

mouths of streams form the peculiar habitat of infectious disorders. The same thing may be, to some extent, said of a zone of land upon which houses are built, extending a short way up the hill from Tararu to Block 27. This also is a favourite haunt of fevers; and the Health Officer complains of the defective state of the drainage along this line.

The system, also, of having closets attached to district schools, the soil of which is not removed, but allowed to accumulate, and occasionally to overflow into an open drain, cannot be too strongly deprecated. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine more favourable conditions for the spread of endemic or epidemic disorders; and if, as is asserted, there is a financial difficulty in the way of performing for these schools one of the most elementary essentials of health, it would seem to call for some attention on the part of authorities. To revert to the general question: any measures to improve the public health here will be of little avail, without a comprehensive system of drainage. They should also afford means of isolation, and rules to enforce it. Neither of these at present exist.

To conclude, the general sanitary state of the Thames District may be pronounced much better than we have any reason to expect, since, as I have described, many of the conditions conducive to entire freedom from disease are "conspicuous by their absence."

I have, &c.,

CHARLES F. LETHBRIDGE,

Medical Officer.

The Chairman, Local Board of Health, Grahamstown.

APPENDIX.—Showing TABLE of CAUSES of MORTALITY in THAMES DISTRICT since 1st January, 1876.

Disease.	No. of Deaths.	Disease.	No. of Deaths.
Scarlet fever	9	Erysipelas	1
Diarrhœa	7	Convulsions	1
Violent, and deaths by drowning...	6	Bronchitis	2
Pneumonia	2	Aneurism	1
Dropsy	2	Hernia	1
Marasmus	3	Hyperpyrexia... ..	1
Heart disease	4	Addison's disease	1
General debility	6	Worms	1
Peritonitis	1	Mesenteric disease	1
Enteritis	3		
Phthisis	4	Total number of deaths	58
Cut throat	1		

SIR,—

Thames, May 18th, 1876.

The health of the Thames, as inferred from the mortality returns, is good, and will bear comparison with that of any other town either in New Zealand or the British Islands. If it should be remarked that the newness of the district and the numbers of its population who are in the prime of life and health are sufficient to explain its low rate of mortality, I would again reply that an enormous proportion of young children and infants, as in our population, must aggravate the mortality of any district in a more than compensating scale.

Scarlatina is now prevalent, and some of these cases have been of a peculiarly virulent and rapidly fatal type. Typhoid fever is not common—probably less common than in any other New Zealand town. Diphtheria and croup are not infrequent, and often fatal. Measles caused a very large number of the deaths registered last year.

The town is built on a low flat by the seaside, composed chiefly of porous sand and gravel; this absorbs readily the drainage matters, and the fluid matter from cesspools and privy pits—the first effect of the porous nature of the subsoil being thus beneficial, though likely to be replaced by an effect of a very opposite character when the ground gets saturated with animal matter, and liberates noxious gases whenever it is opened. The abominable habit of covering up holes full of human excrement instead of emptying them has obtained at the Thames to a very large extent.

Drainage is all by open sewers, which there is no proper system of flushing. In that part of the borough formerly known as Grahamstown, there are wooden water tables, and the sea water at spring tides washes them well out, rising often to the level of the wooden foot-ways.

The chief slaughter-yard of the locality is situated at Parawai, a quarter of a mile from the borough boundary; it is kept clean, but its removal before long will be an imperative necessity.

I have, &c.,

ALEXANDER FOX,

M.D., M.R.C.P.

The Chairman of the Local Board of Health, Thames.

SIR,—

Thames, 19th May, 1876.

I beg to report I have in each case of scarlet fever, where the circumstances of the family attacked were not such as to enable them to comply with the suggestions of the medical attendant, induced the parties to take, and defrayed the expenses of, such measures as were suggested by the medical officer for checking contagion.

In some cases my efforts were defeated by the unthinking action of mothers of families, who would, despite all warnings, intrude into the infected premises, and thereby in several cases conveying the disease to their own families.

I have, &c.,

J. B. MASON,

Officer to the Board.

The Chairman, Local Board of Health, Thames.