

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANNOTATIONS.

PNEUMONIA (inflammation of the lungs) is more prevalent in this country at this season of the year (March and April) than at any other. It is a disease which causes a great many deaths, often of those who are most vigorous and in the prime of life. Dr. Nagle, of the Board of Health of New York city, has given much attention to this disease, and has prepared valuable statistical tables concerning it. The prevalence of pneumonia, he says, "may be owing to a lack of ozone in the air, or it may be because there is too much ozone. Sudden changes of weather and high winds, particularly from the north and east, certainly have much to do with it. Smoking may be a predisposing cause, as tobacco is certainly an irritant. Anything which irritates the lungs should be avoided. If people would breathe through the nose instead of through the mouth, especially when in the open air or facing a cold wind, the lungs would be less irritated. One great cause of the fearful death-rate among children from this disease is undoubtedly the criminally foolish way in which they are dressed. Many mothers seem more anxious to make their children look pretty than to dress them comfortably. On a par with this is the folly of low-necked dresses among women as viewed from a health standpoint. Ladies so dressed will rush from a heated ballroom or theatre into the open air, and then wonder that they have colds or pneumonia. Wear reasonable underclothing, and don't remove your heavy flannels too early in the spring."

PROF. LOOMIS, in his valuable work on Practice of Medicine, says: "It is a well-known fact that pneumonia attacks the poor oftener than the rich, the private oftener than the officer, the sailor on shore oftener than on ship, the soldier oftener than the civilian at the same post. It is unknown in the polar regions and common on the Mediterranean, increasing in a direct ratio from the poles to the equator. Elevation above the sea predisposes to it; north and east winds favor its development; rainy seasons or damp and marshy districts do not seem to influence it. Periods of steady and extreme cold have little effect except upon the old, but sudden changes are very disastrous.

The first predisposing cause is age, the disease being most common in early childhood, from twenty to forty, and after sixty. The proportion of male to female victims is as three to one. Any general condition of the body which debilitates is a predisposing cause. The complications which render the disease so dangerous are those which diminish the nerve supply or weaken the muscular power of the heart. Bad sewerage and miasmatic influence are potent causes of the disease."

MANY physicians now believe pneumonia to be a specific, infectious disease, communicable from one person to another, and there are many cases on record which afford very strong evidence that this is the case. Dr. Leaming, special consulting physician in chest disease in St. Luke's Hospital (N.Y.), has published a pamphlet entitled "Endemic Pleuro-Pneumonia, as seen in New York, during the past ten or twelve years." In this Dr. Leaming holds to the belief that the pneumonia of the present day, or pleuro-pneumonia, as he terms it, is the same as the epidemic which caused so many deaths among the troops in Canada during the war of 1812-15.

In the *Wien. Med. Presse*, 7th Feb., 1886, are the conclusion of a series of articles by Prof. WINTERNITZ, against the numerous obesity cures which have of late attracted so much attention. These articles conclude as follows: Methodic excitation of sweat, influence of cold, appropriate and systematical work, increase the physiological fat-combustion so powerfully that these factors not only deserve more attention than has been hitherto bestowed upon them, but also render useless the strict and one-sided cures as employed at present.

AT the new state capitol building in Albany, N. Y., on March 11, the occupants were alarmed at a violent explosion of sewer gas in a large receiving basin in front of the building. Heavy stones were shattered and thrown into the air. The accident was the result of imperfect sewerage and ventilation of which the Board of Health had warned the Legislature. Says the *American Lancet*, "Pity the Legislature had not been sitting upon the basin."