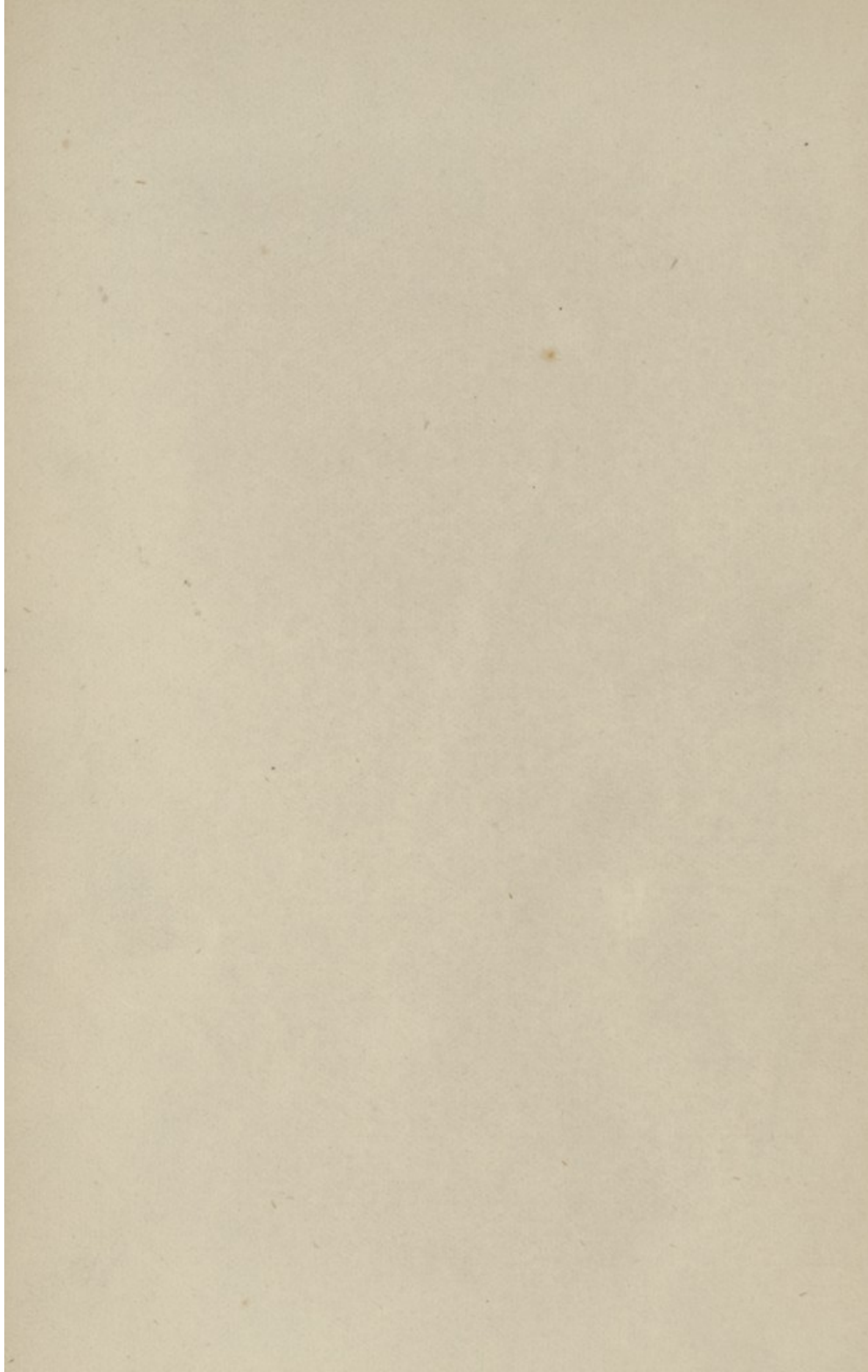


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AC. 437(8) BERMONDSEY





BER 1

METROPOLIS LOCAL MANAGEMENT,

18 & 19 Vic., cap. 120.

VESTRY

OF THE

PARISH OF BERMONDSEY.

REPORTS

BY

JOHN CHALLICE, M.D.

OFFICER OF HEALTH.

From 7th April, 1856, to 4th May, 1857.

LONDON:

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METROPOLIS LOCAL MANAGEMENT

1887

PROPERTY

REPORTS

"Veritas nil timet."

REPORTS

JOHN CHALLICE, M.D.

REPORTS

1887



LONDON

1887

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORTS.

7th April, 1856.

Gentlemen,

In entering upon the duties of Medical Officer of Health of this Parish, I have considered it an object of primary importance to make myself well acquainted with the sanitary condition of the dwellings of the working classes more especially as regards water supply, drainage, and cleanliness. Probably there is no metropolitan district, with a larger proportion of its population, composed of the industrious working classes, and to the condition of their homes has been attributed with justice, not only much of their sickness, poverty and pauperism, but also the intemperance to which they have been liable; for their dwellings too often reek with fœtid gases and offer but a poor place for rest and relaxation after the labour of the day.

The question of the water supply of the district demands the first consideration, as the comfort and health of the community rest mainly upon it; and it is with great satisfaction that I testify to the satisfactory change in the condition of the water supplied to Bermondsey now for some months past. Previous to that period it was impure, offensive and unwholesome, thick, discoloured, loaded with mechanical and organic impurities, generally injurious to health, and it especially aggravated the ravages of cholera. It is now as taken from the water pipe, clear, free from mechanical impurities, contains scarcely a trace of organic matter, and only about

1-4000 or 15 grains to the gallon of inorganic matter (principally lime), in fact, it may be looked upon as pure river water, as the source from whence it is now taken is beyond all tidal influence, and I have ascertained that it is also subjected to filtration. The poor are already sensible of a great benefit, and speak with gratitude on the subject.

As regards the supply, generally speaking, there is no complaint; in some instances however, in the small courts the inhabitants complain that on the Sunday they are without water.

Now, during the summer months this is a great evil likely to be productive of sickness, as the dwellers in these courts are compelled to keep water in their small crowded rooms, which thus becomes tainted and unfit for human consumption. A supply, if only for an hour on the Sunday would be a great boon to these poor people, and I trust that the Board will consider this subject of sufficient importance to induce them to urge its necessity on the Directors of the Southwark and Vauxhall Company. There is one point connected with water which I cannot pass over in silence, as it neutralizes in a great degree the immense advantages derivable from its present purity as compared with its former state viz.,—that the receptacles for water are generally uncovered, and almost always in immediate contiguity to the privies. Now it cannot be too frequently enforced upon attention, that the foul gases evolved from these places are absorbed, or to use a more familiar phrase, mixed with the water, so that it becomes in a degree polluted, and as poisonous as if some of the contents of the privies were added to the water casks. A great amount of sickness amongst the poor is, I am convinced, traceable to this cause, and it is a pity that more care and consideration is not bestowed by those interested in the matter.

As regards the dwellings of the working classes, improvements are in many cases effected, in others they are in progress, while in many I regret to state there exist nuisances of a very serious character, calculated during the summer months to produce fever and other diseases; and should cholera unhappily prevail, it will undoubtedly be materially aggravated by what I have witnessed in the course of my inspection. Old and dilapidated offensive privies, bad drainage, over-

flowing cesspools, badly paved or unpaved backyards, untrapped sinks connected with drains present a formidable category of sanitary evils.

Under the order of the Vestry many cases have already been adjudicated upon, and are in the course of being remedied by decree of the Magistrate.

I wish to draw special attention to No. 4, Fendall Street, where at this time a nuisance exists, while at Nos. 5 and 6 in the same street every thing that could be desired has been effected. Comfortable decent closets, slate water cisterns closely covered, yard well paved, &c. but the nuisance of No. 4, deprives the occupants of No. 5 and 6, of these advantages, by overflow from a cesspool of an old broken down privy.

Wood's Place, in the Grange Road, has no receptacle for ashes, it requires paving and is in a dirty condition.

System Place has five open offensive privies, which have been emptied but three times in fourteen years. There is one water-butt for the whole court.

Queen's Gardens, Crosby Row, has nine open offensive privies, King's Place has thirty-one houses with open offensive privies, and in two instances the occupiers of four houses use one most offensive place. Union Place, and Surrey Place, Crosby Row are in the same condition.

My attention was especially attracted to this spot by the knowledge that several cases of malignant fever (some fatal) have occurred lately in Crosby Row.

In most of the houses in Nelson Street, Richardson Street, and in Alfred Place, the same nuisances exist.

The admirable condition of the public streets, as regards paving and cleansing, has done much to improve the health of the district.

But while on the part of the owners of this class of house property there exists such neglect of their duty, the parish is deprived of the full benefit of these improvements.

From a return by your Inspector of Nuisances, (who is active and zealous) of the number, condition and situation of urinals, I find that there are 35 attached to public houses, and one by the Baths and Washhouses which may be looked upon as a model. Of the 35, two only are in a decent condition, the others require whitewashing, cleansing and draining. Many are in a most offensive and filthy state, some

with the drains stopped, and the urine running over the public thoroughfares.

The ammoniacal gas given off by these urinals in hot weather, is not only offensive but injurious to health; they require water supply—and improved drainage.

