

have mentioned the previous immunity of this parish. I may state that during the next six years there was one solitary instance of diphtheria there. What was the exciting cause of this epidemic I have now reported? Does it not appear fairly attributable to accidental water pollution, probably fæcal, possibly manurial, rather than to direct personal contagion, or atmospheric miasmata?

In the spring of 1872, I had to attend twenty consecutive cases of diphtheria in another Kentish parish, situated on the top and sides of a chalky undulating down, with water entirely furnished by surface supply, there being no river within some miles. I noted four separate sites almost simultaneously invaded, which were widely distant, and never, from the first, had any communication with each other, except through the visits of clergyman and myself. There were no more diphtheritic patients to be heard of in that part of the country. Three of the victimised places were detached cottages, in various parts of a plateau. The fourth was a collection of four single houses and one double one, arranged as three sides of a square, on the top of a high table-land, the fourth side being open. The sanitary appliances and surroundings of all the buildings in which there was diphtheria were of the customary rural type, pigsties, cesspools, and wells being in close proximity, and the wells, in addition, all fouled by surface drainage of the neighbouring hop gardens. Their water, in each case, gave ample evidence of organic pollution by rough qualitative tests. The inhabitants of the square were supplied by a single central well, and in every house having children, with one notable exception, I witnessed diphtheria. This exception occurred in a part of the double house whose occupants would not drink from the well, but brought water (which, on examination, proved fairly pure) daily from a neighbouring farm. The square swarmed with children, and the five families being more or less related, carried on the freest intercourse between sick and sound during the prevalence of their malady. Their mortality was also one in ten. The hop gardens were then being largely manured with 'fish stuff,' and the first case happened in a solitary house, nearly a mile from the village street, and directly underneath one. Here was a probable instance of water pollution, as hop manure is not seldom a compound of the vilest town filth and refuse.

That the well in the square was an agent in spreading diphtheria seems proved by the exemption of those who did not use its water, but were otherwise exposed to the same chances of infection as their neighbours who did.