

The Committee on Disinfectants of the American Public Health Association, whose recent experiments have done much to dispel popular illusions regarding the nature and utility of the various agents of this class, define a disinfectant to be *an agent capable of destroying the infective power of infectious material.*

Thus, the term disinfectant signifies a germicide, a germ-killer.

Popularly, the destruction of bad odors or the arrest of putrefaction is wrongly supposed to constitute disinfection, and any agent which neutralizes or disguises the odors arising from putrefying material is regarded as a disinfectant.

DEFINITION OF DEODORANT.

In reality, however, agents which simply mask unpleasant odors should properly be called deodorants or deodorizers, and, while they serve an admirable purpose, their purpose is not the *destruction* of disease germs.

DEFINITION OF ANTISEPTIC.

So, also, agents which have the power to arrest the process of putrefaction, although their value in the economy of health and the prevention of disease is unquestioned, are properly termed antiseptics, and should not be regarded as disinfectants.

Dr. Geo. M. Sternberg, who has lately published some interesting articles on this subject embodying practical deductions drawn from recent experiments, very pertinently states in this connection that "a disinfectant may be both a deodorant and antiseptic, but it is not for this reason a disinfectant, but because of its ability to neutralize the infecting power of infectious material. Such material is given off from the bodies of patients suffering from small-pox or scarlet fever; it is contained in the alvine discharges of typhoid fever and cholera patients; it is present in the sputa of those suffering from tuberculosis, diphtheria, etc."