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THE MORTALITY OF MONTREAL.

The observations made in our last number on the subject of the mortality of the city of Montreal, have elicited from several of our city contemporaries questions as to its probable cause. The subject is certainly one of great moment to us, in whatever light we choose to view it. An infant mortality of about 65 per cent. under 5 years of age, is in reality an alarming circumstance, and should necessitate a strict scrutiny into the causes productive of it. But however desirous any one may be of directing his investigations in such a quarter of inquiry, his efforts are immediately arrested by a want of accuracy in the official returns of mortality, an inaccuracy which respects as much the nature of the diseases themselves from which death ensued, as the wards of the city in which they actually occurred. And not in fact until the question of our vital statistics is taken up by the Government as a matter of Provincial Legislation, and systematized, as it is done in England, France, and other European kingdoms, will or can the subject become properly elucidated. The laws which govern the health of a whole community should be as thoroughly appreciated as those which govern its individual members in their civil and political relations, and no more important duty can devolve upon a government than a thorough appreciation of all the causes which tend to impair it. We have little doubt, however, that if the system at present adopted by our City Council were a little more in detail, such for example as the adoption of measures to secure the proper enregistration of the disease, of the age, and of the ward of the city in which the death took place, valuable results would be at once secured; as, while effecting improvements, such a system would enable our council to disburse its funds with one of the noblest of objects in view, that of diminishing a large mortality by appropriate drainage, &c., in those parts of the town where the necessity for it would become thus, and thus only, unfolded.

In such a vague condition of matters as here exists, no special conclusion as regards ward mortality can be arrived at; but the census of the city and environs having been completed since our last issue, we are enabled to arrive at a general one, which is, that last year the ratio of mortality in this city was to the popu-