

## Miscellaneous.

### Privies and Water Closets.

To the Editor.

SIR,—I detest bad smells, and fully believe that half the cases of cholera and dysentery are propagated by privies and water-closets. As one of a prudent class of people, I always use a disinfectant, such as chloride of lime, burnt peas or coffee, or the usual preparation of carbolic acid; but it is impossible to convince the majority of people of the necessity for any such thing. They naturally enough reason thus: "I never have used anything of the kind, and we are all well enough, except a case or two last summer, and that was attributed to this, that, or the other cause." I am quite convinced that half the fevers are taken from insufficient accommodation in this way, especially scarlet fever, which we all know is most prevalent in the winter season, when, from other causes, the system seems most likely to be in the right state to receive infection.

With children, where water-closets do not exist in the house, and from bad weather or other causes it is inconvenient for them to be taken out, all offence can be avoided by a jar of chlorine water, made with half a pound of chloride of lime put into, say, two gallons of water, well stirred up in the jar, and half a pint used each time as occasion requires. This will prove a most excellent disinfectant, and great comfort, and the cost is but five cents.

To obviate all offensive smell from the privies, I have adopted the following plan with complete success. Construct a trunk, or square pipe, carefully planed and smoothed inside, about 12 by 5 inches across, and of sufficient length to reach from the underside of the seat to within about six inches of the bottom of the pit. The trunk should not be tapering. It should be attached, air-tight, to the underside of the seat, the joints of which must also be tongued and grooved. The top of the pit must be boarded over with double-sheet flooring, and all egress or escape of air carefully guarded against. The cause of smell from the pit is simply circulation of air—not at all requisite so far as keeping the place free from bad smell is concerned—and the entire absence of any circulation whatever will render the trunk perfectly unobjectionable so far as smell is concerned. At the back and outside I have a common wooden pump, arranged with spout and handle, so that I can at stated intervals (as when the vines in the garden require manure), pump out the contents of the pit into pails, and by being careful, there is nothing more offensive than a smell for half-an-hour during the operation. If a stoppage in the trunk should occur, a few pails of water and a piece of plank, a little smaller than the trunk, with a long handle inserted into a hole in the centre, will form an excellent plunger

to force all obstructions down. But my experience goes to show that once a year only it may be requisite to use it, and about the same time the pit may require emptying. I use an ordinary 200 gallon puncheon, and a small square hole through the double floor, fitted with cover, air-tight, and easily raised, will afford easy means of access to stir up the contents with the aforesaid plunger when pumping it out.

When we consider the number of times each member of a family is offended during the year, and exposed to the infection arising from the dreadfully foul gases generated under the usual arrangement, not to mention the bad odour attached to the clothes, we cannot wonder if infections of all kinds are communicated. With the trunk there is no circulation, and the bad gases are not perceptible, and, besides, a continued sinking takes place as soon as the pressure of the column of water overcomes the resistance, and the stop emptied remaining on the surface effectually act as a stench trap.

Advocates of the dry earth system may condemn this plan, but I would say in its favour that it needs no attention, is always in order, and readily cleaned out; whereas, the dry earth system, although, of course, quite right in principle, fails with the million for want of the necessary buildings constructed for its use, and without them and plenty of dry earth, the plan must fail. And I just want to ask the advocates of the dried earth system where people in cities are to get dried earth and a privy constructed to use it, with the means of constant supply and removal, and all this in an ordinary rented house, without, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, any man servant to do the work, which must be done every week. Besides, few men employed as house-servants can be got to do this kind of thing, whereas, once a year people regularly appointed for the purpose are easily obtainable. Either plan in the country will, of course, do, but we all know that the plan which wants least attendance in the country will always be most popular.

C.

### Remarkable Oaks.

To the Editor.

SIR,—In a recent issue of your journal, I saw a short notice of some venerable oaks growing in Welbeck Park, Notts., England, the seat of the Duke of Portland. Being well acquainted with that park and the neighbourhood, I am induced to give you a few more particulars respecting those celebrated "Monarchs of the Forest." The Duke's Walking-stick was 111 feet 6 inches high, the trunk rising to the height of 70 feet 6 inches before it formed a head. The circumference of the trunk at the ground was 21 feet, and at 3 feet high was 14 feet. The Two Porters are so called from having a gateway between them, the roadway leading from Welbeck Abbey to the Village of Whic-

well. The height of the Large Porter in 1790 was 98 feet 3 inches, but it is now only 75 feet. The circumference of the trunk at the ground, 38 feet. The Little Porter in 1790 was 88 feet high, but now only 74 feet; the circumference at the ground is 33 feet. Another, called the Seven Sisters, from its having anciently had seven trunks issuing from one stool, about 4 feet from the ground. I and three others have stood quite comfortably within the space enclosed by the seven trunks. The tallest of them measured 83 feet 7 inches, the others being nearly of the same height. The Game Keeper's Tree is quite hollow, and remarkable for having, notwithstanding, a flourishing and vigorous head. In this tree the game-keeper secretes himself when he shoots the deer. On the inside is cut the date 1711. The Greendale Oak has long been a very celebrated tree. In 1724 a roadway was cut through its venerable trunk sufficiently capacious to permit a carriage and four horses to pass through it. The height of the archway is 10 feet 3 inches, the width of it 6 feet 3 inches, circumference of the trunk above the arch 35 feet 3 inches. There is only one living branch, which is 51 feet in height. Acorns from off this tree have been sent to numerous places in the kingdom. Its age is computed to be upwards of 900 years. But the Parliament Oak is considered to be the most ancient tree, it being calculated to be upwards of 1,100 years old. The Parliament Oak stands in Clipston Park, and derives its name from a Parliament having been held under it by Edward I. in 1290. Clipston Park, about six miles from Welbeck, is also the property of the Duke of Portland, and is supposed to be the oldest park in England, having been a park before the conquest. Both John and Edward I. resided, and kept a court in Clipston Palace, some of the ruins of which are now remaining.

The Shire Oak, near Worksop, had a head 90 feet in diameter, which extended into three counties, York, Nottingham, and Derby, and dripped over 777 square yards.

JOHN MOSELY.

In cold northern countries, by a wise provision of nature, the mountains are clad in "firs."

Agriculture, being a science as well as an art, requires an educated head and an educated hand. Singly they can do little, conjointly everything.

CARE OF HARNESS—It has been ascertained that the ammonia which is evolved from stable manure has a very injurious effect upon leather, causing it to crack and rot after being for some time exposed to its effects. It is, therefore, a bad practice to keep saddles or harness in the stable. They should be kept in a separate room, from which the fumes of stable manure should be carefully excluded. This room should be provided with saddle and harness racks, shelves for buckets, and other stable furniture.