

If foul air and pure air were of different colours, we should very soon learn to repel the one and invite the other; in which case, every house would be ventilated, and air-pipes, like gas-pipes and water-pipes, would flow around us in all directions. Although however we do not often see miasma, yet, in travelling over the surface of the globe, how evident are its baneful effects, and how singularly identical are they with those patches of disease which are to be met with, more or less, in every district of this country! Let any one, after traversing the great oceans, contrast their healthful atmosphere with the low, swampy parts of India, with the putrid woods of the Shangallah in Abyssinia, or with any part of the western coast of Africa. In all these regions miasma is either constantly or periodically generated by the corruption of vegetable matter; and the following description of the effects of this virus on the white population of Sierra Leone is more or less equally applicable to all:

“Those who are not absolutely ill are always ailing; in fact, all the White people seem to belong to a population of invalids. The sallowness of their complexion, the listlessness of their looks, the attenuation of their limbs, the instability of gait, and the feebleness of the whole frame, that are so observable in this climate, are but too evident signs, even where organic disease has not yet set in, that the disordered state of the functions, which goes under the name of impaired health, exists, and in none is it more painfully evident than in the general appearance of the European women and children of this colony.”*

* *Vide* Appendix to Report from the Select Committee on West Coast of Africa, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 5th August, 1842, p. 244.