As regards the manufactories, I have as yet not paid especial attention to them; I have, however, met with an earnest disposition on the part of some of the largest manufacturers, to do all in their power to effect improvements, and also to remedy any legitimate cause of complaint, I trust and believe that this will be a general feeling with the manufacturers of this parish. I would strongly urge that some regular system should be adopted to prevent accumulation of refuse, more especially during the summer months. Weekly removal in covered carts, and at night, is advisable. I would also urge a more plentiful use of water, in frequently washing down yards, and especially I would advise the free dilution of the soaks and other matters before they are let off into the sewers; offensive smells might by copious use of water be thus prevented.

I have, gentlemen, in this, a preliminary report, endeavoured to express myself plainly, briefly, and without technicality on some of the vital questions affecting ourselves.

It is a fact now fully proved that by sanitary precautions the average of human life may be materially increased. In this country, under favorable condition, only 17 deaths in 1000 annually take place, but owing to neglect, indifference, and ignorance, the average is over 20. Now when we consider how much sickness is represented by one death, the amount of disease, produced by removable causes must be great indeed.

April 21st, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

For the information of the Board, I am happy to state that there is no prevailing epidemic, and that the general health of the Parish is good, the deaths for the week ending the 12th instant, being only 19 in a population of 48,128, which is below the average. It is important to observe that this mortality presents a very marked contrast with several of the crowded districts of the metropolis, and will stand a favorable com-

parison with some of the wealthy (and considered healthy districts), as in St. James' Westminster, the deaths are 18 in a population of 36,406.

I trust that this satisfactory condition will be permanent; it is encouraging for us to continue with energy and constancy the sanitary steps now in progress. In company with your Surveyor, on the 11th instant, I inspected some open ditches; there is one by the Gloucester Road, filled with decaying and decayed vegetable matter, likely in its present condition to give rise to miasma, and produce fever, it should be cleansed without delay; the ditch below St. James's involves an offensive and sickening odour, more especially at its junction with another in Blue Anchor Lane.

I strongly advise frequent flushing during the summer months, I consider the evil will thereby be considerably diminished.

It will be observed by your Inspector's Report book, to which I desire your attention, that privies are in many instances fitted with pans and pipes, but are without a water supply. This is neglect, so wilful, and so highly dangerous, that I urge upon the Vestry the necessity and propriety of some public notice, by means of placards or otherwise, as it may seem to them most fit, of their determination to enforce that salutary provision, viz., water supply, without which there can be no real permanent improvement, or benefit.

I have to report that Mr. Quick, the engineer of the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company, called on me this morning by the direction of their Chairman, and it is with much satisfaction that I also report the willingness of the Company to supply the poorer districts of the Parish with water on the Sunday morning. They only wait a communication from this Board of the hour which may be considered most extensively useful.

I have visited the factory of Mr. Petch at Dockhead, a roaster of chicory, there being complaints by the neighbours of the smell arising at times from his premises. It is true that a faint, sickly, and oppressive vapour, arises during the roasting process which, on a former occasion has been complained of—and an attempt at remedy made by the construction of a shaft passing from the roof to the chimney. This is not effectual, but I would recommend the matter to stand over for the pre-

sent, Mr. Petch having promised to make immediate alterations which I hope will remedy the evil.

May 5th, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

The general health of the district continues in a most satisfactory state, there is no prevailing epidemic; the deaths registered in the whole parish, for the week ending April 26th, being but 17, while for the corresponding week of last year the number was 26. It is interesting to observe that under the head of zymotic diseases, such as small pox, scarlitina, measles, hooping cough, diarrhœa, and fever, we have but one death; this occurred in the Leather Market sub-district from fever. In other metropolitan districts, measles, scarlitina, hooping cough, and diarrhœa are prevalent and fatal. During the last week nine nuisance cases of a somewhat aggravated description were adjudicated upon by the magistrate, and in every instance the decision of the Vestry was confirmed, and sanitary alterations ordered to be forthwith carried out.

On Thursday the 1st, accompanied by your Surveyor, and also the Inspector of Nuisances, I visited and examined the various burial places and vaults hitherto used for the interment of the dead. If I had ever entertained any doubt of the propriety and wisdom of closing by force of law these places of sepulture, it would have been removed by this inspection. This wise measure has in all human probability averted a vast amount of disease and mortality. In most ages and countries it has been known and understood that decomposition of the dead acted most perniciously upon the bodies of the living; with this admitted fact, how stowing away of the dead in heaps beneath places of public worship ever was permitted, is indeed marvellous. The vault of the Parish church naturally claimed our first attention—there are here many hundred coffins, those the most ancient in appearance bearing date the beginning of the present century. There must at or about that time have been a clearance, or some alteration, as there is little doubt of interments prior to this period. In the year 1839 the vaults were repaired, under the direction of the late B. Donkin, Esq., then churchwarden, and the present system of ventilation, which is external to the walls of the church, was effected,

previous to this the only ventilation was by the occasional removal of a trap door in the centre aisle of the Church, a most objectionable and dangerous practice.

The condition of many of the leaden coffins, confirms me in the opinion that they are but little protection to the living against the deleterious emanations from the dead. The inhalation of gases thus generated, must have been a prolific source of disease. Briefly, and without further comment, it is necessary that immediate steps be taken to effect a change in the existing condition of the vaults beneath the old Church.

The vaults in Long Lane Chapel have comparatively but few mortal remains, and these are of a modern date. The ventilation is good; still there is no adequate protection against emanations entering the body of the chapel, more especially when the atmosphere above is rarified by artificial heat, and by the presence of a crowded congregation.

Interment within the bosom of the earth is the natural, proper, and safe remedy, for averting evils which may even yet arise from this past, I had almost said unchristian, practice.

Beneath the Roman Catholic Church there are but few coffins, and these are of a recent date, the ventilation is good. The same may be said of St. James's Church; the vaults are lofty, dry, well ventilated, and paved.

The burial ground in Nelson Street, formerly the place of interment for Guys and St. Thomas's Hospitals, is raised from four to five feet above the surrounding level, indicative of a great accumulation of human remains, probably, a small distance beneath the surface. The place has a most desolate appearance, the surface being covered with loose rubbish, stones, and *debris* of various descriptions; this is a pity, as with small pains and trifling expense, the spot might be made a source of rational pleasure to the dwellers in the very excellent model lodging houses adjacent, as well as to the thickly peopled surrounding neighbourhood. Sown with grass seed, planted with evergreens and flowers, (the most natural and perfect antidote to any injurious emanation during hot weather,) it would be quite a boon to the district and somewhat an ornament.

The Friends burial ground in Long Lane is an ancient place; used as such since the origin of that religious association—somewhat over two centuries, but as they are

far from numerous and live long, there is not the slightest cause of complaint. The spot of earth is in good order, neat, clean, and well preserved. There is an adjoining burial ground, formerly devoted to the congregation of Ebenezer Chapel, which would be improved by the removal or readjustment of many monuments and stones, and by the levelling and planting of the earth's surface.

May 19, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

The quarterly return of the Registrar-General just issued of the births, marriages, and deaths is, as regards Bermondsey, most satisfactory; the deaths registered for the quarter ending the 25th of March last, being but 266, while in the corresponding quarter of 1855 they were 399, and in the same quarter of 1854, 328, taken in connection with the increase of population from the number of additional dwellings and the natural growth of the population from the large balance in favour of births as compared with deaths; this is very decided evidence of the present healthy condition of the district.

The births in Bermondsey are somewhat remarkable, they are in a greater proportion, compared with the deaths, than in any other metropolitan district, being more than two to one, viz. 555, whilst the deaths as above stated are 266.

The improvements already effected in the dwellings of the working classes, contribute very materially to the maintenance of health and the prolongation of life. Still there are many instances existing of an obstinate adherence to custom, now generally condemned, as injurious to the community, more especially of crowded districts.

The condition of some huts, called Somerset Cottages, Blue Anchor Lane, afford an example of utter and complete disregard on the part of the owner, for the health or lives of the occupiers, they are unfitted for human habitations, and are likely to engender fever and other infectious diseases.

The very poor inhabitants, who are tempted by the lowness of the rent, declaim strongly against the wretchedness of their abodes; it is in spots like these that the seeds of disease take root, and from thence spread to surrounding districts.

On the 9th instant I visited some premises in the occupation of Mr. Burgess. I found on inspection 36 hogsheads of fish

refuse, besides some tanks filled with the same, they were all more or less offensive, some so in the highest degree, in fact, in a state of putrid decomposition. The foreman accounted for this condition by the exposure to the atmosphere and to the effects of rain. However this may be, that such a collection of offensive matter is dangerous to the health of the district, does not admit of the slightest doubt. There is also a large accumulation of bones which I consider somewhat objectionable, although I am informed that they are dried before being brought on the premises. There is a further process here in operation, viz., the manufacture of "bone manure," this is effected by the admixture of concentrated sulphuric acid with ground coprolites and crushed bones. In the present condition of the premises this process ought not to be allowed; the effluvia given off is injurious to health, indeed the vapour is almost suffocating, and is very perceptible at a considerable distance. I have had brought to my house specimens of bread and flour, as instances of adulteration; with the sanction of the Vestry I propose that your Inspector of Nuisances have instructions given him on this very important question, indeed precise instructions as to the nature of his duties would be very desirable.

