

# Influenza Ravages.

According to census figures given out yesterday, 64,000 people have died from the effects of influenza and 39,000 from pneumonia in the larger cities of the country. What has been the harvest in the smaller places and the rural districts is problematical, but it has been large. The two diseases are raging throughout the country despite the efforts of the health authorities to curb them. In some places the epidemic seems to have run its course and daily reports are that the number of cases is gradually growing fewer, but in other communities the death lists grow.

One of the grave mistakes that has been made by medical men and health authorities is to have permitted the use of the word "influenza" to be employed in designating this affection. The psychological effect of words is great, and "influenza" has never suggested to the mind any illness that should be looked upon or treated seriously. It was supposed to be some inflammation of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat, a slight congestion and a tired feeling that would pass off in a few days with the usual home remedies. But this epidemic is too serious to be lightly treated, and had the medical fraternity given it a name conveying some slight suggestion of the fatality of the fever it would have been better.

Health authorities would have found it easier to establish and enforce regulations, people would have been more disposed to heed what the doctors said, and to have adopted such a regime as would have guarded against infection and consequent spread of the disease. Confronted with the word "influenza," those entrusted with conserving the public health find themselves fighting the people for the benefit of the people, and not always winning. Any sickness that can sweep through a country leaving thousands of graves in its wake is not to be given some name that fails to convey its sinister qualities.