

at present able to say. From the first, I have been strongly of opinion that methods which permitted of all the articles in the sick room being disinfected without the necessity of removal was very desirable for localities unprovided with larger disinfecting plants and staffs, and that even in cities, economy might be effected by thus doing away with transportation.

With regard to disinfecting solutions, my favourite one is formalin used by means of a pump or spray, as suggested by A. C. Abbott. A $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 per cent. solution seems sufficient, and the cost of this, though more than that of 1-1000 sublimate, is only about two cents per gallon. The pump used costs a few shillings, and weighs but a few ounces, but apparently answers just as well as the heavy and expensive Equifex sprays sold for the purpose. The public need clearer ideas of the "effective cost" of different disinfectant solutions—that is to say the cost of a given quantity of solution of effective strength. I think that the adoption of a uniform standard, say, that sufficient to destroy *staphylococcus aureus* in five minutes would be a convenient strength for house disinfection. The effective cost of several disinfectants is about as follows, when used in amounts generally required for private disinfection:

Carbolic acid, 1-30, costs 7 cents per litre.

Sublimate, 1-1000, costs $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per litre.

Formaldehyde, 40 per cent. strength, 1-200, costs $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per litre.¹

Few realise the waste of money involved in the use of carbolic acid. The cheaper grades sold as carbolic acid contain practically no phenol at all. Other things being equal, I think that preference should be given to substances which are not poisonous. I need not here go into the matter of formalin vapour for treating goods liable to be injured by steam or disinfecting solutions further than to say that it is a most satisfactory agent for this work for which we previously had no reliable method. Whether the dust in the walls and cracks are absolutely sterilised or not by fumigation, most sanitarians will agree that the average fumigation suffices to remove the danger of infection from exposed surfaces, as far as can be judged from epidemiological evidence.

NOTE.

¹ Recent reports seem to show that the very conservative estimate of the effective strength assigned to formaldehyde is too low. Thus Le Dentu (*Sem. Méd.*, 1897, p. 315) stated that instead of the 40 per cent. commercial solution being one-fifth as effective as the same weight of sublimate it is really twice as effective in equal quantities. This, if true, would raise the effective strength of formalin and formol to tenfold what is represented in the table.