June 2, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

The deaths for the week ending May 10th in this Parish were 18, of which one was from typhus; for the week ending May 17th the number is 20, one from typhus and one from diarrhœa. We are fortunately still exempt from the influence of any epidemic, yet it is my province to point out to the Vestry the fact, that in other districts fever is becoming prevalent and fatal; in this district it is my duty, and an anxious one, to take care that every known cause of disease should, as far as possible, be removed, and with this object it is my intention to visit the different manufactories in the parish, for the purpose of ascertaining if there are any accumulations of offensive or decomposing animal matter; one acknowledged potent cause of fever. The removal of such accumulations requires care, and ought to be effected without creating a nuisance injurious to health, by the employment of some deodorizing element, this might without difficulty be effected.

As there is a considerable traffic through the parish in the night for waggons and carts, laden with the contents of cesspools, on their way to artificial manure makers, and to the waterside for shipment, which give off powerful and deleterious gases, I suggest that the owners be informed that they must either make these vehicles air-tight, or by the use of some deodoriser, mitigate the nuisance; in hot weather, and when the atmosphere is calm, which was so especially during the last cholera epidemic, very great mischief must have accrued from this cause.

June 16, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

The deaths in this Parish for the week ending June 7th were 17, while for the corresponding week in 1855, they were 26, and in 1854, 24; there are two deaths from fever. Feeling the importance of correct and constant information on the subject of prevailing diseases in our several localities, I, on the 11th instant, addressed a letter to the Board of Guardians, requesting permission to inspect the books of their Medical Officers from time to time, and I thankfully acknowledge their acquiescence in this proposal, as it will greatly facilitate the performance of my duties in this very essential respect. The almost entire absence of fever, and the general healthy condition of the district, is, I trust, due in some measure to the sanitary improvements already carried out; yet, it is right to add, that the temperature is considerably below the average, and to that cause must be attributed some portion of our present advantages. My attention has on several occasions been directed to the coloured condition of the water at the public baths; after some care in the investigation, for it is a subject of general interest to the parish, I am satisfied that the yellow tinge in the water, is merely owing to the reflection of light, and in only a very slight degree, if at all, to the presence of any mechanical impurity, I would suggest the propriety of covering the cistern, as so large a surface of water must become impregnated by the action of various floating particles in the atmosphere. On the complaint of Mr. Collins, I have inspected a ditch at the back of Corrugated Row, it is in a foul condition, is offensive in the highest degree, is the receptacle of various privies, which mixed with the drainage from Procter and

Bevington's, become a very serious nuisance. I suggest that this ditch be cleansed, the contents carted away, and a covered drain substituted.

On the inspection of Dodd's Cow Yard, in Page's Walk, on the 10th instant, I found that nine pigs were kept in a single sty, in an offensive and filthy place, with a very considerable accumulation of feculent matter. I consider this an instance of animals kept so as to be a nuisance and injurious to health.

The same may be said of a cow yard, or shed rather, in Flora Terrace; I found five cows in a close confined place, two standing over a cesspool, and the whole in a most filthy condition. This is altogether highly objectionable, and is likely to be productive of disease in more ways than one.

The condition of Suffolk Place, Snows Fields, is bad, it has been already noticed by your Inspector; I have the place in my recollection as a breeding spot of disease. Cholera was here rife. A description of the state of some of the houses will satisfy the Vestry of the necessity for prompt action, of the danger of further delay:

No. 1.—A man, wife, and seven children, complain of "dreadful smell" from the privy, no pan or water supply.

No. 3.—Inhabitants complain of short supply of water, pan to privy in a most filthy condition, and no water supply, no dust bin, to any of the houses.

No. 5.—Family of six; place in a filthy condition, no water supply, no dust bin, in fact the whole place is in a dangerous state. I found here for the first time, since the improved water supply, that it was abounding with insects. There is in the front of the houses an accumulation of filth of every description, the poor inhabitants having no dust bin. This refuse ought to be removed daily; I am informed that it is only done so weekly.

The more I reflect on the subject, the more weighty I feel the necessity for urging in every instance a water supply to the pans of the privies, without it I am certain that much mischief will arise. In several instances tenants have complained that the place was far worse than before.

There is an illustration of this at 40, Bermondsey Square, where the proprietor has placed a pan over the cesspool, without trapping and without water. The adjoining houses are also without water supply, but the landlord has ordered the work to be done. I would advise that notice be given to the owners

of No. 40; two children in the house have lately had fever, and the place is most offensive.

July 7th, 1856.

Gentlemen,

It is now my duty to report upon the condition of our district as regards the prevalence of disease and the rate of mortality during the quarter just expired.

The valuable returns published by authority of the Registrar General for this period are a subject of satisfaction, for throughout the metropolitan districts a low rate of mortality has prevailed, far below the hitherto recognized average, indicating a very material diminution of disease in the population at large; but marked as this general amelioration has been, it is peculiarly a subject of congratulation to us, that Bermondsey not only participates in it, but has advanced even in a more material degree. The absence of any general sickness and the diminution of deaths is remarkable. I will briefly allude to some of the most potent agencies in effecting this beneficial change.

The first place must be assigned to the improvement in the quantity of the water, as now it is exercising a salutary influence upon the consumers, and is a great contrast to the filthy and abominable fluid supplied until lately to this district, which aggravated to a great degree the ravages of Cholera amongst us in 1849. All men of experience agree upon this point, that the use of foul water tends more to the production of disease, especially of cholera, than any other known influence.—happily, as regards quality, this is with us past, but complaints from various parts of the district reach me of scanty supply; now this is a serious evil, as the improvements contemplated and in progress in the dwellings of the working classes will thus be rendered unavailing, and are likely, without an adequate supply of water, to be productive of mischief rather than of good.

The Baths and Washhouses have already contributed very materially, not only to the comfort, cleanliness, and health of our working classes, but also to those of the adjoining parishes. They are invaluable in the prevention of many diseases, and are rapidly becoming generally appreciated. The fact that in two weeks there were 10,089 bathers speaks for itself.

The erection of these Baths, for the benefit of the poor and

working classes, at a very heavy cost to the parish, is proof, if any were needed, of our anxiety and determination to carry out every practical plan of local improvement.

If Dickens, whose descriptive powers painted in such dark colours, "Jacob's Island," were now to revisit that spot, he would fail to recognize it, the change is so complete, and the improvements (although not yet perfect) so great.

The abolition of burials in vaults and grounds, has doubtless contributed in no trifling degree to our sanitary improvement.

Lord Palmerston's "Smoke Bill," which is now pretty generally carried out, has, in all human probability, assisted in improving the health of the district.

The excellent paving of our streets, courts, and alleys, has also contributed much towards our sanitary improvement, the exceptions where courts continue unpaved, will I trust soon cease to exist. The rapid improvement in health and appearance of the inhabitants of neglected courts, when good paving, cleansing, and drainage take place, requires to be seen, to be properly appreciated and understood.

The abolition of cesspools, and the substitution of pans, with water supply, cannot fail to be of great public benefit.

It appears that the average of deaths in the 1000, in the ten years from 1840 to 1850, in Bermondsey was 28, in Rotherhithe the same, in Holborn and Shoreditch also the same, in Whitechapel and St. George's in the East 29, and in St. George's, Southwark, 30.

From the subjoined table it will be seen that the deaths in Bermondsey in the last quarter are 256, and in the week ending June 21st, 13 only were registered, being the smallest number in any week since 1847.

I trust that the present favourable condition may not only be maintained but improved. I believe, despite some evils from local causes and from situation, that in many respects we possess advantages over other metropolitan districts. Most assuredly the principal causes, which shorten and embitter life by the production of disease, are mainly within our own control, we must continue to exercise it.

July 21, 1856.

Gentlemen,

During the two weeks ending July 5th and 12th respectively, the average rate of mortality still presents for the metropolis generally a favorable aspect, and it is with satisfaction I report that the deaths in Bermondsey demonstrate the present healthiness of the district.

Eighteen deaths only are registered in each of the above mentioned periods, being considerably below the average, one is from diarrhœa, but at this period of the year, when this disease always prevails more or less, and is now somewhat fatal, there being no deaths from this cause on the southern side of the Thames, and 39 on the northern side, it is not a subject of anxiety. Fever also prevails to some extent on the other side of the metropolis, it is with us of a mild character, and the deaths are but few in comparison.

The mean daily temperature continues below the average, and probably exercises a beneficial influence in our district, as with increase of temperature we shall become more liable to those diseases termed zymotic, which are considered to be in a great measure preventible. The condition of the ditches at the back of St. James's Church, demands an especial consideration as at the present moment, they are more than usually offensive; they should during hot and dry weather be flushed at least twice a week. On the other days, with the sanction of the Vestry, I propose attempting the extinction of the effluvia, or at all events its diminution by the employment of deodorizing agents. If at a trifling cost this can be effected, the district will be greatly benefited. My attention has been called to the condition of the water from the pump in Manning Street, complaints having been made to me of offensive odours in watering the streets. The water is impure, in all probability impregnated from the pits in the immediate neighbourhood. I think it would be desirable to examine the condition of this well, and also of the public wells in the parish.

