The Kind of "Assisted Emigrant" We Can Not Afford to Admit

In the political cartoon, a ship from Great Britain, carrying cholera and immigrants headed to Castle Garden, is about to reach the New York shore. Men in a boat labeled "board of health" meet the ship and try to disinfect it with carbolic acid. Bottles of disinfectant labeled "disinfectant battery" are lined up along the shore. The last great epidemic of cholera in 19th-century Great Britain is presumed to have spread from Egypt, and thus, the figure of Death in the political cartoon rides a ship flying a British flag and wears a fez, Arabic style clothing, and a belt labeled "cholera."

Cholera is a disease that effects the intestines, and it is spread through drinking water which has been contaminated with the vibrio cholerae bacteria. An infected patient experiences violent cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea and becomes so dehydrated that the blood thickens. If left untreated, a patient will die within a few days. 19th-century physicians treated patients with opium or by bleeding them. Carbolic acid was widely used as a disinfectant.