

**MONTHLY RATES OF MORTALITY.**

Mr. W. A. King, statistician for Vital Statistics of the United States Census, has compiled a diagram in four divisions which shows the rate of mortality in each month of the year of all ages, those under 5, 5 to 59, and 60 and over. The diagram, when converted into a table, gives the following results; the figures show the number of deaths per 1,000 in each month at the several age periods given:—

	All ages.	Under 5.	5 to 59.	60 and over.
January.....	86.7	78.3	89.1	92.7
February.....	86.5	82.6	86.8	91.1
March.....	103.6	94.1	102.9	116.7
April.....	100.9	86.9	101.1	117.8
May.....	95.2	89.0	97.3	99.2
June.....	67.0	72.4	66.8	60.6
July.....	79.5	101.9	72.3	64.9
August.....	82.9	104.1	76.6	68.2
September.....	76.5	89.1	73.7	65.8
October.....	75.0	71.9	78.6	92.1
November.....	69.5	62.1	74.2	70.2
December.....	75.7	67.6	80.6	80.7

The spring season is evidently the most fatal, though in July and August occur most deaths per 1,000 amongst infants. June is clearly the most healthful as the deaths per 1,000 of all ages are then at their minimum for the year. It is somewhat remarkable to find the November and December records so favourable. The returns seem to show that the first two months of winter have a lower mortality rate than spring or summer. The fall months also are evidently less trying than those of the two preceding seasons. The diagram so ingeniously designed by Mr. King, though highly interesting and valuable as a health chart, showing as it does the dangerous points in life's channel, where especially careful sailing is necessary, is imperfect, and, in some respects, is liable to be misleading. The conclusions embodied in the diagram are based upon returns drawn from the whole area of the United States wherein widely different climatic conditions prevail which have great influence in determining local rates of mortality. The table shows how generally beneficial it is to avoid extremes of temperature, also how those who have passed their 60th year are less depressed by a hot season than younger folk, as, after that age, the deaths per 1,000 are fewer from June to September than in any other period. It is clear from the United States records that this city is not exceptional in having an excessive death rate amongst infants in July and August. The warning given to Julius Cæsar, "Beware the Ides of March," is opportune for persons of all ages on this continent, for in that stormy time more lives are wrecked than in any other month.

The United States Census shows that the greatest decrease in the death rate since 1890 is shown in the records of children under one year of age. The authorities attribute this improvement to measures being enforced for improving the quality of milk by

the inspection of dairies, the exclusion of unwholesome milk from the market and other sanitary regulations. When a birth is registered in the States the mother is given a circular with instructions as to the care of infants. If a circular containing instructions as to the care of the health of adults were given to each couple at their marriage it would be helpful in warning them against dietetic habits which lead to very serious mischief both as regards health and domestic peace.

**DOMINION STEEL COMPANY'S SUIT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.**

One of the most singular suits ever commenced is that of the Dominion Iron & Steel Company *versus* the Dominion Government, which has been instituted to obtain payment of \$196,967, which the company claims is due to it for bounties on steel made from a certain percentage of pig iron manufactured in Canada. The point at issue is, what is meant by "pig-iron" in the Act granting bounties on its production. The term *pig iron* is applied to iron that, as it flowed out of a smelting furnace was run into gridironed grooves made in a bed of sand, by which, when the metal sets, the iron assumes the form called "pigs," which is a rough kind of ingot. The term "sows" is quite familiar to those in the trade. The advance made in the art of making steel has dispensed with the casting of molten iron as it runs from a smelting furnace into "pigs" or ingots. The Government declares that as the molten iron is not cast in the form of pigs, no "pig-iron" is made. The company, however, contends that though the iron smelted from ore is no longer cast into the old form before undergoing a refining process for conversion into steel, yet, it is so far, practically, "pig-iron" as to be entitled to the bounty. The object of granting bounties on steel made from Canadian pig-iron was to encourage the development of the iron mines and the iron industries of this country by enabling the native ores to be profitably smelted. This object is even more effectively secured by the more scientific process of making steel, which saves the delay and expense of casting the crude iron into "pigs," than it could be by the old-fashioned method of first making "pigs," then re-smelting and refining the metal until it is purified into steel. The term "pig-iron," on the technical meaning of which this extraordinary suit turns, might, without any straining of language or impropriety from a technical point of view, be regarded as applicable to iron in the state and of the class from which "pigs" are made when iron has to be marketed before conversion into steel. If the Dominion Iron and Steel Company is denied the bounties which it is claiming it will be practically punished for its enterprise in adopting the most scientific method of transmuting the ores of Canadian mines into steel.