The vegetable decomposition in the grounds of Mr. Poupart, by the Blue Anchor Road, I look upon as likely to be productive of considerable mischief; the gases given off are injurious and offensive in a high degree. I have spoken to Mr. Poupart, he says he has a difficulty in getting rid of this vegetable refuse; I consider it absolutely necessary that some modification of his

present plan should be adopted. I have inspected two houses, Nos. 1 and 2 Blue Anchor Lane, they are dirty and over crowded; unless these houses are cleansed, I shall consider it necessary to certify that they are unfitted for human habitation. Your Inspector has especially alluded to them. I beg to draw the attention of the Vestry to the accompanying Report of Metropolitan Officers of Health relating to slaughter houses, as it contains some valuable and practical suggestions.

August 4, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The mortality returns for the last two weeks ending July 19th and 26th show an increase, although the deaths are considerably below the average. In my former reports this alteration was anticipated, as a result of higher temperature. For the week ending July 19th, the deaths are 24, the average for the corresponding week, for the last ten years, being 28.6. One death, that of a child under two years of age, is ascribed to "English cholera." For the week ending July 26th, the number registered is 22, the average for the corresponding week for the last ten years being 29; one death is ascribed to cholera in a child seven months of age. From inquiries I have made myself, and caused to be made by your Inspector of Nuisances, I have no hesitation in stating that, in these cases, there were no symptoms of epidemic or Asiatic cholera. The following is Mr. O'Brien's report upon the first of these cases, and the other, which occurred in Cottage row, the mother states that the child was ill, teething. The Inspector reports the house as clean, well drained, and in good condition.

During the last few days, with tropical heat, there is a considerable amount of diarrhœa, which is at present of a mild and manageable form, yielding readily to medical treatment.

I regret exceedingly, that constant complaints are made to me of deficient water supply, which is an evil of such magnitude that it will, if continued, neutralize our efforts to maintain the district in its improved sanitary condition, for scarcity of water, at a time like the present, endangers the health and lives of the community.

Investigation has been made by the Southwark and Vauxhall Company as to the correctness of former complaints from

various parts of the parish, and although the fact is not denied, the blame is laid upon the owners of property, on account of imperfect fittings, small pipes, and inefficient receptacles.

These conditions are to be lamented as interfering in some degree with the supply of water, and also as furnishing a plausible defence on the part of the Company. They are, however, no answer to the complaints of want of daily service, in some cases it being on alternate days, and in others two, three, and four days intervening. The Sunday morning service is a considerate concession on the part of the directors, and is felt as a great boon, but it is dearly purchased if the supply on other days is on that account withheld. Finding that the urgent and important question of the main drainage of our district is yet unsettled, and is still a subject for discussion by the Metropolitan Board of Works, I have thought it right to bring to the notice of the Vestry the condition of the portion of the Thames, which forms the boundary of the parish, as from experience, I know it has been on former occasions a source of disease. St. Saviour's Dock is, at low water, a large mass of corrupting filth, emitting a most offensive and sickening stench, which is a very serious and dangerous nuisance, not only to the crews of the vessels and labourers, but also to the adjacent neighbourhood, and at its outlet to the Thames, there is a deep, filthy, and offensive deposit.

The condition of the ruins of Rain's mill is very unsatisfactory, there is a deposit of mud and filth, which your Inspector reports as four feet in depth. I have examined the place, and consider it to be an offensive and dangerous nuisance. The ancient archway and outlet to the Thames, are likewise in a filthy condition; at low water to-day, with your Surveyor and Inspector, I noticed particularly that portion of the river, where the Duffield Sewer enters. The contents of this large sewer have a perceptible influence in polluting the Thames for a considerable distance, and I was much concerned to find that vessels were lying at anchor in the dark polluted water; for it was here that I saw the first fatal case of cholera on this side of the river, in 1854. Boys too were bathing in the midst of floating feculent matter, and the shore was so covered with disgusting deposits as to be most revolting. I consider that immediate steps should be taken to

remedy in some measure this humiliating, and as regards the health of the public, dangerous condition of the shore of the Thames.

After this subject it is quite refreshing and cheering to notice again that admirable and most valuable institution, our baths and washhouses. I find that in the week ending August 2nd, no less than 6717 bathers partook of its advantages, and that there were in addition 274 washers; a most satisfactory proof that the working classes are alive to the benefits of this establishment. I am using a deodorizer in the urinals with benefit; but, I must repeat what I said on a former occasion, as to the necessity and advantage of a constant flow of fresh water in these places.

August 18, 1856.

Gentlemen,

In the week ending August 2nd there were 30 deaths registered for Bermondsey, a very considerable increase, and a high rate of mortality. There were nine fatal cases of diarrhœa, this disease having been almost universally prevalent with children I had expected a larger amount of deaths, as, during the excessive heat, it assumed a very severe form. In St. James's district five fatal cases occurred, three in St. Mary Magdalen, and one in the Leather Market. In the metropolis 125 deaths were registered from diarrhœa, and 16 from cholera. We had no deaths from cholera. The heat during this week was almost unprecedented, the thermometer marking in the shade 90°, and in the sun 111°.

The deaths above mentioned are rather more than our average from this disease, but I am gratified to find that in the week ending August 9th, although the deaths from diarrhœa in the metropolis had increased to 211, and to 22 from cholera, our deaths had diminished to 22 from all causes, including eight from diarrhœa, but again none from cholera.

The heat this week slightly diminished, but was still considerably above the average, and I have in consequence refrained from urging sanitary improvements during this high temperature, as the setting free of volatile ammoniacal and fœtid gases, is at such a time peculiarly offensive and dangerous.

I have examined the open ditches at the rear of Messrs. Hepburn and Bacon's factories, they are of considerable extent,

and in some parts filthy and offensive, especially where the privies of the workmen are placed over them. Having attended your committee, appointed on the subject of the tidal supply of water, in connection with the proposal to separate the water from these ditches, I beg leave to state that, in my opinion, the covering in of these ditches, and the proposed separation of tidal supply, will be a great and most desirable advantage to the district in a sanitary point of view, independent of any especial benefit to the Manufacturers.

I have again to allude to Suffolk Place. In Nos. 15 and 10, a Fusee Maker has established himself, independent of the risk from explosion and fire, in this a dense and crowded court, which must be extremely great, there is an escape of suffocating gas singularly offensive, which I consider injurious to the health of the neighbourhood.

I am happy to state, that the water supply is considerably improved, having had no further complaints brought to my notice, and having had a satisfactory reply to my inquiries on the subject.

September 1, 1856.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

During the last fortnight we have had diarrhœa very prevalent. In the week ending August 10th we had six deaths registered from this disease, and from other causes 21; in the week ending August 23rd, seven deaths occurred from diarrhœa, and from other causes 19. No death is ascribed to cholera.

I wish particularly to draw the attention of the Vestry to the condition of some ruinous premises in Cottage Row, in order that prompt measures may be taken for remedying its most unsatisfactory state. In consequence of the falling in of the roof of the building, there are pools of stagnant offensive water, and also here and there heaps of decomposed grain, from which offensive exhalations arise, injurious to the district, and two houses immediately opposite, are empty and closed in consequence. There is an unoccupied tanner's yard in the Spa Road, and from the pits offensive emanations are given off. I should advise that they be pumped out, for there is a large surface of stagnant water in a filthy condition, requiring immediate attention, and the same remarks apply to unoccupied premises in Willow Walk.

I have visited the "Sluice House," at the end of Cottage Row, it is really quite horrible to think that human beings are living in such a place, it is over the "Duffield Sewer," and the stench from it perfectly pestilential. The poor woman in the place begged me to try and get something done. It does appear to me a wanton act to allow the existence of such a cause of disease to remain without attempting some remedy. The neighbourhood also is affected, and the effluvia is recognizable for a considerable distance.

My attention has been called to Foxlow Street. I have inspected it, and nothing can well be worse, both as regards the condition of the houses and the wretched inmates. I most strongly recommend immediate action, as regards the drainage, the cleansing, and alterations absolutely required to prevent the outbreak of disease. Complaint was made to me to-day by Mrs. Morris, of 33, Salisbury Street, she stated that for three weeks she has had no water supplied to the house, that in consequence she is unable to wash her linen, and that for tea she begs a little of her neighbours. She appears a respectable cleanly woman, and says she cannot keep her house clean and wholesome; and that the privy which has been panned and trapped, is, in consequence of the non supply of water, in a very offensive condition. Her neighbours state that they have some supply, but of a very limited character.

The Fusee Manufactory in Suffolk Place, which I alluded to in my last report, has been again complained of, as "poisoning and suffocating the inmates of the houses in the rear of the premises." I consider it a very dangerous nuisance, and urge the propriety of steps being taken for its removal as quickly as possible.

I trust that the recommendations in the report of a committee of Medical Officers of Health, on unsound meat, will meet with your approval and adoption.

