

A characteristic of the present epidemic is the intense physical and mental depression. Insanity and dementia have, in consequence, increased alarmingly in the past three to four weeks of the epidemic and many physicians fear that the scenes enacted in Europe during the influenza epidemic of 1847, will be duplicated in New York.

Among the various diseases and disorders which have marked previous epidemics of influenza in Europe is cerebral paresis (*paralysis*), and wherever it has

appeared an epidemic of suicides has followed. The epidemics of 1833 and 1837 were marked by great numbers of suicides, due to cerebral paresis, and within the last four weeks, this has increased in this city to such an extent as to alarm the physicians both in hospitals and private practice. Its spread was first noticed at Bellevue Hospital, but so little was known in this city about the Russian influenza that no attention was paid to the spreading brain disorder.

ON THE EARLY CARE OF INFANTS.

NO more important subject can engage the attention of all who are interested in the welfare of the country than that of the early care of the infant population. Not only is this early care necessary to preserve life, but it is also necessary to the good or even fair mental and physical development of the coming generation, and indeed of many future generations, and hence essential to the wellbeing and permanency of communities, and the nation. In Canada while the high infantile mortality, especially in some of our cities, is very high and a standing reproach to the Dominion, it is very high mainly from want of intelligent or proper management of the infants, and this mainly from parental ignorance. Besides this high mortality, no one probably will deny that this want of proper management of the infants is a cause of a great deal of after-life suffering in those who have survived infancy and youth; that it is a cause of a want of good digestive and assimilative powers, and hence of vigor and usefulness; a cause of predisposition to infectious diseases; a cause of malformations or defects of structure or function of the vital organs—as for example small lungs or weak heart: or of more obvious outward deformities; and more than all, a cause of a want, from these very physical defects, of moral stamina, self-control and general mental ability and usefulness.

Almost as soon as the infant breathes, or within an hour or two of this time, its delicate stomach is disturbed and deranged by a dose of something—castor oil, butter

and sugar or some other very unnatural and improper compound—when it hardly ever requires anything at all but a warm bath in a warm room, loose clothing, and a warm quiet nest, or to be left quietly at or on its mother's breast if possible, for the first 12 or perhaps 24 hours, or until its own natural food comes.

From the first day all through the most delicate, susceptible period of its life it is fed with improper food. "Oh, just what we eat ourselves," the mother will often reply, when asked by the now attending physician what sort of food she has been feeding her perhaps hardly one year-old child. And "what we eat ourselves" is usually bad enough for adults. It is dosed with medicines—soothing syrups, etc.—to counteract the effects of the improper food. It is improperly clothed, deprived of fresh air and sunshine and often taught to walk too soon. Is it any wonder then that the child dies young or that in all its after life—all through manhood or womanhood, sickness and suffering are its "common lot."

Probably not less than 150,000 infants are born in Canada every year—over 400 every day. Considerably over one-third of these, in the cities, die before reaching the first anniversary of their birth, and much more than one half never reach manhood or womanhood. Is not this shocking? What is to be done? This is not a question easily answered. But efforts must be made. On another occasion we shall endeavor to point out some means of remedying the evil. All means, however, must be based mainly on education.