

fluences largely "the average duration of life," and consequently the unhealthiness or the salubrity of the town in a hygienic point of view, little might be thought about it; for we have little hesitation in stating it as our conviction, that after the age of five years has been attained, the ratio of mortality among survivors is actually less than in many of the most favoured places in Great Britain; but unfortunately that infantile mortality must be recognised in such a calculation, and we accordingly find it seriously affecting what has been termed "the average duration of life for the city." From the observations of the year alluded to we have calculated it for this city at 18.43 years, while that of New York fluctuates between 19.69 and 26.15 years; that of all England being 23.46 years; of London 27.00 years, and of Liverpool 20.00 years. Now hence follows a most serious consideration: are the results flowing from the figures apparent or real, and if real are they susceptible of amelioration.

That this diminished average duration of life is the sole result of the disproportionate infant mortality there cannot exist the least doubt, and we question very much indeed whether any other city can furnish a similar ratio; and now arises the important question, to what causes are we to attribute such an enormous fatality among our infants. Without entering into all we may be permitted to specify a few of these causes, and among these there is not one operative to a larger extent than the imperfect drainage of the city; and Dr. Fenwick's statistics, as well as our own, published many years ago, bear this statement out to the fullest extent. It will have been observed that it is in those wards which are the worst drained that the highest mortality has taken place, and assuredly not until the Craig Street tunnel is made to direct its current downwards with that of the river, can any marked amelioration in this respect be reasonably anticipated. Another potential cause will be found in the overcrowded dwellings of the lower orders, in which, during the summer months especially, may be witnessed a great amount of personal uncleanness reacted upon by the extreme heats then prevalent. Superadded to these potential causes, we may enumerate the excessive irritability of the mucous intestinal surface, engendered as well by the extreme temperature of the air as by the employment of an injudicious diet. These we apprehend to be the three most influential causes, although there are unquestionably others of equal magnitude more immediately connected with improper and injudicious dieting, paving the way to acescency of the *primæ viæ* with all its concomitants of diarrhea, cholera, &c., &c.

We have therefore to look for the causes of the excessive infantile mortality among ourselves; and if among ourselves we can perceive nothing in the affair insurmountable, at least to this extent, that measures guided and controlled by proper authority, should not be competent of achieving. We are glad to perceive that our City Council has moved in this matter—*Mieux tard que jamais*—thanks to Dr. Fenwick's valuable papers on the subject; but once that the attempt is made to clean the Augean stable, with preservation of life in view, we trust that the expurgatory efforts will not relax, until a largely diminished infantile mortality proclaims itself, in letters of gold, as its reward.