September 15, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The deaths in the week ending August 30th, were 32, and in the week terminating September 6th, 24; the former in a very high rate of mortality, the latter about an average; these are the two weeks corresponding with the most fatal period of the cholera with us in 1854. I am strongly inclined to the belief,

that the sanitary improvements already effected, have exercised a considerable influence in checking the developement of diarrhœa into cholera.

The general prevalence of diarrhœa, during the last four weeks, has been remarkable, especially with children, in whom it has been in many instances fatal, accounting in a material degree for our increase of mortality.

Of the 24 deaths in the week ending September 6, no less than nine are from diseases, which are now justly considered to be in a very great degree preventible, viz., two from typhus, two from diarrhœa, two from scarlitina, and three from measles. I believe that the time is not far distant, when we shall be able to fix and identify, in the majority of instances, the direct causes of these diseases, as well as we can now, those of ague or marsh, and the jungle or yellow fever. I beg especially to direct the attention of the Vestry to a place called "Turner's Retreat," which is as much a fever producing locality, as can well be imagined. The inhabitants are not of the poorest description, and some of them are remarkably cleanly in their houses and persons, but the miserable want of drainage, and the offensive condition of the privies, is without the slightest exaggeration producing a poisonous influence upon the inhabitants. All, but with one exception, appeared to me in a low state of health, the exception was the deputy landlord, or rent collector, who could see nothing wrong about the place. This court is also within the influence of the soaks from Mr. Barrow's yard, of which complaints have already been made. On inspecting Mr. Barrow's premises, I regretted to find that the pits, containing a strong solution of dogs' excrement, (technically called pure) were inconsiderately placed adjoining the public thoroughfare. I am pleased to learn that your Surveyor has a plan for improving the drainage of this spot, and I beg leave to reiterate what I have before often urged, the imperative necessity for a great dilution of the contents of the saturated pure pits, before and also after they are poured into the public sewers. This is done by some of your large Manufacturers, it ought to be a rule with all. I remonstrated with Mr. Barrow also on the general complaint made by surrounding neighbours, of a suffocating vapour arising from his yard, in consequence of his burning tan mixed with coal. This practice he promised should be discontinued.

This morning the Fusee Manufacturer, in Suffolk place, called on me, and stated his intention to discontinue at once the offence complained of.

October 6, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The deaths in the weeks ending September 13th, 20th, and 27th, respectively registered, are 19, 25, and 35. The last is a high rate of mortality, in the absence of epidemic disease, and is occasioned principally by scarlitina, in a malignant form, eight deaths having been occasioned in this parish from this disease in the week ending September 27th, three of these occurred in one family, at 14, West street, Neckinger. I have examined the house, which is thoroughly clean, and well ventilated, but I am strongly inclined to the opinion that the disease and mortality, to which this family have been so very heavily subjected, they having lost seven children during ten years, has arisen in a great measure from the foul air brought into their premises, from a connection with the main sewer by means of pipes from their privy, without the protection of pan, trap, or water supply. I look upon this arrangement as infinitely more injurious to health than the condemned cesspool. There is almost a constant evolution of gas and foul air in the sewer, which when breathed enters the blood, producing in different degrees, sickness, fever, and death.

During the quarter just ended, we have had in the Leather Market district, no death registered from typhus fever, a very satisfactory fact; in St. Mary Magdalen, there are two fatal cases recorded; and in St. James's district, two also. I have thought it my duty to ascertain some of the circumstances connected with these cases, as the prevention of typhus and of typhoid diseases, as I have before stated, is now considered to be almost always practicable. In other words, it is a disease engendered by the neglect of well known sanitary precautions.

Mrs. Matthams, 189, Grange road, a middle-aged active person, the proprietor of a coffee shop, died in five days, the house is clean and respectable, but there is most offensive cesspool almost within the house, and the sink stones are untrapped, from which there is a frequent stench. The son of

Mr. Bartlett, of 14, Paulin street, aged four years, died after a few days illness; the mother states that none of her children have been well since she removed from Alfred street, about 12 months ago. Her little boy went to a child's school, at No. 2, Paulin street, which joins the manure factory, many of the children have had fever, the governess stating that she could not open the window in consequence of the suffocating vapour which arose from the adjoining yard. The closet at No. 14, is properly panned, trapped, and supplied with a water cistern, but Mrs. Bartlett complains of the very inefficient supply of water.

George White of 76, Princes road, also of fever. In this house the privy is open, and there is connection with the sewer but there is no pan, trap, or water supply, and at times the inhabitants complain of a very offensive smell. These cases tend to strengthen the opinion I entertain of the preventibility of fever.

At No. 2, Ferguson's Rents in Snows Fields, I have lately attended a case of fever, a woman—about thirty years, the mother of six young children, who all at various times in this house have also had fever, she is an industrious, cleanly, and respectable old person; now the court is admirably paved and well drained, but on examining the back premises, I was sickened with a most abominable stench arising from the privy. I found it to be aggravated by the heat from a copper in the adjoining house, which belonging to a laundress is always heated, keeping the contents of both privies at a temperature peculiarly favorable for the developement of noxious effluvia. I have consulted with Mr. Barrow, on the most practicable means to be adopted for the removal of any cause of complaint against him for creating a nuisance, and I hope that the evil will be remedied. He has promised to do all in his power to accomplish this desirable object.

I believe that the alterations which, with your Surveyor, I have witnessed in the various slaughter-houses, will be conducive to the health of the district. There has been on the part of those interested, a commendable promptitude and correctness in carrying out the improvements required by the Vestry.

October 20, 1856.

Gentlemen,

My report this day is brief, and I am happy to say, as regards the health of the district, satisfactory. The deaths in the week ending October 4th were but 18, and in the week ending October 11th, the same number. From my own experience, and from the returns of the Parochial Medical Officers, I am justified in saying that there is no serious disease at present prevalent. My attention has been directed to the premises of Mr. Cordery, in Wyld's Rents, and I found that a very considerable nuisance had been occasioned by an accumulation of Scutch. I requested its immediate removal, as the inhabitants of Wilderness Street had been put to inconvenience, and suffered in their health, from the effluvia given off. I have reason to believe that the offensive matters are now removed.

On the 18th instant, I caused to be seized about 1 cwt. of sausages, and a large quantity of diseased meat, at the premises of Mr. Templar, No. 3, Grange Road. It was unfit for human food; and the Magistrate fined Mr. Templar forty shillings. The meat and sausages were destroyed under the superintendence of your Inspector.

November 17, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The deaths registered in the last three weeks are respectively 28, 28, and 23. Hooping cough and measles are prevalent, and serve to increase materially the mortality, which is slightly in excess of the average. On the complaint of Mr. Stock of Bermondsey Street, I inspected the yard at No. 44, used as a manufactory of potato powder or farina. The yard was wretchedly dirty, partly paved, and badly drained; pools of offensive liquor, the strainings from potato pulp, gave off in various places a faint sickly odour. About thirty tons of diseased potatoes were on the premises--certainly an objectionable accumulation,--and considering that a powder the product of these is sold as a substitute for one of the most generally used articles of food in sickness, viz. arrow root, it certainly is open to censure, if not to legal condemnation. I have again this day examined the premises; the bulk of the potatoes is used up, and the yard is in a less filthy condition.

Accompanied by your Surveyor, on the 13th instant, I inspected the premises of Mr. Naylor, in Cherry Garden Street, relative to a complaint made by that gentleman at the last meeting of the Vestry; when he stated that effluvia from the sewer in front of his house was so offensive as to cause continued ill health to his family. There is a ventilating crevice immediately opposite the house, and also a gully within a few feet—undoubtedly a serious nuisance—for which your Surveyor is prepared to advise a remedy.

On inspecting the rear of Mr. Naylor's premises, we found that lately a large portion of the contents of two capacious cesspools had been let off into the sewer, which had undoubtedly tended to aggravate the evil he had so much complained against. The workmen were also filling up the cesspools, without previously emptying or cleansing; a practice too prevalent, one most certainly calculated to engender disease, and which ought not under any circumstances to be tolerated.

Captain Corbin and Mr. Boddington having complained of the Comb Manufactory of Mr. Martin, in St. James's Place, I closely inspected his premises on the 13th instant, and I can find no legitimate cause of complaint, with the exception that the chimney to the copper, where the shell is steamed, is not more than twenty feet from the ground; this may possibly occasion a little smoke at times.

I have this day visited the premises of Messrs. Eason; there is no alteration. The man at the furnace informed me that Messrs. Eason have, since the complaint, given orders for the burning of more coal and coke, so as to diminish the smoke as much as possible.

Mr. Hacker lodged a complaint against the south side of Hanover street, Neckinger Road, as being inefficiently drained and a nuisance to him. I deeply regretted to find some of them in a truly disgraceful condition.

No. 12.—I now certify as unfitted for human habitation, the privy dilapidated—indeed tumbling down—the cesspool overflowing, no pan, no water supply.

Nos. 10 and 11.—In the same condition, but the houses less dilapidated.

No. 9.—The privy giving off gas of a suffocating nature. Nine children in the house, all lately with the measles.

