

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH.—THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

WHILE MAN's great object is to promote the well-being of the living, it desires all its readers to take an interest in the dead—especially in the prematurely dead, and in the causes of premature death. Although, on first thought, to most people, all things relating to death form a sombre subject, they may be made an interesting and highly profitable one. To familiarize ourselves with those dangers which "stand thick through all the ground" and which cause so many while yet young in years to fall out by the way in the race of life and "be no more seen," is to give us such advantages over the dangers as will enable us to avoid them, and so prevent not only the too early death, but the trying sickness and acute suffering which usually precede the death. To study a little all the various causes of death, at what periods of life and at what seasons they are most active and most likely to destroy life, is to increase our ability to overcome them and to promote health and prolong life. It is the intention of MAN, therefore, to give some attention to the mortuary statistics of the Dominion, so that all readers may become interested therein.

Following are the mortuary returns from twenty of the principal cities of Canada to the Department of Agriculture, for the month of September, 1885. From them we learn what terrible consequences have followed neglect of proper sanitary regulations in Montreal. Municipal authorities and others may from them learn that the neglect to timely provide simple and comparatively inexpensive means for promptly isolating first cases of contagious epidemic disease, such as smallpox, and at once suppressing outbreaks and preventing the spread of the disease, as is done in many cities, especially in Great Britain, may at any time—and in a short time—cost the municipality many, many valuable lives with inestimable suffering, and, directly and indirectly, vast sums of money. Municipal bodies insure their public buildings against loss by fire, probably never neglect this, yet commonly fail to insure by means of proper precautionary measures, against the development and spread of contagious malignant diseases.

The returns show that, through a little neglect, the mortality of Montreal was increased to four or five times what it should

have been; or to nearly 100 per thousand of population per annum, over two-thirds of which was caused by that one fell disease, small-pox. The mortality of Quebec is also shown to have been very high; while that of Toronto, Ottawa and other cities, was not exceptionally so. The mortality from the various zymotic diseases in Toronto, Ottawa, St. John and Sorel, as well as in Montreal, was, during the month, much greater than in London and other cities in England; while in the other cities in Canada it was lower, and in many of them much lower, than in the English cities. The mortality from zymotic diseases, as most readers of MAN know, furnishes a good indication of the sanitary condition of a locality: if the mortality is high, the sanitary condition may be safely regarded as bad.

Of the *zymotic* diseases, diarrhoeal affections prevailed most universally, and caused 176 deaths in the 20 cities during the month, and, with the exception of small-pox in Montreal, caused more deaths than all the other zymotic diseases combined. The victims of these affections were, doubtless, for the most part young children. The diseases are most common, if not always, caused by improper food and foul air. There were 42 deaths from diphtheria; 15 of which were in Montreal, 13 in Toronto and 6 in St. John. There were in all only 32 deaths from fevers. From *constitutional* diseases, which class includes all tubercular affections—consumption being the chief—with cancer, dropsy, anæmia, and the like, there were 205 deaths during the month. From *local* diseases—apoplexy, paralysis, diseases of the heart and lungs (other than consumption) and of the stomach, bowels, liver, kidneys, etc., there were 434 deaths. From *developmental* diseases—premature births, teething, child-birth, old age, debility, etc., there were 274 deaths; and from *violence* or *accidental* causes, 42 deaths.

### IN THE THREE PREVIOUS MONTHS,

June, July and August, diarrhoeal affections, caused 782 deaths; 178, 234, 370 respectively in the three months. Just two more deaths from these diseases took place in June than in September; while more died from their effects in August than in both June and September. July