



The Strange Case of the Broad Street Pump: John Snow and the Mystery of Cholera

Sandra Hempel

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In 1831, an unknown, horrifying, and deadly disease from Asia swept across continental Europe and North America, killing millions and throwing the medical profession into confusion. A killer with little respect for class or wealth, cholera ravaged the squalid streets of Soho and rocked the great centers of Victorian power. In this gripping book, Sandra Hempel tells the story of John Snow, a reclusive doctor without money or social position, who—alone and unrecognized—had the genius to look beyond the conventional wisdom of his day and uncover the truth behind the pandemic. She describes how Snow discovered that cholera was spread through drinking water and how this subsequently laid the foundations for the modern, scientific investigation of today's fatal plagues.

A dramatic account with a colorful cast of characters, *The Strange Case of the Broad Street Pump* features diversions into fascinating facets of medical and social history, such as Snow's tending of Queen Victoria in childbirth, Dutch microbiologist Leeuwenhoek's deliberate breeding of lice in his socks, Dickensian children's farms, and riotous nineteenth-century anesthesia parties. An afterword discusses the new threat of infectious diseases—including malaria, yellow fever, and cholera—with today's global warming.

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