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Selections

USES AND LIMITATIONS OF FORMALDEHYD IN DENTISTRY.*

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Twenty years after its discovery formaldehyd was still *almost* an unknown quantity to the average pharmacist. Truth-hunters for truth's sake, reporting their findings at infrequent intervals, averred its undoubted and surpassing virtue, until at length sufficient interest was finally awakened to challenge a general investigation. Then, all at once, the unthinking many began to herald numerous doubtful and ofttimes most manifestly impossible achievements.

Such unwarranted hue and cry of the faddists and empiricists resulted shortly in the usual "black eye" being administered to the new-found remedy.

What wonder that "doubting Thomases" should logically have their innings when "Through a stone floor," "To the centre of mattresses," "Penetrating innumerable thicknesses of pillow-slips and blankets," are but fairly average samples of the bill-board announcements indiscriminately published in many of the more reckless so-called scientific journals.

"Innocuous to man, but sure death to 'bugs.' Hail! to formaldehyd, the new germ-destroyer."

Following in contrast is the gospel the anti-formaldehydists preach:

"At best formaldehyd is but a surface disinfectant, and not always sure at that."

"A pure atmosphere of it will invariably kill a cat."

"It is innocuous to man only because *he* cannot abide in it long enough to die decently."

* Read before the Annual Convention of the Seventh and Eighth District Dental Societies of the State of New York, October 25th, 1899.