

# INFLUENZA TOLL NOT

1/15/19 LESS THAN 2,000

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Vermont Hard Hit in Worst Epidemic of Modern Times, for Which No Preventive Has Yet Been Found—End Not Yet in Sight

It is impossible at this time to estimate anywhere near the number of deaths which have been caused by influenza in Vermont during the epidemic. The latest authentic figures available were to November 1, when the toll had reached the large total of 1,089. Since that time the deaths have continued steadily, among the apparently healthiest of the population, without any great decrease. At the office of the secretary of the State Board of Health no estimates would be made because they care to talk only about facts down there. From unofficial estimates the number in the aggregate runs between 2,000 and 2,500.

The worst thing about this epidemic, which has caused more deaths than any other on record in this as well as in other northern States, is that little progress seems to have been made in the way of handling it. While a few weeks ago different vaccines were looked on as sure preventives in different parts of the country, these are being used less and less and nowhere near as many physicians are using them as was the case at first. In the laboratories in various places, men are still looking for the vaccine which will work, but it is the general opinion that their efforts are thus far of no avail.

In Vermont, as well as in the rest of New England and New York State, the hope followed up was the pneumonia serum. There is little demand for that now. In other sections the medical profession leaned toward other bacilli. All the bacilli are taken from the throat of different persons who have been ill with influenza. The different vaccines which have been used probably will number a dozen. Some are one particular germ and other vaccines are made of a combination of germs.

One thing the health officers wish to impress on the public is that the place for sick people is at home, where they will meet as few people as possible. This is for the affected person's welfare as well as anyone else's, for the germ can easily be taken again, as shown by the experience of many. The old rule to keep away from crowds should still be carefully observed. It is just as necessary that visiting should cease now as at any time, and most of all in houses where influenza is known to exist. The epidemic is nowhere near over and no one can tell when it will be.

There is a popular belief that the influenza is the pneumonic plague and the same belief is expressed by many medical men. This plague has swept over vast areas in eastern and southern countries before, and resembles this so-called influenza in its propensity to spread. In the history of the United States there have been scourges which were more loathsome and terrible in their symptoms but not since records have been kept and diseases handled scientifically has there been any such general epidemic.