

DISINFECTION.

That well known Sanitarian, Mr. A. Winter Blyth, medical officer of health for Marylebone, Eng., in a criticism on the exhibits of disinfectants at the health exhibition, after referring at considerable length to the different disinfectants in common use, concluded a lengthy address with the following practical remarks on disinfection in general:

A practical study of the question of disinfection has profoundly altered my views, and I have an honest conviction that most of the disinfection by *chemical agencies*, as commonly practised, is worse than none. The reliance that even medical men of repute, still more the laity, place on a sheet wet with a little permanganate hung up before the sick room door, or on a feeble atmosphere of phenol, or a tablespoonful of Burnet's fluid to destroy things, the resistant nature of which is pretty well proved by their persistence, is astonishing. I question whether three horseshoes nailed over the lintel, by which some country folk keep the devil away, would not avail as much.

Specific excreta should be treated with the strongest chemical agencies. They may for instance be cast into the undiluted crude carbolic acid of commerce, which contains from 25 to 50 per cent. of real acids, and there digested for at least *two hours* before being thrown into the common sewer.

House drains in the presence of zymotic disease should not be intermittently but continuously disinfected, so that the walls of the pipes be ever moistened with a disinfectant.

A non poisonous disinfectant is certain to be useless as a germicide. It stands not in reason, that a fluid harmless to mammals, rodents, and reptiles will be destructive of forms of life, some of which withstand a short exposure to the heat of boiling water.

Rampant rides the quack in the fields both of preventive and remedial art. Quackery takes a well known common

powder, labels it with a grand mystic name, selling bright copper at the price of gold. Quackery finds a stink outstinking feebler stinks, and gives it forth as a disinfectant. Of all the substances gathered together under the name of disinfectants—solids, vapours, gases and odours—a small percentage alone possess any value.

Heat, chlorine, phenol, and corrosive sublimate are the sole practicable agents in which I put my trust as germicides, but to have due effect these must be used in a concentrated form, and for a prolonged period. To receive specific excreta in a five per cent. solution of carbolic acid, and then after a few minutes' interval to cast the substances so treated into drains or cesspits, is not likely to afford safety; for the disinfectant will be immediately diluted a thousand or million fold, and cease to inhibit pathogenic activity. The aim of the disinfectant must be not to "scotch," but to kill, and this destruction should take place at the bedside of the patient; on the birth, as it were, of the fever egg.

STORY OF LIEUT. GREELY'S RECOVERY.

The story of Lieutenant Greeley's recovery after his rescue from Cape Sabine is given by Assist. Surg. Green, U. S. N., in the *Medical Record*. The cases of Greeley's six fellow survivors were very similar. The condition of all was so desperate that much delay in the camp was necessary before they could be removed to the vessels. Brandy, milk, and beef essence were administered.

Lieutenant Greeley's disease is called asthenia, a diminution of the vital forces. Greeley fainted after being carried to the wardroom of the Thetis. When he received a teaspoonful of minced raw fresh beef was given. His clothes were carefully cut off and warmed, heavy red flannels substituted. "He was excessively emaciated, and his body emitted an offensive odor. His skin hung from his limbs in flaps. His face, hands, and scalp were black with a thick crust of soot and dirt. He had not washed himself nor changed his clothing for ten months. He