

Mortality and the Seasons. A lively British insurance journal, *Answers*, treating the vital spark as mercury in a thermometer, which in its rise or fall indicates the degree of heat or cold, has published the following observations on the mortality of those who suffer from the ill's flesh is heir-to. Although we are not permitted to know upon what the writer bases his calculations, some of them are sufficiently interesting to bear reproduction, although the reading thereof inspires one with much the same feeling which is inspired by perusing epitaphs in a graveyard. Beginning, this far from cheerful scribe remarks:—

"It is a curious fact that nearly everybody has his own particular months of the year in which he feels especially strong and hearty, and other months in which he is depressed and miserable.

The explanation of this fact is rather dismal. All our life we are circling round the grave like a moth round a candle, and, according to our peculiar constitutions, we go nearer to it and farther away with the changes of the season.

For instance, if you happen to be a rheumatic individual you are at your best in August and September, and tolerably well from the 1st of May to the 31st of October. About Lord Mayor's Day you begin to feel decidedly indisposed, and by the beginning of December you enter your worst period, out of which you don't emerge till some time in April.

Now, gout has quite a different time of year for being troublesome.

During the summer, autumn, and winter it leaves you more or less alone; but in March, April, and May it becomes terrible.

He then says:—The most deadly ailment of the British Islands, consumption, is almost as prevalent one month as another. All the year round it slays its thousands, killing one person in every eight that die. But it is slightly less murderous from the middle of July to the middle of November, doing its worst during the winter and spring. The very best time of year for consumptives is the fourth week of September, and the worst week is the third week of March.

All lung troubles are, as might be expected, worse in the cold weather, and there is a curious contrast between them and the diseases of the digestive apparatus."

The latter kind enters in largest quantity when the weather is hot. So that, while people who have weak lungs suffer and die in thousands from bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma in December, January, February, and March, those who have badly-made stomachs are never healthier than in those months.

After admitting that it is wholly a mystery to him why certain forms of sickness select particular months in which to play havoc with poor humanity, and assigning a time and season for almost every complaint, giving to Londoners the measles in October, and typhoid fever as a New Year's gift, he closes with the dismal warning that:—

"Christmas-time is the worst period for those inclined to insanity, all December and January being bad. April is another bad month, and so is June; but the rest of the year is rather good. Other kinds of brain disease give the most trouble from December to April, and least in September, October, and No-

vember, while apoplexy has also regular times for being very active and disappearing. If you suffer from blood in the head, you must be very careful not to eat too big a dinner, nor to get into a towering rage in November, December, January, February, and March. Be moderately careful in April, May, and June, and you may do as you please in July, August, September, and October.

If you die from pure weakness, it will probably be in July or August; and if you die of old age, your month will be December, January, February, or March."

What folly! forbidding big dinners during Yuletide. After spreading death and disaster pretty evenly throughout the year, and virtually giving you a choice between whooping-cough and croup as a destroyer of children, it seems strange that this singularly saddening statistician makes no reference to any close season for "writer's cramp." Possibly this is an all-the-year-round malady, and consequently escaped notice.

However, as the result of evidently careful observation in the hospitals and elsewhere, the paper will be highly interesting or entertaining to medical men.

A Sublime Faith in Fire Insurance. We should be sorry to see financial and insurance journals encouraging drollery in their columns; but we cannot resist the inclination to laugh with the author of some lines published in the *Insurance Age* (N. Y.), at the beautiful simplicity and sublime faith of a grocer of Des Moines who is reported by the *Insurance Magazine* as having sold out his stock of groceries and bought the stock of a fire insurance company. A friend asked him why he made the change. "Because," he replied, "I want to go into a business in which there is no worry, annoyance or trouble."

The faculty of being funny is not always to be coveted. It has its disadvantages. This is best illustrated by the story told of the great moral satirist Hogarth, who was once drawing in a room surrounded by friends. A young lady present expressed a wish to learn to draw caricature. "Alas, young lady," said Hogarth, "it is not a faculty to be envied. Take my advice, and never draw caricature; by the long practice of it, I have lost the enjoyment of beauty. I never see a face but distorted." We will not, therefore, express a wish to be as funny as this seeker after happiness in far away Des Moines. Moreover, it may be that he is unconsciously funny, and that his droll idea of a business free from all care and anxiety is but the expression of the laughable side of harmless ignorance. Whatever of annoyance, worry and trouble this ex-purveyor of provisions may have had in the past, he has now found peace and comfort. He has to adopt the lingo of Western horse-dealers, swapped his stock of sugar and spice for the stock of a fire insurance company. We may assume that this Des Moines grocer must have been hard put to it; must have been disgusted with his trade;