

MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS, CONTRACTORS, AND MATERIALS.

often greatly increased in value through the former improvement, it may be. Many instances could be recorded where owing to such increased values, improvements have been delayed or so modified as to render them of little value beyond temporary benefit, or perhaps permanently shelved altogether. An experience of 30 years in municipal matters has shown me the error of procrastination. The longer necessary improvements are delayed—and where is the town not requiring improvements in some form?—the worse it will be. The health, the happiness, the prosperity of the community will suffer. The sanitary science is making headway in our midst, as is shown by the interest taken by a large number of people in the transactions of the Institute of Civil Engineers, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and various other kindred societies, still there exists much ignorance in matters pertaining to public health. There is plenty of work for our scientists, philanthropists, and teachers of all grades. The bulk of the people need to be shown that money expended on the improvement of sanitary condition is money well invested, that it is to their interest for such works to be of the best and most perfect description, and that as by their nature such undertakings must necessarily be costly, it is the duty of representatives to obtain the best advice. It is best to pay a few hundred pounds in salaries than to spend thousands on imperfect works designed by incompetent and less remunerated advisers. There are, however, municipalities who have grasped the importance of following the dictates of true sanitary science, and who stand as beacon lights to less favored localities. The vast sums of money spent upon sanitary improvements in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leicester, and other large towns bear witness alike to the knowledge and enterprise of their rulers and advisers. There are also smaller communities who according to the means at their disposal are endeavoring to pursue the same policy. I have not enlarged upon the many branches that properly come within the scope of the profession of a civil engineer viz, hydraulic, naval, mechanical, mining, and electrical sciences—all of which we, as municipal and county engineers, are expected to know something of, but have contented myself with making a few practical though desultory remarks upon our status, responsibilities, and the relationship we bear to the association and to the community. I trust you will not consider that I have taken too gloomy a view of the situation. If any conclude so, let me disabuse their mind by saying that there is every encouragement to go forward. We have only to compare the advancement made in the common necessities of our everyday life to see this is so. Compare the tallow dips of our grandmothers with the gas and electric light of our own day; the tinder-box with the lucifer match; the cobbles of 50 years ago with our improved wood, asphalt, and granite pavements; the advance in the speed of steamships; the remarkable progress of the locomotive. I will now conclude with this observation, that the capacity of

man's invention is unlimited. As an illustration take the recent advancements made in the science of electricity. Since our last annual meeting the exhibitions of Frankford and London have demonstrated how much may be done in lighting our streets and buildings and in the generation and transmission of motive power, exemplifying with much force Tennyson's lines:

The thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the suns.

As in all other sciences and professions so in our own immediate sphere of labor, skill, application, and perseverance must prevail and bring success. The Institution of Civil Engineers is by consent the representative head of the civil engineering profession, but to the branch of engineering devoted to sanitary science our own association has become and will continue to be a power and help.

PERSONAL.

Mr. A. Davis has been appointed Superintendent of Water Works in Montreal, *vice* Mr. McConnell, resigned. The salary is \$3,500 per year.

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Engineer in charge of Welland Canal Enlargement.

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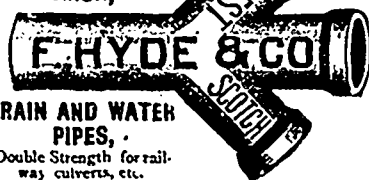
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