NOTES AND NEWS.

THE question whether an attack of influenza confers protection from subsequent infection is one which must have often arisen during the experiences of the last three years, but the data for its solution are not yet fully available. The amount of information which must have been gleaned by the family practitioner in all parts of the country upon this and many other points concerning the malady would, if collated, go far to settle the matter. It is of course notorious that certain individuals have suffered from more than one attack; but the conviction is pretty general that such cases really form but a small minority of the large numbers who have suffered. Then, again, it must be deemed possible that the degree and duration of the protection may depend on the severity which the primary attack exhibited, for one can hardly invoke the doctrine of attenuation of virus in the case of this disease, which shows so much variation from the ordinary course of infective disorders in general. In a highly interesting contribution upon the features of the present epidemic in Berlin, according to *Lancet*, Dr. Ruhemann directs especial attention to this question of protection and affords valuable evidence of it. He aptly remarks that the more gradual evolution and persistent character of the present epidemic, as compared with the rapid and stormy course of the pandemic of 1889 to 1890, have afforded opportunity for more closely studying the character of the malady, and that it has especially enabled us to recognize more clearly its contagious nature. According to him, influenza has prevailed in Berlin ever since the beginning of last September, and he notes how on this occasion the stress of the outbreak had fallen to a far greater extent upon women and children and less upon men than was the case two years ago. His own practice affords proof of this, especially in the fact of the greater frequency of uncomplicated cases among women than among men. As to the question of protection, he has observed that members of families who were severely attacked two years ago have either escaped entirely at present or been only slightly affected; whilst, conversely, the most serious cases of the present time have arisen in households which the influenza spared during its earlier visitation. He notes the statement of Dr. Edward Gray, to the effect that "many persons who escaped the epidemic of 1775 were affected by that of 1782, and many who escaped the latter were affected by the former," as showing that a century ago this question of immunity had not passed unnoticed. Dr. Ruhemann gives his experience of 55 families, numbering 193 individuals. In 1889–90 there were 64 cases of influenza among this group, whilst in the present outbreak only 40 have been attacked, and, what is of special interest, only 5 out of this number were affected (and that but slightly) two years ago, whilst of the 64 then attacked only 4 have again become victims. Should this prove to be anything like the general experience it would go far to substantiate a fact that has hitherto been much disputed, even to the extent of declaring that one attack predisposes to another. That one individual may have several recurrences during the prevalence of a single epidemic does not, in Dr. Ruhemann's opinion, mitigate against the general doctrine of protection, since he thinks many such recurrences may be explained by lack of caution on the part of the patients against exposing themselves to fresh infection before they are restored to full health. That influenza does protect from a second infection should reassure many persons who, having once suffered severely from it, dread a repetition of so depressing a malady, and it may be further comfort to them to learn that the more they have to suffer at first, the less likely are they to suffer at all again. If, then, influenza shares this common property of all infective diseases, it is not so remarkable that it should not apparently select the young in preference to the adult and aged, seeing that the whole community is more or less "unprotected" when it first reappears after an absence (in pandemic form) of years.

— At the meeting of the Gesellschaft Deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte held last year in Halle, it was arranged that the sixty-fifth meeting should be held this year at Nürnberg, from the 12th to the 16th of September. This society, similar to the English and American associations for the advancement of science, together with a medical association, is divided into thirty-two sections, about two-thirds of which belong to the medical side, and the remaining are scientific, if it be allowed to use the word in the narrow sense. The three general sittings are to be opened by addresses from Professors His of Leipzig, von Helmholtz of Berlin, and Günther of Munich respectively; and in the meetings of the sections — for example, in chemistry — papers will be read, among others, by Ostwald and E. v. Meyer; in physics by Wiedemann and Boltzmann; in mathematics by G. Cantor, F. Klein and Königsberger. On one of the days of the meeting excursions are to be made by certain of the sections. Those of physics and zoology and some of the medicinal sections go to Erlangen, where the apparatus of the University laboratories will be used in demonstration of papers. On the same day the sections of botany, mineralogy, and geology, ethnology, and anthropology make a scientific excursion to Neuhaus or Pommelsbrunn. As before, the German Mathematical Society meets with the general Science Society, and thus the number of papers in the section of mathematics is probably larger than in any other section. There is to be a technical industrial exhibition in charge of the general society and the Bavarian government, and the Mathematical Society has undertaken an exhibition of "mathematical models, drawings, apparatus, and instruments, serving both for teaching and research in pure and applied mathematics." This latter exhibition is to include only those instruments having an interest primarily mathematical, while the instruments having to do with the experimental sciences, and of more practical use, are to be placed in the general exhibition, which will be especially rich historically, as the collections of the Nürnberg Industrial Museum are to be utilized. The mathematical exhibition is to include historical surface and curve models, such as those constructed by Plücker and Klein, and later those of the Brill collection; and certain unique models which have been in university collections, and which have become dilapidated, are to be as much as possible re-set. In connection with these models explanitory lectures are to be delivered, those thus far announced being as follows: Dyck, introductory lecture on the mathematical exhibition; Bjerknes, hydrodynamic phenomena analogous to electric and magnetic; Finsterwalder, surface curvature; Mehmke, reckoning machines. Other lectures are to be given on function-theory surfaces, etc. In this connection it is of interest to note that Professor Klein, who probably exerts the most influence in the German Mathematical Society, and who is a member of the mathematical advisory committee of the Chicago exhibition, suggests that such an exhibition of models with demonstrations be introduced there.

— For some eight years the theory has been before the scientific world that the great ice-sheet bridged the Ohio River near Cincinnati, Ohio, sufficiently to block its channel and raise the waters above the place of bridging to a height of 500 to 600 feet above the present river-bed. Silt deposits east of Cincinnati near the ice margin have been cited as evidence of this dam since they stand about 600 feet above the Ohio. These silts have been found by Frank Leverett, U. S. Geological Survey, Madison, Wis., to be too widespread to admit of this explanation, since they extend west past Cincinnati, covering much of southern Indiana as well as portions of States farther west. They are also of later date, since they rest upon the drift deposited by the ice when it bridged the Ohio, and are separated from it by a considerable time-interval, shown by humus stain, leaching of till, and erosion of surface of the underlying drift. The apparent absence of striæ south of the Ohio River and the meagre amount of drift there indicate a thin ice-sheet with feeble movement. These facts and a comparison with other districts where conditions for damming appear to have been more favorable than on the Ohio, lead to the conclusion that the river would not be blocked except for very brief periods.

— *Neptunia*, May, 1892, reports a singular phenomenon from the Balearic Isles. On March 4, about 9 o'clock in the morning, a violent wind from the north blew over Soller in Majorca. As the wind died away, the rain by which it was accompanied increased, and at the same time the ground was covered by a yellowish coating, which proved to be sulphur.