

# Medical News.

## DISINFECTANTS.

M. Gille has published in the *Archives Medicales Belges*, an interesting article "On the value of a Disinfectant," in which he says we must not only get rid of offensive smells, but of all other products of decomposition, and that any substance which only effects one of these ends, is a very imperfect disinfectant. He then passes in review some of the disinfectants in common use. Sulphate of iron he considers is useful from its effect of decomposing ammonia, carbonate, and sulphohydrate. Perchloride of iron, besides this, precipitates albuminoid matters, and acts also by its chlorine. Lime disinfects organic matters, fixing carbonic acid and sulphuretted hydrogen, and decomposing hydrosulphate of ammonia. The permanganate of potass. is a most energetic oxidizing agent, decomposing sulphuretted hydrogen, destroying organic matter, and acting upon all fixed compounds with which it comes in contact.

It may be remembered that M. Decaisne employed it in dissecting rooms, but that M. Gosselin, in 1864, reported that it was not adapted for this purpose. Chlorate of potassi may be used to disengage chlorine in places that are not easy to reach by other means. This is a capital plan for cesspools and middens.

Chloride of lime acts by the chlorine it sets free, and chemically decomposes most foul gases. M. Decaisne considers it the best disinfectant of offensive gases. Does it also, mixed with metallic oxides, act by disengaging oxygen as has been asserted? M. Gille doubts this. He also observes that, although chloride of lime destroys offensive gases, it does not arrest putrefaction, but by the lime set free, hastens the process.

Hydrochloric acid is employed to disinfect dog-kennels. Vessels containing it left open, completely destroys the offensive gases that abound where a large number of dogs are kept. This plan is adopted in the Veterinary School of Brussels.

The action of carbolic acid, M. Gille says, is not chemical. He accepts what is commonly called the germ theory, inasmuch as he says the acid prevents germs from provoking putrefaction. He also thinks it will hinder the formation of miasms, and is, therefore, a good preventive of epidemics. It is thus to be seen that all the disinfectants are good, but that they should be used with discernment, a selection being made according to the products we wish to get rid of.