

# THE SATURDAY READER.

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FIVE CENTS.

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Continued from week to week, the NEW STORY, "HALF A MILLION OF MONEY,"

written by the author of "Barbara's History" for *All the Year Round*, edited by CHARLES DICKENS.

## TO OUR FRIENDS.

ANY person getting up a Club of five will be entitled to a free copy of the READER, during the existence of the Club; and if a yearly Club of ten, to a free copy of the paper, and a handsomely bound copy (two volumes) of Garneau's History of Canada, which is published at \$3.00 by R. Worthington, Publisher and Bookseller, next door to Post Office, Montreal.

## THANKSGIVING.

BY HENRY PRINCE.

Eng clouds have shed life-giving rain by day,  
Night's cisterns have distilled refreshing dew;  
The sun hath sail'd the vaulted blue highway  
Benignly all the joyous summer thro'.  
From out the depths of the mysterious air  
God's hand hath stretched and bless'd all things  
below;—  
Now fruitful grain, and herb, and blossom fair,  
Exuberant o'er hill and valley grow.  
The sunny days of harvest-time are past,  
And Peace and Plenty guard the garner door;  
While stalwart Labour, weary, seeks her rest,  
With smiles surveying earth's prolific store.  
And thankful man, in tones of deepest pray'r,  
Gives glory to his God for all His bounteous care.  
MONTREAL, Oct. 18th,  
Thanksgiving-day.

## NEMESIS.

MUCH of the world's morality is simply conventional. That which the people of one country regard as criminal, those of another country consider to be just and lawful. The Asiatic delights in polygamy, and the European monogamist sends forth missionaries to convince him of the sinfulness of having many wives. Everywhere a single murder is a crime, wholesale murder is glory; and circumstances alter the aspect of guilt. Nor is it in great matters alone that our moral code is defective. Acts highly reprehensible are committed every day, by private individuals and bodies of men, which are visited by neither condemnation nor punishment.

Before many months, in all human probability, the cholera will be upon us, and are we prepared for this terrible visitor? If we are not, at whose door lies the sin? We should not perhaps blame

the Corporation overmuch, for they may not have the power nor the time to do all that is necessary. They may not be able to drain the pestilential marshes of Griffintown, St. Antoine ward, and the Quebec suburbs; but there is much that could be effected between this and spring, by the removal of nuisances, including accumulations of deposits injurious to health, cesspools, foul ditches, animals filthily kept, or in wrong localities, and the like. Health officers ought also to be appointed, who, among their other duties, should have power to prevent overcrowding, one of the most fruitful causes of fever and pestilence; as also in the matter of offensive trades and manufactures. Under ordinary circumstances, the mortality of this city is great as compared with other towns and cities in the Province, although the death-rate in some of the wards is far less than in others. In a pamphlet published by Dr. George E. Fenwick in 1862, he ably describes the sanitary condition of Montreal, specifying the prevailing diseases and their causes. In one place he remarks: "After referring to the tables, it will be observed that the greatest proportion of deaths takes place in infants under two years of age; this fact is borne out by professional experience. The proportion of the death of infants under two years of age bears a ratio to all deaths of about one in 2.73, equal to about 36.55 per cent. In this calculation I have omitted the still-born and all those registered as having died under one month; were these added it would give a ratio of one in 1.76, or equal to 56.60 per cent. The ratio of the mortality of children under eight years of age is equal to one in 1.45 or 68.76. Between the ages of eight and fifteen the ratio falls off surprisingly, giving only a percentage of about 2.20." These facts tell their own tale, and sufficiently establish the enormous extent of infant mortality in Montreal; and the chief causes are insufficient drainage and ventilation. We have known instances of persons losing the children born to them while residing in a badly drained part of the city, and who did not lose one after removing to a part where the drainage had been better attended to, or which did not so much stand in want of it. The duty of the Corporation is then plain; they should take every precaution, to be drawn from our own experience or that of other countries, against the calamity that is pending over us. The cholera has appeared in several parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe; and though its somewhat eccentric movements have hitherto resembled the manœuvres of an army preparing for battle, the onslaught is evidently not far off. It is inaction that we have to dread in this contingency; and as the responsibility is great, so sins of omission will amount to crime, even if they should escape unwhipt of justice. But we hope for better things, and that the authorities will be up and doing, ere it be too late. Nor is it to the corporation alone that we must look. The property owners of Montreal have also a duty to perform. They are bound to see that their own houses

and those of their tenants shall want nothing necessary to the health of those who dwell in them, a thing too much neglected, especially in the poorer class of houses.

Perhaps we cannot do better here than to enumerate some of the measures passed by the English Parliament in the cause of sanitary reform, and upon which several works have recently appeared in that country. The first visitation of the cholera to the British Isles was, as we all know, in 1831, the second in 1849, the third in 1854. The second visit fully aroused the nation to the danger of its recurrence, and former provisions for the preservation of the public health were revised and new ones enacted. In 1846 had appeared the "Nuisance Removal Act," which has been altered and improved up to the present time; in 1848, the "Public Health Act," and various acts of a similar kind, establishing local Boards followed; in 1852 and 1853 several acts of a sanitary character, among them the "Metropolis Water Act;" there were also the act to make compulsory the practice of vaccination, of which we have a transcript in Canada, which is never enforced, the Metropolis Local Management Act, 1855, and more recently still an Act further to improve the sewerage of London. We have only mentioned the most important of the English sanitary enactments. They abound with the most useful provisions on matters connected with the question, and are a storehouse of precedents for other countries to copy. They obviate the trouble and expense incidental to the punishment and removal of nuisances under the common law, by giving summary jurisdiction to magistrates, and by the appointment of officers to carry out the intentions and objects of the several acts. The medical officer of health in every parish in London, must be "a legally qualified practitioner of skill and experience," and his functions as well as those of the Inspector of nuisances are thus set forth:

"To inspect and report periodically upon the sanitary condition of the parish or district, to ascertain the existence of diseases, more especially epidemics increasing the rate of mortality, and to point out the existence of any nuisance or other local causes which are likely to originate and maintain such diseases, and injuriously affect the health of the inhabitants, and to take cognisance of the fact of the existence of any contagious or epidemic diseases, and to point out the most efficacious mode of checking or preventing the spread of such diseases, and also to point out the most efficient modes for the ventilation of churches, chapels, schools, lodging-houses, and other public edifices within the parish or district, and to perform any other duties of a like nature which may be required of him."

It is impossible to treat this most important question as we would wish within the space at our disposal, and we must conclude by warning the public that Nemesis in the form of cholera comes from the cesspool and the swamp.