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THE DISPOSAL OF HOUSE AND CLOSET
REFUSE.

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Read at the meeting of the North Eastern
Sanitary Inspection Association, Carlisle :
(From *Sanitary Record*).

The question of the disposal of house refuse having frequently come before the sanitary authorities of this country, and apparently without any unanimous conclusion having yet been arrived at, it may not be out of place briefly to review a subject which is not only important in itself, but appears always to bring out a free expression of opinion and a considerable variation of sentiment, whenever it is introduced.

Too often these discussions have been allowed to lapse into the controversy as to whether the water-carriage system of the disposal of sewage, the pail system, or some modified form of either of these was the best ; but it must not be forgotten that in cases where the sewage has been disposed of in the best form of water-carriage operations, the ashes and other refuse remain still to be dealt with.

In this paper it is proposed to touch on the question of sewage disposal to a very small degree, and only as bearing upon those classes of dwellings where the present water-carriage system is found by

experience to be scarcely suitable. The condemnation by sanitary reformers, of the old style of ashpits or middens is now universal ; but it is not so many years since it was thought the best and most approved method of disposing of refuse. Unfortunately while the workers and thinkers in sanitary science are active and anxious for the public health, the Legislature is, as usual, a long way behind. All sanitary engineers, medical officers, inspectors of nuisances, medical men generally, and all thinking and intelligent members of the community condemn the system known as the privy and ashpit ; yet the Statute Book requires that such shall be provided, and there it stands.

The first step in the right direction appeared to be an effort commenced about fifteen years ago, to so construct these ashpits as to cause the ashes to fall upon the most offensive contents, and to some extent absorb the gases. This, however, was not found to be practically effective, and moreover it assumed the principle that the accumulation of refuse for many days, and even weeks, was inevitable. This must be wrong, and any mode which favours the accumulation for more than two days should be discountenanced. Nightly removal would be better, and is by no means impracticable either on the score of expense, or for any other reason.

The first suggestion of the pail-system appeared to come from Rochdale, where