

purifying sewer air have been forwarded to us. The idea seems so good that we regret we have not been able to see it practically applied, though it is stated that successful experiments have been made at Manchester. The apparatus is patented by Mr. T. S. Wilson, F. S. I., and Mr. H. T. Johnson, and is called the Patent Hygienic Furnace. Profiting by the proximity of the gas mains to the sewers, the patentees have constructed a gas furnace to be inserted in the man-holes. The gas is introduced into a little chamber, where it is mixed with a due proportion of air and supplies some Bunsen burners. Immediately above the gas there are some fireclay plates, which soon become heated; while above them are iron divisions. The heat naturally draws the air up from the sewer below; it passes through the Bunsen burners backwards and forwards over the fireclay plates and iron divisions, till at last it finds its exit in the ventilation chamber or man-hole, and hence through the grate into the street. The furnace not only causes a strong current of air from the sewer, but, as it is capable of being heated at from 600° to 700° Fahr., it should destroy all the germ life that travels with the sewer gas. Experiments with sterilized infusions of meat have been made, and whereas ordinary air drawn from the street soon caused the infusions to become turbid with animalcula and fungoid life, no such effect was produced by the sewer air taken after it had passed through this furnace. There is, however, one objection to furnaces when employed to ventilate sewers. They certainly produce a very active suction, but the effect, however energetic, only extends to a short distance. We would therefore suggest, that these ventilating furnaces should be as small and as inexpensive as possible, so that a large number of them might be used, and these at very short intervals.—*Lancet*, September 29, 1883.—*Med. News*.

THE MUTABILITY OF BACTERIA.—The question whether the same germs under different conditions give rise to various diseases has been raised, but not settled. Dr. Carpenter, at the meeting of the British Association, treated the subject from a point of view of natural history. He referred to the facility which the lower forms of life possess of adapting themselves to chang-

ed conditions of existence. He believes that the same germs may under altered circumstances produce various diseases, and these opinions he supported by various arguments. The decrease of the virulence of the small-pox which ravaged Europe in the fifteenth century he attributed to the cultivation of the mildest cases which occurred. A severe attack of any particular disease may so affect the system that a disease arises which can not be recognized as related to that from which it proceeded. Under favourable conditions an ordinary intermittent fever may develop into a virulent form, which is highly contagious. There is, in his opinion, very strong ground for the belief that even the innocent hay bacillus may undergo such an alteration in its type as to become the germ of severe disease.—*N. Y. Med. Jnl.*

EPIDEMIC PNEUMONIA.—Von. A. Seufft (*Berl. Klin. Woch.*) states that in a town of 1,500 inhabitants, located on a high plateau, where no examples of typhus or typhoid fevers had occurred for five years, an epidemic of pneumonia broke out. In twenty-two days there were fifty-nine persons taken ill. Of all the cases twenty were double, twenty-six on the right, and thirteen on the left side. There was pleuritis sicca in two, meningitis in two. In fifteen cases there was diarrhoea. The temperature was remittent, reaching its highest point between five and twelve p. m.; and its lowest point between five and ten a. m.; it sometimes rose as high as 105.8°F. Remissions to the extent of 2.3°F were observed. In no case was the temperature continuous. Five of the fifty-nine were fatal.

MASSAGE IN PHELGMASIA ALBA DOLENS.—Kochman has employed massage with good results in this condition. He places the patient so that the leg is higher than the body. Massage is then carefully performed from the foot upwards to the thigh. In one case, where the leg was very large, the swelling went down one-third in four days, and was completely removed in twelve.—(*Allg. Med. Central-Zeitung*.)

HYDROCYANIC ACID AS AN ANTIDOTE TO STRYCHNINE POISONING.—Dr. C. H. Watts Parkinson thus writes in the *Brit. Med. Jour.*, July 28, 1883:—Some years since, it