

supplies of Toronto, the packed soil of the roadways might, in some instances, prevent underground water flowing in its more natural course toward the bay, and force it back into the nearest well. In the discussion which followed the lecture here referred to, the question was asked, can water flow or percolate as it were up hill? There can not be a doubt that water, after dissolving, and loading itself with, organic impurities at some cesspool or privy vault, may percolate into a well the mouth of which at the surface of the ground is higher than the surface at the cesspool or vault. Some think the wise precaution of 'banking up' around the mouth of a well prevents the entrance of foul water; entirely ignoring possible underground currents, probably of too free a nature to permit of much benefit from the filtering process in the soil.

It is to be hoped that some measures may soon be adopted for preventing the use of the water of wells, especially in the more densely populated parts of cities, and especially of this the metropolis of Ontario. If such measures were adopted, and also adopted the Goux or Rochdale system of disposal of excrement, the sickness and death-rate would be so reduced as to save probably twice the cost of carrying out the measures.

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NOTES AND EXTRACTS ON DISINFECTION.

RECENT PAPERS BY MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS ON THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF DISINFECTION.

The subject of disinfection is not very well understood by the people generally. It must be distinctly understood and remembered that disinfectants are merely *aids* in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and they must not be relied on too far. As commonly practiced, aerial disinfection in sick rooms is of little use, and indeed may lead to much harm on account of the false feeling of security to which it may give rise. Abundance of fresh air is perhaps the best disinfectant. Dr. Kelly, Medical Officer of Health, W. Sussex says the best are the ancient elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

At a recent meeting (April 20, 1877) of the Association of Medical Officers of Health, Great Britain, two interesting papers were read on this subject of which we give below a synopsis: from the *Medical Times & Gazette*, May 12, 1877:

ON SOME THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF DISINFECTION, Dr. E. B. Baxter read a paper. He said:—Authors still employ the term "disinfection" to denote three fundamental dissimilar operations—viz., the destruction of specific contagia, the arrest of putrefaction, and the neutralization of gaseous effluvia from organic matters in a state of decomposition, which are often offensive to the sense of smell, and always injurious to health. The term "disinfectant" should be restricted to "agents capable of so modifying the contagium of a communicable disease, during its transit from a sick to a healthy indivi-