

The Influenza Microbe.

FRENCH DOCTOR'S ACCOUNT OF ITS PECULIARITIES.

DR. L. CAZE contributes an interesting article on influenza to one of the monthly reviews. Under the name of "grippe" the scourge has been known for at least a century. In 1776 it raged with such violence that a doctor, in search, it may be thought, of a novel form of advertisement, offered to give a small income for life to anybody who could prove that he had not suffered from the disease. Nougaret, a popular author of the time, made the incident the subject of a comedy, "La Grippe," which is now worth its weight in gold in the eyes of bibliophiles. A still worse visitation of the epidemic occurred in 1803, when a host of illustrious victims succumbed to the plague, including La Harpe and the famous actresses Sophie Arnould and Mlle. Clairon.

The influenza, like most other pathological abominations, has its microbe, and a microbe distinguished, unfortunately, for its vagabond proclivities. It is ever on the march, and any mode of locomotion—it is wingless and legless and requires to be carried—serves its turn, from ocean-going liners to the winds of heaven. According to an American scientist, Turkey was the headquarters of the nuisance last winter. Following the lines of international traffic, it has since found its way to innumerable localities, but in particular to New York, London, and Paris.

The promised land which the influenza microbe has in view throughout its wanderings is the respiratory organs of human beings. Elsewhere it vegetates, it exists as best it can; but in these essential regions of our organic economy it flourishes and is for the first time thoroughly at home—especially if the ground has been prepared in advance by chronic bronchitis or consumption. The oxygen of the lungs is necessary for its healthy and normal development, and when deprived of this elixir it mopes, becomes torpid and eventually gives up its tenacious ghost. Indeed, the idiosyncrasies of the thing are all of them of such a nature as to induce it to regard our bodies as the most eligible residence on offer. For instance, a bath of twenty-four hours duration in ordinary water, however stagnant and inviting to the average bacillus, is fatal to the influenza microbe, while on the other hand it will exist for weeks in perfect bliss in human saliva.

The *modus operandi* of the influenza microbe is peculiar. It is not the microbe itself that does the harm, but a poisonous liquid it excretes. A measure of consolation is afforded by the fact that this poison is even more deleterious to the microbe than to the human being in whom it is deposited, for the microbes end by being destroyed

by their own horrible exhalations, whereas their victim, of course, has many chances of recovery. The microbe is an egg-shaped thing, but gifted, in spite of its roundness and smoothness, with an extraordinary capacity both for adhering to any conceivable surface and for passing from one resting-place to another. Its goal is a human nose or mouth, and once in the vicinity of these organs its future is assured, for the mere act of breathing is sufficient to draw it into the system. Arrived there, it propagates itself with amazing rapidity. It lengthens out, and, after twenty minutes of this process, it breaks in twain, and there are two fully-fledged microbes in the place of one. In twenty-four hours the original invader will, in this way, be surrounded by a progeny of over sixteen millions of his poison-producing kindred. In short, the doctors know almost everything about the influenza microbe except an effective method of exterminating it.

Appointments.

MATRON.

MISS M. S. CAMERON has been appointed Matron of Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin. She received her training at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and has held the position of Head Nurse of the Accident Ward of the Salisbury Infirmary.

MISS B. SHIPLEY has been appointed Matron of Miss Atkinson's Convalescent Home for Children, Tynemouth, South Shields. Miss Shipley was trained at the Belfast Royal Hospital, and has, of late years, held the position of Ward Sister at the Monsall Fever Hospital, Manchester.

SISTER.

MISS SUTTON has been appointed Sister at the Military Hospital, Athens, owing to an increase in the nursing staff of this institution. Miss Sutton received her training at the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, and holds the three years' certificate of this infirmary, where, until last month, she held the position of Staff Nurse.

MISS THEODORA UNWIN has been appointed Ward Sister at the Royal Infirmary, Halifax. She received her training at the Liverpool Royal Infirmary.

MISS ANNIE FRASER has been appointed Sister at the Royal Children's Hospital, Bristol. She was trained at the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital, Plymouth, and has recently held the position of Theatre Sister at the Bedford Infirmary.

NIGHT SISTER.

MISS A. M. WYCHERLEY has been appointed Night Sister at the Suffolk County Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds. She received her training at the Liverpool Royal Infirmary.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)