Nos. 7 and 8.—Open privies, cesspools lately emptied. At

No. 7 an old filthy water butt broken, and no dust bin to any of these.

No. 30.—An open offensive privy, faint sickening odour; appears to be open to a drain.

No. 31.—Empty.

No. 32.—The same as 30. Four children with measles.

No. 33.—Privy panned, but without water supply; effluvia from drain.

Nos. 34, 35, and 36.—In the same condition. The tenant of the last house who lost her daughter with cholera, says that the privy being without water is a much greater nuisance than before. The water was generally filthy and unfitted for human consumption, being polluted by the foetid surrounding atmosphere, and filthy uncovered receptacles.

December 1, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The deaths in the week ending November 15th were 25, and of these I regret to state that three cases were of typhus fever in the Leather Market district. In the week ending November 22nd the deaths registered are 35, a high rate of mortality, not however peculiar to Bermondsey; as in 33 of the 36 Metropolitan districts (the principal exception is Chelsea, the deaths being 21, the average 24; there are two others slightly under the average, viz. St. Luke's and Clerkenwell), the mortality was considerably above the average, occasioned principally by typhus, hooping cough, measles and scarlatina. The three latter diseases affect, especially, the lives of young children, and are I am convinced often engendered and propagated in schools; owing to overcrowding, ill ventilation, want of cleanliness, and offensive emanations from the privies. I have personally inspected most of the Public Schools in the Parish, of these some are in a highly satisfactory and creditable condition, and some quite the reverse. Bacon's School in the Grange Road, is as regards the condition of the privies in a state that I have no hesitation in reporting as highly offensive and injurious to health. The Infant School in the Grange Walk is altogether satisfactory; the arrangements good, and free from any offensive emanation. The School at Star Corner is satisfactory. The Girls' School in Grange Walk unsatisfactory. Your Inspector reports to me of Christ Church Schools, "300 boys and girls

from three to fourteen, with two privies only, and there is no division between that of the boys and girls." More accommodation required; very little sickness. St. James's Girls' School, Spa Road—140 girls—an open and offensive privy—scarlatina and small pox been lately prevalent. St. James' Boys School, 194 boys. A very offensive privy—urinal drain stopped.

Harold's School, Drummond Row, 170 girls; privy without trap, soil pan, or water supply. The Boys School 230; the privy in the same condition. The master complains that the smell from these places, and the privies on the south side of Millpond street, and the west side of Little Cherry Garden Street, which are built against the School party wall, is so offensive in summer time, that he is prevented opening the windows to ventilate the School. I strongly urge upon the Vestry the necessity for prompt measures to remedy this unsalutary state of affairs. I cannot well insist upon sanitary improvements, and alterations in private establishments, while our public ones illustrate faint zeal, and afford a bad example for excuse or imitation. I am convinced that wholesome regulation and improvements are greatly required, and I am certain that when carried out, the moral and physical condition of the children of our district will be materially advanced, and most amply repay any requisite necessary expense.

December 15th, 1856.

Gentlemen,

The mortality of our district for the last two weeks is beyond the average, being respectively 36 and 33. Fatal cases of measles still continue; four are recorded in the fortnight, and hooping cough has also added two to the number of deaths.

The sudden fall and rise of the temperature have been remarkable during the period, and will in a great degree account for the increased mortality, which has been principally with the aged and the young.

It is worthy of notice that on Sunday, November 30th, the thermometer fell from 38 to $9\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, and on December 6th, marked 56, the lowest point during the night being 40 degrees. The old worn out working men or women, and the children of the very poor, badly clad, and half fed, are ill able to contend against the influence of such changes, and become ready victims.

We have had one death from scarlatina, but none from diarrhœa or typhus; the latter fact which is encouraging and satisfactory.

On the complaint of Charles Eames, I have inspected his house, No. 2, East Lane, and I find that from the bursting of a pipe or drain, the kitchens are covered with offensive sewage matters: very disgusting, and most certainly calculated to injure the health of the occupiers. I have also inspected the house No. 22, John Street, Parker's Row, and here also a similar nuisance exists, notwithstanding repeated remonstrances for the last three months on the part of the tenant. The cesspool is overflowing, and the soil and liquid sewage have according to the testimony of the tenant, been for the time before mentioned, escaping into the back yard. In this house the husband of the present occupier died of cholera in 1854.

In consequence of complaint made, I have visited and examined 20, 21, 22, and 23, Parker's Row, houses of a respectable class, and inhabited by cleanly and respectable tenants; they are, as regards sanitary requirements, in a state really disgraceful; the effluvia from the surface drains and cesspools in the rear, being positively suffocating and most pernicious. A show of amendment appears to have been made some months since by the laying down of pipes, but the cesspools remain untouched, and are an intolerable nuisance. I consider the health of that portion of our parish endangered by what I have but faintly described.

January 15, 1857.

Gentlemen,

I am happy to report that the health of the Parish is improving, and the mortality diminishing; the deaths for the weeks ending December 13th, 20th and 27th are 18, 29, and 24. Scarlatina has been fatal in nine cases, and Measles in three. We have had no death from Typhus, which I look upon as highly satisfactory.

The result of the inspection of Slaughter-Houses, and of the applications of the owners for a license, is that there are now 29 licensed as fit and proper; and as it is of material consequence to the healthiness of the district that these places should be maintained in their present greatly improved condition, I recommend that a quarterly inspection should take

place, in order that evils now rectified should not again be called into existence.

In my report of August 8th ult., I stated that St. Saviour's Dock was, at low water; a huge mass of corrupting filth, emitting a sickening and offensive stench, dangerous to the crews of vessels, and to the labourers in the Dock. I regret to find that nothing has been done to remedy this nuisance, because I believe it to be a very serious one, quite likely to endanger the health and lives of the people in the neighbourhood. I refer again to it now, because this is a period (as the temperature is low, and as we are fortunately free from epidemic disease), that ancient neglected nuisances, such as this, can with greater safety be removed. In hot weather, with a prevailing tendency to fever, diarrhœa, or cholera, this accumulation could not be stirred up without considerable risk. I therefore respectfully urge on the Vestry the necessity for adopting some effectual measures to remove the nuisance forthwith.

There is deficiency in decent urinal accommodation in the Parish, and this will in some measure account for the very filthy and offensive condition of many of the courts and alleys, where public-houses occupy one corner.

Having reason to believe that the sanitary condition of the houses on the south side of the Grange Road was not satisfactory, I directed your Inspector to visit them, and I beg leave to refer to his report. On the 24th ult. I had great satisfaction in attending your Committee on the Park for Southwark, to accompany the President and a Committee of the Metropolitan Board to view the proposed sites. I can have no hesitation in stating my opinion, that the future health, not merely of the district, but of a large section of the metropolis, will materially depend on the adoption of the present favorable opportunity for securing to the *Public, for ever*, a place for recreation and healthful exercise.

January 19, 1851.

Gentlemen,

The deaths registered in the week ending January 3rd, are 30; seventeen males and thirteen females, four of the former were of the respective ages of 83, 78, 73, and 72. The births registered are 46, viz., 25 females and 21 males. For the week ending January 10th the deaths are again 30; six-

teen females and fourteen males, the ages of two females are recorded 82 and 86; the latter (widow of a boat-builder) was accidentally burnt to death—a waterman aged 90, has died from natural decay;—and an accidental death has been occasioned to a person in his 59th year, by falling from a granary of a “corn runner.” It is almost marvellous that more accidents of this description do not occur in our district. The births registered are 50, 27 females and 23 males, thus in vital statistics affording a considerable balance in our favor.

I have had my attention called to the condition of Albert Street East; the drainage appears to me defective, and the inhabitants complain generally of dampness in their houses, and effluvia from the closets; the majority of the latter being open and offensive. The roadway and pavements are in a bad condition.

February 2, 1857.

Gentlemen,

The deaths in the week ending January 17th were 22; 12 males and 10 females. There were four in St. Mary Magdalen district, five in the Leather Market, and thirteen in St. James's districts; eight of these were caused by disease of the chest. The births registered are 43.

In the week ending the 24th, there were 24 deaths equally spread over the three districts, viz. eight in each:—and the births were 40. A female at 92 died in Long Lane. The general health of the Parish is satisfactory, and I have strong reasons for hoping that the measures already taken by the Vestry are materially tending to raise the sanitary condition of the district in the metropolitan scale. I report to you to-night some houses in the Grange Road requiring improvement, as being entirely without drainage, and consequently in a most unsatisfactory condition.

February 15, 1857.

Gentlemen,

The health of our district continues in a satisfactory condition, and is almost entirely free from fever, no case of death from this disease being registered during the last fortnight; which is a most favorable indication. In the week ending January 31st the deaths were 26, thus distributed:—five in the Leather Market sub-district, eight in St. Mary Magdalen, and

thirteen in St. James. The births in the same period were 46. During the week ending the 7th instant the deaths are 22; four in the Leather Market sub-district, seven in St. James, and eleven in St. Mary Magdalen. It is worthy of remark that 15 of these 22 deaths were occasioned by diseases of the lungs and air passages, and that children and the aged are the principal sufferers. The births in this week are 52; a very satisfactory increase; St. James contributing 22, St. Mary Magdalen 17, and the Leather Market 13.

