

of silver, lead, or sulphate of iron—is successful in the result but dangerous for employment.

CAUSES OF PUTREFACTION AND FERMENTATION.

The *Popular Science Monthly* says:—A year or two ago, Dr. J. Dougall, of Glasgow, at the Social Science Congress, held in that city, announced, as the result of investigations made by himself, that the presence of an alkali determines putrefaction in organic matter, while the presence of an acid determines fermentative changes. The same line of inquiry has been taken up since by Dr. John Day, of Victoria, Australia, who finds in Dougall's discovery an explanation of the presence in hospitals of septic poisons, giving rise to pyæmia, erysipelas, and puerperal fever. The *Sanitary Journal*, of Toronto, has a paper by Dr. Day upon this subject, the purport of which may be briefly stated as follows: Hospitals, as usually constructed, have alkaline ceilings, alkaline walls, alkaline floors (owing to the use of soap in cleansing them). Experience has shown that pyæmia is of extremely infrequent occurrence in temporary hospitals consisting of rough wooden sheds. The incessant generation of peroxide of hydrogen by the turpentine of the wood doubtless prevents putrefactive changes, but, as turpentine always gives an acid reaction, this circumstance must greatly increase the disinfecting power of the peroxide, by determining the fermentative instead of the putrefactive decomposition of the pus-cells and other organic matter given off from the patient. Dr. Day proposes the following method of counteracting the evils of hospital life: The boards of the floor he would first cover with a coat consisting of equal parts of gasoline and boiled linseed-oil, to which is added a little benzoic acid. When dry, the surface is polished with a paste of beeswax, turpentine, and benzoic acid. Boards so prepared are, in his opinion, rendered permanently disinfectant. The walls and ceilings might be rubbed smooth, and coated with a varnish of paraffine or oil of turpentine; or, better still, they might be coated with silicate paint, then rubbed down and varnished. For the purpose of keeping the air pure, and destroying the pus-cells floating in it, he recommends, in addition to ventilation, the use of certain volatile substances, such as gasoline, benzine, and eucalyptus oil. The furniture should be occasionally

brushed over with either gasoline or benzine, in which a little benzoic acid has been dissolved.

ARTIFICIAL TOBACCO

According to the *Scientific American*, artificial tobacco leaves are now being produced in New York for the manufacture of Havana cigars. The material used is a kind of brown wrapping-paper, made especially for the purpose. This paper is saturated with the juice pressed from tobacco stems and other offal, and then rolled through a machine which gives them the appearance of the tobacco leaf, with the peculiar spots printed on them as on calico. The paper thus prepared is especially adapted for the wrappers around the cigars, and for that purpose is even preferred by the Havana cigar makers to the genuine leaf, and they import it largely from New York. According to our authority as much as 30,000 reams of this artificial tobacco leaf have been occasionally exported. It is further stated that this tobacco-flavoured straw paper makes also a filling superior to the genuine leaf, and that the paper leaves no residuum other than a pure light grey or nearly white ash, just like that of the best quality of tobacco.

BI-CARBONATE OF SODA IN SUPPRESSION OF URINE.

Dr. Wilson of Clay Cross writes, in the *British Medical Journal* of the 22nd of July last, that he has applied the following plan with marked success in the treatment of suppression of urine. He says:—"I allude to cases of complete suppression, with general dropsy, coma and convulsions. Here an enema of half an ounce of acetate of potash in from one to two quarts of warm water, poultices (linseed or digitalis) to the loins, cold to the head and sinapisms to the leg. Where there is much irritability of stomach in acute desquamative nephritis, this alkaline enema is a valuable adjunct to treatment."

The Philadelphia correspondent of the *Boston Medical Journal* says the attendance at the Jefferson and the University Medical Schools in that city is larger than ever before. He accounts for the increase in spite of the hard times, by saying that most likely they reason thus: "There is nothing else to do, let's be doctors." He says, "you may have heard the story of Sir Walter Scott's colloquy with a grave, sagacious-looking doctor, attired in black,