

And yet how easy to remedy this state of things. By working the fan up to a high rate of speed so as to compress the air, and then letting it suddenly expand, it could be chilled to any degree desired; and the passengers, instead of being nearly roasted alive on deck, might remain below during the whole voyage, revelling in the delightful coolness of the temperate zone, while the air above and the water around them was simmering at one hundred and twenty degrees. To show that such a plan is quite practicable is made evident from the statement of the writer that he gathered a snow ball from the walls of the refrigerator, which was kept cold in that way.

It would, I think, be preferable to do with one dish or even one meal less each day for the luxury of a cool and well aired room to sleep in at night.

I have placed this matter very briefly before you, but I trust that the weight of the influence of such a learned body as the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which we are all so glad to welcome to this country, may lead to the further investigation of this important matter, so that the owners and architects of ocean steamships may recognize the evil, and devise some remedy that will lead to some improvement in the ventilation of ocean steamships.

SULPHONAL.

By H. L. REDDY, M.D., C.M., L.R.C.S.E., L.R.C.P.L.,
Professor Midwifery, Bishops' College.

Or as it is known chemically diethylsulfondime-thylmethan. It occurs in the form of large, flat, colorless crystals which are tasteless and devoid of smell. Sulphonal is soluble in 18 to 20 parts of boiling water and 1 to 100 in tepid water. It dissolves more rapidly in alcohol or alcohol mixed with ether. Acids and alkalies do not affect the composition of the body.

Within the last few years a number of new remedies have been introduced, the action of which we have been told was unlike opium, chloral, cannabis, or the bromides. Most of these drugs belong to the acetal group of compounds, they include methylæ, acetophenon (known as hypnon), urethan, parædehyd, and hydrate of anylen. Although some of these have found favor with a few of the profession none of them are really satisfactory.

Sulphonal was first prepared by Bauman, who

discovered it whilst investigating a series of bodies known as disulphones, to which it belongs. Its action (according to German authority) appears to consist merely in the intensification of those factors that lead to natural sleep in the physiological sense, or in supplying the periodical desire for sleep in those cases where it is wanting.

Sulphonal on the same authority is said to have none of the disadvantages inherent in deadly narcotics, and is more reliable than the Bromides. It does not disturb digestion, is not constipating, no unpleasant after-effects, is not likely to cause a "habit" even when employed for a long time. Schwalbe, in the *Deutsche Med. Woch.*, concludes that:—

1. Sulphonal is an agreeable medicament, being odorless and tasteless.

2. It acts as a hypnotic in cases of "nervous" sleeplessness, in doses of fifteen to thirty grains. When the insomnia is the direct result of organic disturbances due to existing disease the action is more or less uncertain.

3. Sulphonal does not affect temperature, pulse or respiration, and is to be preferred to morphine and chloral when heart failure is to be feared. It is especially to be commended for children.

4. The subjective manifestations, immediate and subsequent, are insignificant, and not a contraindication for the use of the drug.

Dr. Rabbas has used it at the Marsburg lunatic asylum, over 200 times and speaks very highly of it.

The best time to administer it would appear to be the late afternoon or early evening hours, when it is followed by 8 to 10 hours of natural sleep. The dose is from 15 to 60 grains. The hypnotic effect is observed in from ½ hour to 2 hours after its exhibition.

Women are more easily affected by it than men. It is found useful in febrile wakefulness, in the restlessness of organic heart disease and even in the delirium of dementia.

Mr. T. E. Lovegrove in the *British Medical Journal* says that his experience has been very discouraging. For several hours after the exhibition of the drug, there was no appreciable effect, but during the greater part of the following day there was extreme drowsiness and considerable cyanosis. Mr. Lovegrove finds the best vehicle for its administration is pulv. tragacanth co. and water.