

PROMINENT TOPICS.

The intense heat which has prevailed over the larger portion of this continent since the 25th June, has been a very painfully prominent topic. It has indeed almost monopolized attention, for it has paralyzed energy and made work, even thinking, almost impossible. In New York where they are wont to vocalize freely over "a hot time," there has been more moaning than singing for a week past, for the torrid wave has suffocated several hundred citizens. New Yorkers by tens of thousands have been sleeping, or rather courting sleep, in the streets, on house roofs, balconies, wharves, anywhere outside where air was available, where scores were picked up beyond recovery. So in other American cities.

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In Canada the heat has been intense and prolonged beyond precedent. In this city the mortality has been terrible amongst the infants in one section of the city where insanitary conditions invite sickness. There are areas in the east part of Montreal that are gardens of disease, where infant life meets with every condition averse to its development. The houses are very old, very dirty, very confined; they have no yards, or spaces, only big enough to accommodate an ash barrel and fuel bin, with privy pits within walking stick length from the living rooms. In some cases a cow shed adds to the charm of the surroundings. Houses are huddled together as though there were not ground enough in Canada to find a decent share for each family. There are horrible "courts" in the old land, where population is so congested as to make civilized habits impossible. But the comparatively equable climate tempers these conditions to some extent, while in this city there are similar hovels for human habitation equally crowded, equally well adapted for breeding fever, and, with these revolting conditions there is a temperature in winter that compels the rigid exclusion of air, and in summer such heat as combines with the miasmatic conditions to choke out infant life on a wholesale scale. There were 212 infants under 5 years of age died in this city last week, yet one civic father said recently, "There is altogether too much attention paid to sanitary matters in this city!"

Those who regard such a horrible sacrifice of life with indifference, should have those 212 poor victims of insanitation passed one by one before them, as Macbeth had the procession of ghosts, and have in their ears the lamentations of the stricken mothers, who themselves are drifting into life-long collapse of strength and hope. The question of our summer mortality calls for more active sanitary measures than have yet been taken, or even seriously proposed.

The new head of the police force, to be known as Chief Legault, was sworn in before the Recorder this week, who, in offering his congratulations, urged upon the Chief the importance of his instructing the men under his command in their duties. The Recorder laid especial stress on the lines being followed that were laid down in THE CHRONICLE last week, viz: giving each police officer thorough instruction in regard to the by laws of the city which he gave the new Chief to understand were expected to be enforced by the police with zeal and intelligence. The occasions upon which a police force can make a demonstration of their discipline, their efficiency as peace preservers, their power to preserve order in times of excitement, are very rare indeed. But every hour, day and night, there are opportunities for services being performed in a quiet way by policemen, to individuals and to the community, which though unknown publicly, are of such value as to more than justify the expenditures involved in keeping up the force.

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It is due to Superintendent Hughes, on retiring, to say that again and again he has rendered inestimable service to the city by his skill and coolness in restraining excited crowds from violence. He was courageous, bold and daring so that the mob feared him, as what Chief Hughes threatened was certain to happen to law-breakers. He did his whole duty on many trying occasions and very materially raised the character and discipline of the force.

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The Ottawa Board of Trade has issued a pamphlet advocating the state ownership of all cables and land telegraphs in the British Empire. THE CHRONICLE recently had some brief comments on the proposal, when it was first approved by the Ottawa Board of Trade as, "a scheme calculated to be an effective means of fostering trade and stimulating commercial activity, at the same time constituting a bond of Imperial unity of inestimable value." There is something attractive in the conception of an Imperial system of telegraphy, embracing all the ocean-cable systems and land telegraphs now operating within, or capable of being made a means of uniting the several portions of the Empire. The scheme was originated by Sir Sandford Fleming whose various papers on the subject have been published along with the Ottawa Board of Trade circular. Sir Sandford is very sanguine that, were "our whole telegraph system nationalized messages will be transmitted to and from the most distant British possessions at one-eighth or one-tenth the rates now levied by the companies." He considers such reduction would be compensated for by the increased number of messages. He has