

means of disposal of night soil, as their contractor had been fined for depositing, or rather *spreading*, the material on a field in an adjoining municipality and also adjacent to the city water supply. The object of the contractor in doing this was to obtain, by natural evaporation, a fertilizing material out of which a profit could be made. Very properly, this procedure has been legally condemned, and the question of how to dispose of the contents of cesspools came up.

The opinion of an eminent scientist was obtained, but we must be pardoned if we fail to acknowledge that the system of dry earth closets which he advocates can meet the desired end. There can be no doubt of the value of earth closets if properly worked and used by persons of intelligence. In Montreal the majority of such people reside in houses containing water-closets, and who require no such system. It would be perfectly useless to recommend to the great mass amongst whom cesspools abound a plan the intention of which they cannot appreciate,—a class belonging chiefly to the lower and more ignorant grades of society, who are in the main regardless of any sanitary precaution the utility for which they cannot be taught to understand. It is a strange fact, although true, that civilization destroys those instincts which induces the savage to adopt sanitary measures necessary for his well-being; and leaves the lower classes of our larger communities to grovel in filth and disease, and it is for such chiefly that sanitary laws are wanted, as this class is mostly affected by faulty arrangement in the disposal of sewage. As a result of their deliberations the Committee concluded that to burn or dry up the obnoxious substance was the best plan for getting rid of it. It has been estimated that an additional sum of \$8,000 would be required for this purpose. But for the Chairman of Finance this depletion of civic funds would have been fixed upon the city for a number of years.

Fortunately, this gentleman, who seems to have very grave doubts of its success, objected to binding the city for any period, so that, as it will be tried experimentally, the Council can at any time withdraw from the arrangement should it prove unsuccessful. We have not learned what is to be done with the residue after incineration, but suppose it will remain a perquisite of the contractor.

If this gentleman wants to convert this material

into fertilizers let him do it by any means he may think fit, at his own expense, as long as it is not detrimental to others, but that the city should do it for him we fail to understand.

So far as the object aimed at is concerned, namely, the destruction of *materies morbi*, the plan proposed appears so absurd that we wonder the Medical Health Officer and the better-informed members of the Board did not oppose such expenditure. According to the Medical Health Officer's report there are about 10,000 cesspools distributed throughout the city. Nearly 1,500 of these are annually cleaned out, so that about once in six years each pit is supposed to be emptied. As a matter of fact many of these places have not been emptied for double that time, as the law does not compel removal unless their contents reach within eighteen inches of the surrounding surface. As the danger of these places lies in the poisons they evolve they require to be emptied much more frequently than it is possible to accomplish. Usually decomposition and putrefaction have done their worst in poisoning a neighborhood, and the adjacent subsoil is saturated by soakage from them. Where, then, can be the sense of burning this material after it has polluted the original site of its deposit. Let it be buried in deep pits and covered over with earth when these are full and all further annoyance or danger from it will cease to exist. The Board evidently believe in locking the stable door after the steed has been stolen, for unless there is a little nigger in the fence with a job for some one we fail to understand why any body of intelligent men would favor such useless expenditure.

There can be no doubt of the necessity of ridding the community of these unmitigated nuisances, and if the Board of Health would move for their entire abolition they would exhibit more sense than by trying inefficient incineration experiments. Wherever a cesspool exists there will be found a dangerous focus for the spread of choleraic disorder, especially in children; and should the dread cholera visit our fair city this summer we sincerely hope that no increased energy will be shown in disturbing these disgusting masses. The Medical Health Officer has suggested the only proper course which should be adopted for the disposal of sewage; that is, the general use of the water-closet system and removal by flushing through the sewers into the river. Circumstances favor this mode, as we have a na-