

## PURE WATER.

The city of New York has incurred an expense of at least twelve millions of dollars for the sake of procuring an adequate supply of pure water. The most prudent and economical of her citizens have not thought this debt too great for the object for which it was created. Nor can any wise community too highly estimate the advantages of having the constant enjoyment of pure water for sustenance and cleanliness. Philadelphia is peculiarly fortunate in having this want supplied at a cost so trifling that it is really not felt by the mass of consumers. We have become so accustomed to the privilege of good water in abundance that the liability of impairing the quality or diminishing the quantity is scarcely thought of as a possible circumstance. There is in truth, however, great danger of having the fountain poisoned and of spreading in consequence discomfort and disease through the city to an extent which no one can pretend to estimate.

A correspondent, whom we know as one of the most eminent physicians in the community, and who has not any personal interest in the suggestions which he makes, asks attention in the following communication, to the danger which exists of the Schuylkill water becoming utterly contaminated by the various impurities discharged into it above the dam. It is certainly in the power of the city to prevent this evil, and if it be apparent that it will happen unless arrested at the expense of the city, the object is far too important to be neglected on account of a question of dollars and cents.

### THE CITY WATER WORKS.

To the Editors of the North American,

Gentlemen: The preservation of the purity of the Schuylkill water should be an object of especial solicitude to the citizens of Philadelphia. We have long been enjoying the use of water pre-eminently pure, conducing in a marked manner to the preservation of the health of the inhabitants of this city; and whilst neighboring towns have suffered from the pestilential influence, we, by the sanative influence of this boon, have escaped the scourge.

The comforts and conveniences arising from this pure beverage are such, that the citizens have willingly met every cost to ensure to themselves the abundant supply we now enjoy. But, from the fact of the land adjacent to the Fairmount Dam not being in possession of the city, that receptacle for water from which we derive our supply, is peculiarly exposed to contamination. Already has a culvert been constructed which discharges the filthy water from Coates street almost into the fore bay of the water works; and we are exposed, unless legislative action should speedily arrest the evil, to all the excrementitious matters which will be produced by the thronged and dense population which must soon people that part of Spring Garden. Unquestionably it is our duty, whilst we have the power, to arrest the fearful evils which must follow from a supply of impure water. This moment is an important crisis in reference to the purity of the Schuylkill water which we use.

It will be observed that Lemon Hill Estate, (the late residence of H. Pratt, Esq.) which forms the northern boundary of the Fair Mount Dam, will be exposed at a peremptory sale in November next. Suppose this sold, and the fee simple vested in the hands of those who have no interest in the preservation of the purity of our excellent water—what will be the probable consequence? The whole of the extensive river front will probably be occupied by manufactories of cotton and woollen goods, and all the various and deleterious chemical compounds used in dyeing *will be emptied directly into the Fair Mount Dam, and directly in the current* which enters the fore bay of the Water Works. Again—the whole of that space which is designated as the Lemon Hill Estate, will be covered with a dense population, and all excrementitious matters, the consequence of such population, must of necessity be discharged into the Dam.

Can any one suppose that, under such circumstances, the water in the Dam will not be deleterious? It must become noxious; we shall be compelled to abandon the use of it as a beverage, and shall be forced to obtain our supply from another source. In this opinion the writer is not alone; he remembers very distinctly the vivid appeals formerly made to our City Council on this subject by the benevolent and philanthropic Dr. PARSONS, and it has been the subject of frequent communications to the same bodies by the College of Physicians of this city.

The consideration of this subject is fraught with great interest, for, upon the perpetuation of the purity of the water of Fair Mount Dam depends the health and future prosperity of our city. Can we then, fearing some slight increase of our city debt, refuse to preserve the precious gift of pure water with which we are now so abundantly blessed? Can we risk the comfort of our children, and of the future inhabitants of this city rather than incur a slight pecuniary outlay?

I hope that this all-important subject may claim the serious attention of our citizens, and that through petitions, town meetings, &c., the Councils may be instructed to purchase the fee simple of the Lemon Hill estate for the city of Philadelphia, and thus have the power to prevent the contamination of the water of Fairmount Dam, and also to secure a space for the resort of the public for healthful recreation.

Yours,

MEDICUS.