

CHAPTER XV.

MORTUARY STATISTICS.

527. Under the authority of the "Census and Statistics Act, 1879," a series of rules and forms for the collection of mortuary statistics was assented to by the Governor General, on 26th December, 1882, and arrangements were at once made by the Minister of Agriculture to put the same into operation. The first report was published in March, 1884.

528. The rules were to apply to all cities having a population of 25,000 inhabitants or upwards, and returns have been regularly received from all the cities included in such a provision, with the exception of Victoria, British Columbia, from which place no returns have yet been received.

529. It has been well said, and should be remembered, that of the returns of these statistics "some come up to that standard of accuracy which it is possible to exact, others approximate it more or less closely, and others again are more or less far below it."

530. The estimates of the total population of each city, as well as of the numbers by nationalities, occupations and religions, are based upon a comparison of the figures of the census of 1881, and are therefore merely approximate, but at the same time, cannot be very inaccurate.

531. The following tables are concise statements of the number of deaths in the various cities in 1884, according to ages, nationalities, occupations and religions, with the respective proportion of deaths per 1,000 of population.

532. It will be seen that, with the exception of Charlottetown, the largest proportion of deaths was among children under 5 years of age. The proportion in Montreal was as high as 615 per 1,000 deaths, while in Quebec and Ottawa it was 532 and 573 per 1,000 respectively, being a much higher proportion than in any other cities. This is principally to be explained by the fact that in the three cities named there are special asylums for the reception of foundlings, and that far more complete returns are therefore made of deaths of illegitimate children than can be obtained from any of the other places.

533. According to these statistics, the death rate was highest in Montreal and Quebec, and lowest in Charlottetown and Fredericton. The ratio per thousand deaths was generally highest among the English, and in the labouring class, while according to religions, the highest proportion was among the Roman Catholics.

534. The ratio of deaths over 60 years of age in Winnipeg was very small as compared with other cities, but it is easily understood when the nature of the population is considered, and as might be expected, the ratio of deaths between the ages of 20 and 40 was the highest in the table.