In pursuance of instructions from the Vestry, I have inspected the premises of Mr. Petch at Dockhead, used for roasting chicory; also, a new building adjoining, in which malt is roasted. On my first visit, the chicory roasting (as well as the malt) was in full activity, and the vapour which came from the heated chicory was pungent, irritating, and offensive. The odour from the malt was less decided, but faint and sickening.

I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion as to the nuisance caused to the immediate surrounding neighbourhood, by heated vapour, charged with acid fumes, entering the houses, and impregnating the "goods" of the owners.

The odour from the chicory I have detected, during the last fortnight, in Great George Street, John Street, Dockhead, Maltby Street, and in Russell Street. I have also directed your Inspector to note the prevalence and extent to which he could recognize the peculiar smell emanating from this factory. I refer to his book on the subject.

As regards the influence of this vapour upon health, although it would not cause fevers, and probably not diarrhœa, yet it is quite certain and indisputable that *Bronchial* and *Lung* diseases, especially with the aged and the young, would be much aggravated by its presence.

I regret the necessity for this unqualified opinion, because I believe the owner has evinced anxiety to remove or diminish the cause of complaint by his neighbours against him. I have seen and examined lately other premises, not in our district, where similar processes are carried on, without producing any approach to the same amount of offensive effluvia, in consequence of the greater adaptability of the buildings, and the more complete arrangements for ventilation.

On the 12th instant, in consequence of information from your Inspector, I accompanied him to a pork butcher's, and

being convinced that a portion of a cow's carcass had all the appearances of diseased meat, I directed it to be destroyed, under the superintendence of your Inspector, and with the consent of the butcher.

I did not in this case cause the meat to be taken before a magistrate for the enforcement of a fine, as in a former instance, because of the earnest declaration of the party of ignorance as to the character of the meat, and regret at its occurrence, and also because the bulk of the meat in his possession was sound, and of good condition, whereas in the other case all was bad and unfit for food. I have reason to hope that this event will prove a wholesome warning.

March 2, 1857.

Gentlemen,

It is satisfactory to me to report that the deaths in the week ending February 14th were but 23, and what is especially worthy of record that in the Leather Market district only three deaths occurred, these being children of the respective ages of two years, ten months and fourteen months. In St. Mary Magdalen the deaths are sixteen, and in St. James's four. The births in the Parish were 52.

In the week ending the 21st of February the mortality is increased, owing to five deaths from hooping cough; 29 is the number registered, but none from fever or diarrhoea. The births in the same period are 33.

Having received a complaint from Mr. Freeman, a Timber Merchant, of the Spa Road, of an offensive odour which had caused sickness to his wife and servants in the afternoon and evening of the 26th ult., which he described as proceeding from the premises of Mr. Young, Glue Manufacturer; on the 27th I inspected the premises complained of, and I believe the offensive effluvia proceeded from an accumulation of "Scutch," which was in process of removal. I am strongly of opinion that for the comfort and safety of the district, this refuse, which has a great proneness for putrefaction, should not be allowed to accumulate, and I advise the Vestry to require its removal at least twice in the week during the summer months. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the emanation of ammonia is not only peculiarly offensive, but also deprives the atmosphere of its vital properties.

April 16, 1857.

To the Vestry of Bermondsey, Gentlemen,

A year has expired since you did me the honor to elect me to the responsible position of Officer of Health to this important metropolitan district, and the duty now devolves upon me to report generally to the Vestry our progress in sanitary improvement.

In the first place, however, I must offer my very sincere thanks to the Vestry for their cordial and earnest co-operation at all times, and I am also much indebted to several Members of the Board individually for useful hints, and information on many occasions.

It is to me a source of extreme satisfaction that the mortality of the Parish, during the past year, has been considerably below the average, and that the amount of sickness amongst the poor, as shown by the returns of the District Medical Officers, is also indicative of improved health, and the absence of disease in an epidemic form. To the courtesy of the Guardians I am indebted for an inspection of the weekly returns of the sick poor, which are at all times useful, and in periods of threatened epidemics will be of the highest importance. The annual return of the Registrar General makes the deaths in Bermondsey for the year 1856, 1176. On adding the quarterly return, I find the correct number to be 1192, viz., in—

January, February, March,.....	266
April, May, June,	256
July, August, September,	323
October, November, December, ...	347
	<hr/>
	11.92

The births for the same period, are for—

January, February, March,.....	555
April, May, June,	555
July, August, September,	516
October, November, December, ...	547
	<hr/>

2173 Births

1192 Deaths.

.981 Excess of

births a very satisfactory balance in our favour. In the last ten years the annual number of deaths in London, have been 23 in a 1000, but in 1856 they were but 22. Now taking our population at or about 55,0000, which I think within the mark, for in the period from 1841 to 1851, we increased from 34,947, to 47,836, making an average annual addition of 1288; the mortality in our Parish, is within the average of the whole of London, in this one of the healthiest years on record. No serious epidemic has prevailed, hooping cough has however been fatal—a result of general belief with parents, that remedies in this disease are of little service. I am convinced that a large proportion of the mortality of children from hooping cough might be avoided by more care, and attention, to medical treatment.

In August and September a strong disposition and general tendency to diarrhœa prevailed throughout the metropolis. It was very general, and considering the number of persons attacked, the fatal cases were but few, our deaths from this disease during the whole year were 63. The necessity for precautions in diet, and medical treatment in this disease, is now so almost universally understood and practised, that to these circumstances may be attributed the trifling mortality which occurred compared with that which would in all human probability have taken place, had such precautions and treatment been neglected. Weak and delicate children, with the aged and debilitated, were the principal sufferers. Middle aged people of healthy constitutions almost entirely escaped.

Cholera was developed in but a few cases, and I have the strongest conviction that our comparative immunity from this very terrible disease, was mainly owing to the many sanitary improvements which had taken place, and more especially to the beneficial change in the purity of the water. That impure water, produces Diarrhœa, is indisputable: from most exact statistical information, it is proved that the cholera death-rate was $3\frac{1}{2}$ times as great in persons drinking the Southwark and Vauxhall water in 1854, as in those supplied from other and purer sources. Thus proving that the odium attached to this district, was due to the poisonous nature of the water in a greater degree, than to any other especial cause.

Probably there is no disease which yields so readily to sanitary regulations as fever. In a majority of instances where a case occurs, the cause can be at once pointed out—just as in

ague we expect to find a neighbouring marsh—so do we here find open cesspools, or sewers, or decomposing animal or vegetable matters, as the immediate cause of fever. Now the most satisfactory and convincing proof of the efficacy of the measures already carried out by us, and of the general healthiness of our district, is our comparative freedom from typhus fever during the last year, and the few deaths as compared with other parishes. Our population at the last census was 47,836. Our mortality for the year from typhus fever was 28—viz., seven in St. James', ten in St. Mary Magdalen, and eleven in the Leather Market districts.

In Christchurch and St. Saviour's, with a population at the last return of ... 35,731 ... 46 deaths from typhus fever.

In St. George's 48,128 ... 47 " "

Newington ... 64,816 ... 54 " "

and in the suburban district of Plumstead, Eltham, Lee, Lewisham, and Sydenham, with 34,835 at the last census 31 deaths.

In Greenwich 99,365 113 „

This result then as regards fever is in a very high degree creditable to the Parish, and must I think tend to remove much unfounded prejudice prevailing as to the unhealthiness of the district. These are facts. I do not, cannot, think them accidental. I believe them to be the fruits of progressive sanitary improvement, initiated and carried on with energy and perseverance by your late Board of Improvement, and now continued by your present Vestry, armed with increased powers under the Metropolitan Management Act.

I cannot however refrain from bearing testimony to the vast benefit conferred upon our population by that admirable and most excellent institution the Baths and Washhouses. I do not doubt that much sickness has been avoided in consequence of the cleanliness induced in the persons of many of our working classes, to whom previously the comfort, convenience, and luxury of a bath, and purification of the entire body was unknown. Emanations from the human body, when in a state of uncleanness, are a prolific source of disease—foul, and ill or half washed linen, produce also the same results. The facilities offered in this most excellent Institution, enable the poor at a trifling cost, to thoroughly purify alike their clothes and their skins. I do not doubt that many lives have

been saved, and much sickness and consequent poverty, prevented by the public Baths and Washhouses of Bermondsey.

