

the method of dispersion—which really is the material point in dispute—Dr. Buchanan, sees in Mr. Power's report reason for believing that to whatever degree limitations in number of patients, and improvements in administration and in ambulance service, may have operated to reduce the danger of small-pox hospitals to their neighborhoods, these changes have had but a partial result; and a hypothesis of atmospheric convection over considerable distances is wanted, not for Fulham alone, but for London generally, in order to explain the observed behaviour of small-pox in the several districts of the metropolis. The Department claims to have established a doctrine concerning the means of small-pox spread that is applicable for the practical purposes of the inhabitants of London, and that affords to hospital authorities, if they choose to recognize it, better opportunities than they before had of preventing the unquestioned danger incurred by those who live near to small-pox hospitals.

No reference is made in the present volume to the neglect by hospital authorities of the suggestion strongly placed before the Hospital Commission of 1881, by Dr. Burdon Sanderson, that the spread of infection from a hospital could be prevented by the adoption of a system of passing the internal air of the building through a furnace, before allowing it to escape into the outer atmosphere. Dr. Sanderson took the trouble to design a circular hospital embodying his principle. It is strange, therefore, that it has been so entirely ignored by hospital authorities not only in London but elsewhere.

CHOLERA SURVEY.—A considerable portion of the inspections made during the year consisted of inquiries, in

continuation of those previously reported on, into the sanitary condition of certain classes of districts, with especial reference to their state of preparation against an invasion or spread of cholera. About one-third of the total sanitary service of England and Wales has thus come under review, and there can be no doubt that the system of inspection, with its accompanying conferences and giving of advice, was greatly appreciated by local sanitary bodies; that it conduced in valuable measure towards the attainment of a better understanding of their duty by one class of authorities, and that it served the object much cared for by another class of authorities, of placing at their disposal the experience of a Public Department.

TYPHUS FEVER.—In the winter of 1885-6 typhus fever appeared in various populous centres throughout England, and gave signs of extending. This was observed by the department, and Mr. Spear was commissioned to visit the various places in which the disease appeared. For one reason or another 67 districts came under suspicion. In the most of these, where fever was found, it proved to be the ordinary enteric fever of the country; but there were no less than 17 important centres of population in which typhus was found existing in some of them to a notable extent. As usual, its incidence was upon the most crowded and miserable localities of the various towns, sometimes the very same localities that had been the scene of lamentable outbreaks of the disease in past times.

DIPHTHERIA.—The disease which most frequently led to official inquiry during the year was diphtheria. In investigating outbreaks of this disease, the inspectors are specially instructed