

In Quebec, Dr. Painchaud, sen.,* of the Marine and Emigrant Hospital, wrote out an excellent plan for testing the comparative deodorizing powers of the Burnett and Ledoyen fluids, by which the judges were to give their opinions, unconscious of whose fluid it was, in favour of which they were voting. The result of this trial† was in favour of the Burnett fluid, and it afforded no little amusement to the other umpires, and caused no small vexation to himself, that Mr. Ledoyen's zealous and enthusiastic colleague was found to have voted (of course, unconsciously) against *their* fluid: Mr. Ledoyen himself conducted his own part of the trial, while I experimented with the other fluid, and neither of us voted.

Pereira,‡ after enumerating the various medicinal and the poisonous effects of the preparations of lead, describes each preparation separately, and of the nitrate of lead, he observes, that "its general effects are similar to those of the other soluble salts of lead."

A non-professional reader glancing at these pages might think that, as he has heard of lead preparations being employed as internal medicines, Ledoyen's solution cannot be very objectionable; but he may be informed that, when a lead preparation is prescribed internally, it is in small doses, in some diseased state, such as internal hæmorrhage, &c., where a sedative and astringent remedy is peculiarly suitable; where its effect is daily watched by the medical attendant, and new directions, if necessary, given for its use, and where also it is combined with opium, or some other medicine, to prevent its producing its objectionable effects, which, however, sometimes appear, notwithstanding all possible precautions.

Far different, however, is the method which the proprietors of Ledoyen's fluid recommend for using their solution of the nitrate of lead; they think that it ought to be used indiscriminately, and without any precautions, by the public generally; nor would it be a sufficient defence of its use, to say that the nitrate of lead, acting on the ammonia in the feculent matter or in the air, and so becoming nitrate of ammonia, would prevent any bad consequences: as any remaining nitrate of lead not decomposed by the ammonia, might go on to produce one or other of its poisonous effects.

While Mr. Ledoyen's fluid is so objectionable, on account of being a solution of a poisonous salt, Sir Wm. Burnett's fluid, the solution of the chloride of zinc, is formed of a base which is perfectly innocuous. Wood & Bache§ say of the chloride of zinc, that "it has the advantage of not giving rise to constitutional disorder from absorption." In conclusion, there appear to be just grounds for stating that the general use of Ledoyen's fluid is unsafe, and that if employed by the public indis-

criminately, it, most likely, would very frequently do much harm.

Next to perfect ventilation, I would place the use of Sir Wm. Burnett's solution of the chloride of zinc, which, for improving the quality of vitiated air, is greatly superior to all the other artificial methods of doing so, including Mr. Ledoyen's solution of the nitrate of lead.

1, Hanover Street, Montreal, 15th May, 1848.

SIR WILLIAM BURNETT'S DISINFECTING FLUID—MODE OF APPLICATION.

One Part Fluid to 40 Parts Water.

To Purify Sick Rooms and the Wards of Hospitals, Work-houses, Prisons, Factories, and Crowded Places, the between decks of Ships, &c.—Moisten, with the diluted solution, a piece of flannel-cloth, attached to a long rod, and wave it through the air of the apartment for ten minutes at a time—in addition to which, the floor should be mopped or sprinkled over with the same, if necessary, several times a day, and a small quantity of the same dilute solution should be put into the close-stools and bed-pans. The Water-closets should also be cleansed with it, and a couple of gallons occasionally thrown down each. N. B. For use on board ships, between decks, and in places where, from imperfect means of ventilation, it may be inconvenient to wet the floors.—Moisten with the diluted solution thick pieces of flannel cloth—the thicker the better—and wave them through the air of the apartments for ten minutes; and then suspend them in the most convenient manner to the deck-beams, or across the rooms; and keep other similar pieces of cloth; thoroughly and repeatedly saturated with the same solution, in flat dishes upon the floors.—It is essentially necessary that the Bilgewater in the hold of the vessel should be purified agreeably to the instructions given below.

To purify Fever Wards, in cases of death.—When a patient dies of fever, the body should be sponged over with the dilute solution, and the clothes and bedding should be immersed and kept in a sufficient quantity of it, for forty-eight hours, before being washed. The floor should be well mopped over with the solution. Flannel, moistened with it (as before recommended), should be waved through the room.

To purify the Clothes, Linen, &c., of sick persons.—Immerse the articles in the dilute solution, as directed in sick rooms.

To prevent the communication of Infectious Disease.—Sprinkle the dilute solution over the whole of the floor of the apartment, and very slightly on the coverlid of the patient's bed. The clothes used should be immersed in the solution, and afterwards thoroughly dried. Moisten pieces of flannel cloth, and use them as directed above.

To purify the odour of Night-chairs.—Put half a pint of the dilute solution into the pan previous to its use, and when emptied, rinse it out with a small quantity.

To disinfect Dead Bodies, and purify Apartments preparatory to the visits of Searchers, Undertakers, and Jurymen, and in cases of Post-mortem Examination.—Wash the body occasionally with the dilute solution, which will remove all unpleasant smell, and retard putrefaction.

To prepare, and arrest the decomposition of, Subjects for Dissection.—Immerse the subject in the dilute solution, and let it remain about two hours; after which time it will be purified. As the dissection proceeds, the parts should be sponged over with the same; and, if they are to be preserved, the blood-vessels should also be injected with the solution.

One Part Fluid to 20 Parts Water.

To disinfect Cesspools, Drains, Water-closets, &c.—Pour in a quantity of the solution in proportion to the capacity of the receptacle. For ordinary water-closets, one gallon of the dilute solution will generally be effectual. For large cesspools the quantity must be increased in proportion to their contents.

To purify Stables.—Sprinkle the floor, and wash all the wood-work, with the dilute solution.

To sweeten Musty Casks, Tubs, &c.—Rinse them well with the dilute solution.

To destroy Canker and Fungus in Trees.—Apply the solution carefully with a brush, to the parts affected only.

* Whom I take this opportunity of thanking, for the obliging disposition he showed while I was making trials of the fluid in the Hospital.

† Detailed in the *Montreal Courier* of 20th October, and other papers; and in the *London Medical Gazette* of 26th November, and *Dublin Medical Press* of 8th December. One or two periodicals erroneously supposed that the judges in this trial considered they were experimenting on something more than the deodorizing properties of the fluids.

‡ *Materia Medica*, Lond., 1842, p. 805.

§ *United States Dispensary*, 1847, p. 1215.