

point in the hot, dry weather in the latter part of summer, usually August. The high death point in the spring is always caused, for the most part, by deaths from diseases of the lungs and air passages—congestion and inflammation of the lungs, bronchitis, pleurisy; and the high death point in August by diseases of the digestive tract, as the stomach and bowels—diarrhoea, cholera infantum, dysentery. The low points in the wave are reached, one in June or July and one in the Autumn, often in November, though sometimes October and sometimes December returns the smallest number of deaths.

The high point in Spring is made up largely by deaths amongst the adult population—of those in the prime of life; while the Summer high point is made up for the most part by the deaths of young children, and these largely in the cities and larger towns. As regards the prime

CAUSES OF THE TWO HIGH POINTS IN THE DEATH WAVE,

we cannot do better than quote the following from the last annual report of the Registrar-General:

“Regarding the winter or spring high death point, it is important to observe that, it is not the first cold weather in autumn or early winter that gives rise to the great increase in the mortality, but it is that at the end of the winter, after the severe cold is past. Why is this? It cannot be doubted that, though the cold at this later period is accompanied by winds and greater humidity of the atmosphere, those who then ‘to death succumb’ have been, during the winter, exposed to some pre-disposing causes of lung

diseases—to causes which have made them readily susceptible and prone to these affections. The most eminent authorities have brought forward convincing evidence that the re-breathing of breathed air in unventilated rooms is a common and constant cause of diseases of the lungs and air passages. Here, then, doubtless we have the chief factor, the principal cause, of the high March death-rate from diseases of the organs of the chest: exposure during the winter to impure air in close, unventilated rooms. Other causes, to be sure, help to swell up the wave of death at this period. There will be found a few in this country badly housed and fed during the winter, and cold and hunger combine with the foul air to predispose to these fatal diseases, manifested with the chills of spring; others are inactive and spend much of their time in cramped positions with contracted lungs, and these organs then much more readily take on congestions and inflammations on exposure to cold damp air.

“In reference to the summer high death point, it may be said that the warmer the atmosphere the more rapid the generation of malaria, and the development and growth of all sorts of disease germs, moulds, mildews, etc., etc.; and the greater the insanitary conditions, *i.e.*, the more we allow ourselves to be surrounded with excremental or waste organic matter of any sort, the more abundant the development and growth of those causes of disease. Indeed, without the presence of decomposing organic matter, as on the surface of the ground or in the soil, there cannot be any development of such causes.