

DISINFECTION BY SULPHUR FUMES.—In a communication to the French Academy (*Therap. Gaz. Phil.*) M. DUJARDIN-BEAUMETZ relates the results of the experiments which he performed at the Cochin Hospital as to the relative disinfecting powers of sulphurous acid and certain other substances. (*Jour. de Méd.*, Oct. '84). He concludes that sulphurous acid is the best of all disinfectants, and shows that all germs and microbes, even those of anthrax, are destroyed in a room in which this acid had been generated. M. Beaumetz was thus able by means of the microscope to confirm the ideas generally held as to the efficacy of this disinfectant, and to prove its superiority to disinfection by heat, a means, by the way, whose difficulty of accomplishment is not sufficiently appreciated. Of all the means of production of sulphurous acid, one only is practicable for purposes of disinfection, viz., the combustion of sulphur with enough alcohol to ignite it; other methods which have been recommended, such as the burning of sulphide of carbon, require special apparatus, and are not entirely free from danger. In the disinfection of a room, all the objects should be left in position, and about one ounce of sulphur burned for every cubic yard of space which it is desired to disinfect. The best means of avoiding danger from fire is to employ two earthenware vessels placed on top of one another, the upper and smaller one containing the sulphur and alcohol, the lower one containing wet sand. If then the upper jar breaks with the heat, the burning sulphur falls onto the wet sand and not onto the floor. The room which is being disinfected should be kept closed for 24 hours after lighting the sulphur. Bleaching from the fumes of the sulphur must be expected; all metallic objects are attacked, though they may be protected by first coating them with oil. The above is the ordinary method employed in most of the hospitals in France, and it cannot be too highly recommended.

HOW SCARLET FEVER IS SPREAD.—The following authentic instances have been recorded. Dr. (later Sir Thomas) Watson is the authority for this: Scarlet fever had attacked several persons in a large household. When it was fairly over the house was left

empty, and (as was supposed) most thoroughly ventilated and purified. A year afterwards, the family returned to the house. A drawer in one of the bedrooms resisted for some time attempts to pull it open. It was found that a strip of flannel had got between the drawer and its frame, and this the housemaid put playfully around her neck. An old nurse who was present, recognising it as having been used for an application to the throat of one of the former subjects of scarlet fever, snatched it from her, and instantly burned it in the fire. The girl, however, soon sickened, and the disease ran a second time through the household, affecting those who had not had it on the first occasion. Dr. Murchison relates the following: An officer, aged 22, on 5th September, visited a friend in London whose little girl had scarlet fever, but so slightly that she was not confined to bed. He took the girl on his knee and kissed her. On the morning of the 8th September he was quite well, but towards evening he was attacked with headache, heaviness, and sore throat, followed by a dusky rash, ulcers on the tonsils, constant delirium, sleepiness, and a great prostration, and died on 14th September. Dr. Murchison relates another sad case concerning himself. In the afternoon of 14th May, 1860, while from home, I was myself seized with general pains, fever, sore throat, and great prostration. I did not get home until eleven o'clock, and all next day I was very ill in bed with the same symptoms, but there was no rash. Suspecting that I had scarlatina, I sent for a medical friend to advise me as to sending away my only child, but by the time he arrived, I was so much better that he gave a decided opinion that my attack was not scarlatina, and next morning, as I was able to get up and attend to my duties, I believed that he was right, and did not send my child away. I have no doubt now from the sequel, and from what I have seen in other cases, that my attack was scarlatina. At the time I was much exposed to the disease, I never had scarlatina before, nor have I had it since, and for months after that attack I was anæmic, and out of health. On and after 16th May I saw my child as usual. On the morning of 20th May she was attacked with scarlatina in a malignant form, and she died on the 27th.