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## THE SHORTCOMINGS OF SOME MODERN SANITARY METHODS.

AT the meeting of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain last month (July 14, '87), the annual address delivered by C. V. Poore, M.D., F. R., C. P., etc., on "the Shortcomings of some Modern Sanitary Methods," was, as the British Medical Journal says, "as might have been anticipated, one of scientific interest and great practical value on important matters connected with modern sanitation. It was an attack on the practice of mixing putrescible matter with water, or, in other words, on the method of dealing with excrement by means of water-carriage."

From almost the first number of this JOURNAL we have expressed views strongly in favor of the earth system, similar to those now so ably given by Dr. Poore, and we are much pleased to find one so eminent taking such a strong position before the Institute, as it can hardly fail to operate, and in no small degree, against the present vile system of river pollution. In future numbers we purpose giving extracts from the address as published in the Sanitary Record for July; meantime we give the following abstract from the British Medical Journal of July 23:

Dr. Poore pointed out that recent investigations had shown that the decomposition of organic matter depended upon the growth of microbes. When organic matter was buried not too deeply in the soil the microbes were of a kind which caused oxidation

and nitrification, and prepared the organic matters for absorption by the roots of plants. When mixed with water the microbes produced were different, and those offensive changes were caused which were known as putrefactive, and ammonia and carburetted hydrogen were formed, and oxidation prevented. The mixing with water prevented and delayed the only natural use of organic refuse—namely, that of forming food for plants. The practice, therefore, was antagonistic to natural law. The mixing of organic refuse with water in cesspools and sewers caused putrefaction, and these putrefactive changes, repellent to our senses, were acknowledged causes of disease.

Dr. Poore further called attention to the fact that many zymotic diseases had been shown to depend upon living organic particles, which possibly multiplied in putrefying liquids, and most certainly were disseminated in the most perfect manner when organic matter containing them was mixed with water and allowed to flow to rivers or wells. No method of "sewage treatment" could, he said, be considered as reliable for the removing or rendering innocuous of zymotic organisms. The practice of mixing with water involved a neglect of the great principle of "resisting the beginnings," and as an illustration of this the lecturer alluded to the cholera epidemic of 1866, when the excrement