

Before proceeding to examine Table I, it is well to state that a Census of Montreal was made in 1844, 1852, and 1861. From 1844 to 1852 the annual rate of increase was nearly 3.5 per cent. and from 1852 to 1861 it was 5.1 per cent. It has been thought proper to calculate the increase at the average rate, as it does not materially affect the general average. A calculation, made from the list of voters, and the number of houses built, might enable a closer estimate of the population to be made for some years; but, after all, probably no two persons would be agreed on the subject. During the first 7 years embraced in the table, the marriage rate was 1 in every 93 of the people; while during the remaining 7 years, it fell to 1 in 101, indicating that in the former period the population was larger than is calculated; or that, in the latter period, the people were less disposed to enter into the married state.

In the first 7 years the baptisms were 5 per cent. on the population; a decline of 1-9th in the marriage rate in the second period would give 4.45 per cent. as the proportionate rate; the returns show 4.78, or an increase of one third per cent., in the fecundity of the population, supposing the returns to have been made with equal care. The apparent increased fecundity of the people would be still further augmented were the returns completed, as supplementary returns have been made for the earlier, and are wanting for the later years. The record of the Catholic population is made with great care and punctuality, and includes 78 per cent. of the baptisms. To show how very little value can be placed on Clergy returns, it is sufficient to state that eight of the city Clergymen have not yet sent in their registers for 1868, and that in 1857 additional returns were received for the District of Montreal for the preceding 17 years!

The number of burials in the Cemetery returns exceeds the number registered by the Clergy by fully 6 per cent. on the whole number. The Cemetery returns may be said to represent the city as more unhealthy than it really is, in a degree nearly equal to that in which the record of baptisms falls short of the actual births. No deduction is made for the number coming from the country, as it is, probably, not very much larger than in other cities, and does not add one quarter per cent. to the burial rate. It is well to note, however, that in 1860 the returns show 313 from the country, or 10 per cent. of the burials. In the Census the deaths in 1860 are given as 2,038, or only two thirds of the burials according to the Cemetery returns.

The difficulties attending the subject of vital statistics must now be apparent to the reader; and as an admirable example of the absurdities written upon it, we quote from an essay by Philip P. Carpenter, B.A.,