

LA GRIPPE.

It looks as if our old friend La Grippe, influenza, or whatever name may be applied to it, is going to pay us another visit, if it be not already in our midst, the American and Continental papers being full of accounts of an epidemic resembling that which swept our country last year, though in a slightly milder form. Many have been the surmises as to its true identity. In many of its features it resembles what was formerly known as the Influenza, which name was given by the Italians to a disease which occasionally visited Europe from remote periods, travelling rapidly from east to west, and supposed to be due to some influence of the planets upon poor suffering humanity. Authorities differ widely as to its nature and etiology, one eminent English surgeon giving it the grotesque name of "Bastard Pulmonary Rheumatism," while the unscientific name La Grippe, is supposed to be derived either from the French verb "gripper," to seize, or the Polish "crypka" (hoarse), from the nature of its onset and symptoms. The majority of medical men regard it as bacterial in origin, but the fact that such eminent investigators as Klebs, Kowalski, Kollman, Tomaso Crudeele, and others, all describe an essentially different microbe as being found in connection with the disease, indicates clearly that the specific germ has not yet been discovered. One theory as to its etiology was that La Grippe was a new disease started by a miasma arising from the thousands of rotting bodies left after the great flood from the overflow of "China's sorrow," which took place two and a half years since—at all events, the disease seemed to come from Asiatic Russia in the first place; and caravans constantly carrying tea and other Chinese products overland might account for its propagation.

It would seem as if atmospheric conditions had little effect upon the disease, although moist damp weather seems to be more favorable for its rapid spread than when the opposite state of things exist.

La Grippe has been divided into three forms, according to its action upon the different systems, viz.: nervous, pulmonary, and catarrhal and gastric, and this division seems justified by the

peculiar course of the disease in various individuals.

In the nervous form there is intense headache of a peculiar throbbing character, with a sensation of great tension in the head; the eyes burn and ache, while muscular pains fly from one part of the body to the other; flashes of heat alternating with chilly sensations add to the patient's discomfort; the pulse-rate and temperature rapidly rise, and great prostration ensues, often followed by delirium or tinnitus aureum. In a few days, or a week, these symptoms usually ameliorate, although meningitis and other cerebral complications occasionally ensue, adding greatly to the gravity of the disorder.

The convalescence is usually slow, and a condition of nervous exhaustion is frequently left, characterized by great muscular debility and a tendency to an almost irresistible drowsiness and mental hebetude, which yields very slowly to treatment. In those cases which terminate fatally and post-mortems have been made, congestion of the spinal arachnoid and certain degenerations in the cord were found, but no pathological appearances of a specific nature.

The gastric form is characterized by muscular pains simulating closely those of rheumatism, with rise of temperature and the onset of nausea and vomiting, the ejected matter being of a peculiar greenish color, almost pathognomonic of the disease, and scarcely to be forgotten if once seen. Constipation and tenderness in the region of the spleen and liver is frequently found, and in some cases the disease assumes a typhoid form, but without the characteristic temperature record of that disease. The convalescence is more rapid than in the nervous form, although chronic weakness of the digestive system results in a certain proportion of the cases.

The catarrhal form, which has the greatest mortality, owing to the frequent onset of pneumonia in the aged or debilitated, is characterized by chilliness, intense frontal headache, sore throat with swelling of the tonsils, acute rhinitis with cough, tightness of the chest, and other symptoms of a severe attack of bronchitis. If pneumonia does not set in the patient usually recovers in the course of a couple of weeks. One of the most troublesome features of this form of La Grippe is the fact that acute otitis media sets in very fre-