DISINFECTION OF ROOMS, ETC., BY AUTANE.

One of the great objections to disinfection of rooms by formaldehyde vapour, according to Flügge's method, is that a special apparatus is necessary, and in spite of efforts to simplify the technique, it still remains rather complicated. Last year Eichengrünn made known in the *Ztsch. f. angen. Chem.*, a new product, to which he gave the name of "Autane," consisting of a mixture of peroxide of barium and strontium, with paraformol or trioxymethylene. This mixture, inert in the dry state, gives off in the presence of water, vapour of formaldehyde and water vapour. At ordinary temperatures a relatively small quantity of water gives a slow and continued disengagement of formaldehyde vapour. If tepid wated is used the vapour is disengaged much more rapidly, and is diffused at once in the atmosphere. It is a catalytic action, the alkaline peroxide in the nascent state depolymerizing the trioxymethylene into formaldehyde, which in part dissolves, and in part is disengaged in the gaseous state. The efficiency of this substance as a disinfectant has been favourably reported on by several workers, including Wesenburg, Selter, Nieter, and Tomarkin and Heller. Fornario (*Rev. d'hyg.*, Paris, XXX, 1) gives the results obtained in some experiments made by him in the Pasteur Institute, Lille. He conducted his experiments in an apartment of 60 cubic metres (over 2,000 cubic feet), which was not air-tight. He used for this room 2,400 grms. of autane powder and about 2,300 cc. of water from 20° to 25° C., in order to assure the slow development of the vapour, the process of disinfection taking seven hours. Previous observers, with the exception of Nieter, consider that complete and careful shutting up of the chinks, windows, doors, key-holes, etc., is unnecessary, but Fornario found that disinfection was much more complete when the apartment was practically hermetically closed. He also differs from them in this, that whereas they attribute to the gas generated from autane a considerable power of penetration, his experiments show that it does not penetrate, well, *i.e.*, that it is a good surface disinfectant only. The ease with which it can be employed, without special apparatus, renders its use convenient for the rapid disinfection of small apartments, conveyances, railway carriages, consulting rooms, etc. *The Edinburgh Medical Journal*, May, 1908.