I have before stated that the quantity of water supplied to us is greatly improved, occasionally after heavy rains it is somewhat turbid, but generally it is fresh, bright, and clear, as it issues from the supply pipe. The quality is good, and I am happy to state that I have not had any complaints of late as to inadequate supply (with the exception of two cases last week). The Company have behaved with liberality by supplying the poorer districts very plentifully on the Sunday morning. This has given great satisfaction, and been productive of much good. It is not my province here to speak of the additional charge. I consider very great advantage would arise were the present system of supply changed. The manner in which the water is stored by the poorer classes inevitably leads to its pollution; the Butts are generally decayed and rotten, as well as uncovered, so that filth of various kind enters, and the emanations from drains, cesspools, and house refuse, become absorbed by the water, and thus its purity entirely changed. I cannot but think the continuous system, by which the necessity for storage is done away with, would be not only productive of great benefit but also of considerable economy. In Amsterdam the system of constant supply has been adopted with great benefit to the comfort and health of the community. I have already stated that water, beyond all question, exercises a paramount influence in preserving health or producing disease, in proportion to its purity or impurity. This leads me to the consideration of the use of shallow well waters of London, which as a rule are most unwholesome. Owing to the contiguity of cesspools, sewers, grave yards, and pits used for manufacturing purposes, these waters are almost invariably polluted, and cannot be drank without great danger to health. Such water should be especially avoided, when any epidemic is prevailing. A reference to ninety fatal cases of cholera in Broad Street, Golden Square in 1854, proves that 45 persons drank of water from one pump, just before their illness, and of 50 other persons attacked between 31st August and 2nd September; only two did not drink this water, and that undoubtedly of 100 persons residing in Broad Street, who were attacked by cholera and diarrhoea, (dead and surviving,) 80 drank the water. That in two factories situated next door to each other, both equally

well arranged in regard to sanitary condition, the workmen of one, in which the mortality was high, had the water for drinking purposes, whilst those of the other never drank it, and entirely escaped. This is an additional fact of peculiar importance to us, and cannot be too well known.

For the preservation of health we have seen that pure water is most necessary; next in importance is the quality of food. The Association of Metropolitan Officers of Health considered this a subject of great interest, and a Committee of that Body was formed last summer, to obtain evidence as to the extent of the sale of meat unfitted for human food, and its influence upon the health of the community. I was Chairman of that Committee, and the facts brought before us convinced us that large quantities of unwholesome and diseased meat are constantly on sale to the lower classes. We also found that there are persons in the London trade, whose especial business is to dispose of, privately, meat which could not be sold openly in any market. From the evidence of Mr. Fisher and Mr. Pocklington it appears that more unsound meat is found in Newgate, than in any other market, solely because more country meat is sent there. This then may be looked upon as the head quarters of a criminal and most abominable trade, alike dishonest, degrading, and disgusting. From facts which have lately come to my knowledge, I have every reason for believing that this traffic is carried on, with very little attempt at concealment, and that the means used for its prevention are most inadequate and inefficacious, and not at all commensurate with the great interest involved, viz., the health and lives of the community. Whilst this central traffic reigns almost undisturbed, local efforts for suppressing the retail distribution of diseased meat, must be feeble and unsatisfactory. I am however happy to find, that at the present time, a searching investigation is going on by the Government, principally I believe in consequence of our report upon the subject.

In one case, at my instance, proceedings were taken before a Magistrate, who ordered the meat seized to be destroyed, and inflicted a fine. The man so fined has since left us, his trade being no longer profitable. I have in three other cases warned parties of the unwholesome state of meat on their premises, and cautioned them, which will I believe and hope have a good effect, for although the poor are but bad judges, and are easily

deceived by apparent cheapness, they have a great and natural horror of unsound meat; and the conviction of any one for selling it, would render their future trade most uncertain.

Many complaints of childhood are produced by diseased food, and I attribute a great proportion of the mortality of children to this cause—blood diseases, scrofula, and skin complaints are thus especially promoted and aggravated. With the aid of my friend, Dr. Thompson, of St. Thomas's Hospital, I have had analyzed, bread procured from the various districts of the Parish, in every case alum was present. Now I am not prepared to state that it was in sufficient quantities to cause immediate illness or injury, but I am of opinion that bread would be much more wholesome without it. Alum is a powerful astringent, very useful as an internal and external remedy in various diseases, its constant use in bread I look upon as mischievous in almost all cases, and in some instances, especially with children and the aged, not unattended with danger. The only use or excuse for the admixture of alum in bread that I have heard, is that the loaves are better looking. Would not the bakers of Bermondsey merit well of their fellow men, if they were all to meet, and declare that henceforth they were prepared to set a good example by supplying bread free from adulteration. This might without much difficulty be done, as it is already in some manufacturing districts, where it has worked well alike for baker and consumer.

At my request the Master of your Workhouse has kindly furnished me, from time to time, with samples of the food supplied to the inmates. I have found them of excellent quality, especially the meat, bread, milk, and wine.

I have dwelt somewhat on this important subject, as the effect of bad food depresses the vital powers, and renders a population easy victims to the attacks of epidemic disease.

As regards the suppression of nuisances we have not been idle—one offensive trade, the boiling of fish refuse has been stopped. The nuisance arising from another of a similar description has been abated. In three cases offensive accumulations have, on my certificate, been by order of the Magistrates removed. In fifteen other cases similar accumulations have been removed without proceedings. Two over-crowded houses, and three unfitted for human habitation have been set right; and in four instances where animals were kept in a filthy con-

dition, so as to be injurious to health, they have been removed.

In several instances where complaints have arisen of nuisances from manufacturing processes, I am happy to state that friendly suggestions for alterations and amendments have met with a cordial reception, and been carried out with earnestness and sincerity, without necessity for any legal proceedings. I cannot but look upon this result as most satisfactory, and my constant endeavour will be to obtain it in all cases where it is possible.

I must however here allude to a growing nuisance, which ought at once to be strongly dealt with, when carried on amidst dwellings and a crowded population—it is the manufacturing of artificial manures. By order of the Vestry in the autumn of last year proceedings were taken, and a conviction obtained against Mr. Goodwin, in Paulin Street, for a nuisance of this description. The health of the district suffered materially from the stench evolved from heaps of heated putrifying animal and vegetable refuse. The grown people sickened and loathed their food. The children took fever and died. I regret to state that Mr. Goodwin has again, regardless of consequences, made this place a receptacle for most offensive deposits, and thus endangered the lives and the health of those living in the immediate vicinity.

I have had my attention drawn to another spot by Mr. Freeman in the Spa Road. There is an artificial manure manufactory adjoining his premises, against which he bitterly complains. I must say that Mr. Freeman's residence is not placed in a fortunate position in a sanitary point of view. It is encompassed by the premises of Messrs. Young, and Messrs. Powell, as well as Robinson's Artificial Manure Manufactory, from each of which at times odours, varying in intensity and character, not altogether savoury, just as the wind blows invade his premises. There is in addition a very filthy and most offensive ditch, which receives the drainage from the yards of Messrs. Powell and Messrs. Young, and which Mr. Robinson states to be the principal source from which the stench complained of proceeds. I have visited the manure factory twice—once while the mixing process was going on, the heated vapour which is given off is suffocating and offensive, and is, I doubt not, injurious to health. I am bound however to say, that there was no apparent putrifying process or offensive emanation in the heap of matter on

the premises, which forms the bulk or base of the manure. It is also but fair to state that one side of the premises is quite open to the Market Garden Grounds.

During the year, no less than 689 notices have been issued upon parties for the removal of nuisances, and carried out without the necessity for proceedings before a magistrate. In 60 other cases proceedings were taken, and the work required ordered to be done. In 199 cases nuisances have been remedied by owners of property without the necessity of a notice. This is satisfactory. There are 89 cases standing over, making a total of 1043. The drainage of houses in Hanover Street, and on the north side of Snows Fields, is not included in the above return.

About 450 feet of open ditches have been covered, and there are now in progress, works in connection with the tidal supply, which will include the covering in of about 2,000 feet more.

The present condition of our main drainage, and the uncertainty as regards the future, occasions me some anxiety, lest the sewers should become more and more a source of disease, by the evolution of poisonous gases. The necessity for frequent purification by flushing must be apparent to every one who takes the trouble to think upon the subject. I believe also that most essential benefit will be derived by the adoption of a very simple plan of ventilation, and I would suggest that some of our lofty public buildings and warehouses, might with great advantage have attached to them small conducting ventilating shafts, which would carry off the foul air above the buildings, and thus render it comparatively harmless.

The Leather Market, the Workhouse, Bermondsey old Church St. James' Church, might be all used with advantage for this purpose. The stench which frequently pollutes the atmosphere, proceeding from the eye holes, and gullies, might thus be got rid of, it is I am sorry to say on the increase, and I am somewhat fearful of the consequences should it continue so to do in the approaching warm season. I venture strongly to urge upon the Vestry this suggestion. With the assistance of your able Surveyor it can be doubtless carried out without much difficulty and with but trifling expense. I take this opportunity of tendering my thanks to that Gentleman, for his ready and valuable assistance to me on many occasions. I must also bear testimony to the very satisfactory improvement carried out by

the Metropolitan Board of Works, at the outlet to the Duffield sewer. I am sorry that St. Saviour's Dock remains in an unsatisfactory condition, the Medical Officer of Health of St. John's has reported to his Vestry thereon, and coincides with me as to the great probability of its becoming a source of disease, unless soon attended to.

In bringing this Report to a conclusion, I am sensible of several omissions, but have dwelt upon some of the most important subjects in relation to public health. I feel every confidence that the Vestry will pursue with earnestness the work by them hitherto so well done; and that their efforts for preserving human life, and alleviating human suffering will still be crowned with success, so that this Parish now one of the most industrious, may soon become one of the healthiest and most prosperous of the Metropolis.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN CHALLICE, M.D.