

INFLUENZA.

By A. E. PORTER, M. D.,

Oxford, N. S., formerly of Prince Albert, N. W. T.

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IN view of the recent visitation of influenza, it may not be inopportune for me to set forth the following remarks on this epidemic.

There can be no doubt that the disease is due to a specific cause which the microscope and bacteriological investigation will yet reveal. In fact Sievert is reported to have found micrococci in the sputa of influenza patients, but so far as I am aware there have been no facts adduced to show that it is positively due to this micro-organism, nor are there any to show the manner in which it is disseminated.

We find that all the great epidemics of influenza which have occurred during the past three hundred years originated in Asia. In proof of this we have the authority of the best records and historians. When it reaches Russia it is known as Chinese catarrh, in Germany the Russian pest, in France, and to Canadians as la grippe, and to Englishmen as epidemic catarrh or influenza.

These epidemics have only been clearly recorded since the beginning of the sixteenth century, although the spread of a somewhat similar disease is mentioned as occurring at intervals from so early a date as the ninth century, and is said to have infected the whole of Europe, and to have been known as epidemic catarrh.

The first epidemic of influenza recorded in Great Britain was early in the sixteenth century, occurring also in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Germany, and the Baltic Provinces.

The epidemic in 1557 started westward from Asia, spread over Europe and crossed the Atlantic.

The great epidemic of 1580 spread from China in a north westerly direction through Russia and Germany into England, appearing also in Sweden and Norway, and westerly into Africa and Southern Europe. Between 1610 and 1647 it is only at times spoken of as epidemic. Again in 1730 it spread over Europe, and is said to have found its way to Mexico.

It is recorded in each decade from this date to 1880. In 1830 influenza started in China, crossed into Russia, invaded Moscow and all the large cities of Europe, and was remarkable for its widespread diffusion and rapid succession of epidemics appearing in 1831, 1832 and 1833.

In 1837 it again appeared in Russia, coming as before from China. At least eleven epidemics are recorded at varying intervals between this date and 1879, when it is recorded as prevailing over a large portion of the United States, and from my own personal knowledge in the North West Territories.

In the Fall of that year, and the Spring of 1889, it prevailed for at least six months before it became generally epidemic, a fact which may yet be shown to have some bearing on the subject in question. I observed in the epidemic in 1897 what at that time I believed to be the same disease in cats and dogs while epizootic was fatally prevalent among horses, and to all appearances resembled influenza.