

Canada Medical Journal.

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PUBLIC HEALTH.

The importance of the subject of public health is attracting very general attention at the present time. The laws which govern public health should be thoroughly studied, and become to all a subject of deep interest. That the invasion of disease and death is preventable to a certain extent is an undoubted fact, one which is daily demonstrated in the cities and larger towns of Europe. That man in the body should be rendered immortal is neither attainable nor desirable; but that he should fill out his allotted time and enjoy the blessings bestowed by an all-wise Creator is the desire of each individual. It has been aptly said by Dr. Aitkin, that "the physician must above all remember that the sphere of his professional exertion is limited, and surrounded by unsurmountable barriers, and that death will eventually come alike to all, reminding him that he himself must become a victim to the incompetency of his art." In the foregoing numbers of this journal we have touched upon some of the causes which affect the health of our city; others exist which admit of remedy if properly looked into. It is not alone sufficient that we inquire into the state of drainage of our houses; this may be regarded as of the greatest importance. The passage of the by-law that all houses shall possess efficient and thorough drainage, under penalty to the proprietors for negligence in complying with the terms of the law bearing on this point, is a step in the right direction, and we trust will be rigidly carried out. Let all premises be efficiently drained; but how is this to be enforced? Surely our city authorities will not trust to police inspection; a proper officer is needed, and should at once be appointed. An officer of health is much required in Montreal, one who, occupying a public post, would be responsible to the citizens for the due performance of a most important duty.

In all cities of any size in Europe and America, the great importance of a health officer is fully recognized; but Montreal has so far contented herself with a health committee,—a committee existing in name, but