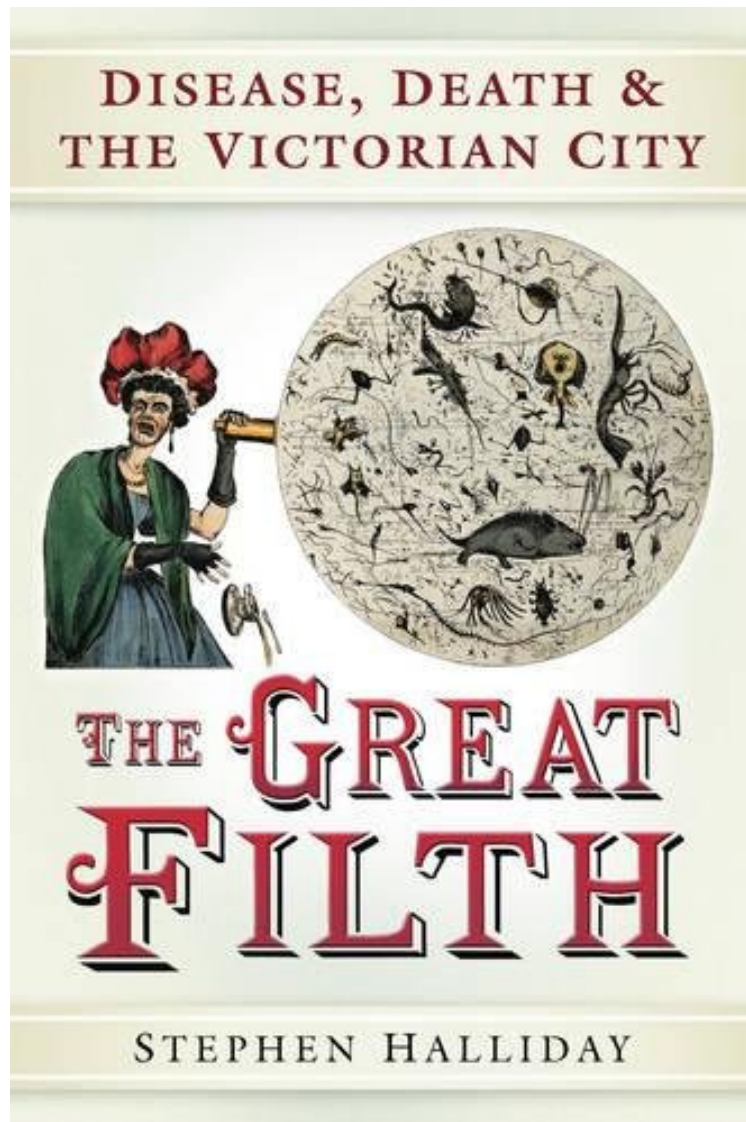


(Read now) The Great Filth: The War Against Disease in Victorian England

## The Great Filth: The War Against Disease in Victorian England

*Stephen Halliday*

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#5887618 in Books 2011-04-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.10 x .80 x 6.10 | .97 #File Name: 0752461753256 pages | File size: 26.Mb

**Stephen Halliday : The Great Filth: The War Against Disease in Victorian England** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Filth: The War Against Disease in Victorian England:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Halliday is dead wrong on both Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole By Dr Lynn McDonald Halliday's inaccuracies in The Great Filth: Disease, Death. are extreme on both Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. Nightingale he accused of going to her grave opposed to germ theory, believing that disease was caused by a bad smell! How silly. Yet Nightingale was firm that smells were only an

indication of something foul, the point was to get to the cause of the disease. Of course she did not know about germ theory during the Crimean War (1854-56), when neither Joseph Lister nor Louis Pasteur's work was available, and long before the definitive paper on germ theory by Robert Koch in 1879. Halliday is dead wrong as well on his heroine Mary Seacole, and takes the trouble to vilify Nightingale again - and again erroneously - saying that Nightingale turned her down as a nurse. He gets the title right for Seacole's fine book, but if he had read it he might have noticed that Seacole in her brief meeting with Nightingale asked only for a bed for the night, which Nightingale found for her. She was then en route for the Crimea, to join her business partner to start their business. It, of course, as Seacole explained in three chapters, was to cater to officers. It provided no clean accommodation to anybody, and the nourishing food was for sale, not given free of charge to those who could not afford to pay. She and her partner went bankrupt, thanks to overstocking fine food and wines, again all explained in her book. Neither of them blamed giving away food or accommodation for their troubles. They were making money after the armistice, my restaurant was always full, as Mrs Seacole said. They could not sell their stock when the peace treaty was signed. W.H. Russell did indeed praise Seacole, but hardly for the feats Halliday described. While Halliday has Seacole often braving gunfire, Russell, who was there, noted her presence on three battles - hardly often. How could she have been there often? She got to the war late, for she was busy in London on her gold-mining investments when the two nursing teams left for the war. Again, this is in her book! Why not read it? Nightingale's view of Seacole? If you go by what both said, and what their mutual friend, chef Alexis Soyer said, it was nuanced, praise and criticism. What a pity. Nightingale had a lot to say, of great value, on filth and disease, so to trash her as Halliday does misses all that. For more examples of errors on Seacole see [www.maryseacole.info/](http://www.maryseacole.info/) and for better material on Nightingale see [www.uoguelph.ca/~cwfn](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~cwfn)

How the Victorians struggled to overcome diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and scarlet fever in their cities

"A wealth of engaging detail." Guardian