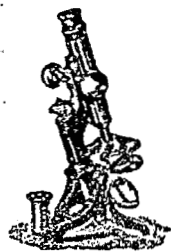


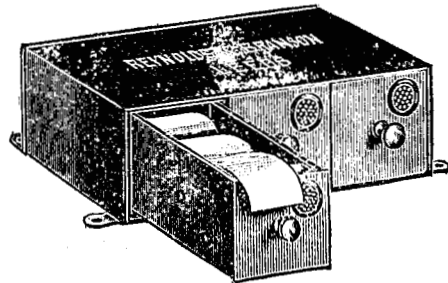
Medical Matters.

DUST PROOF.



THE discovery of the fact that dust is germ laden and that dirt means disease may be said to have been the starting point of the modern antiseptic system. It caused Lister to search for drugs which would kill the germs, and so prevent the infection of wounds, and the blood poisoning which thirty years ago, and for centuries before that, ravaged our Hospitals. The next and logical consequence was that other surgeons went a step further and strove to prevent the germs instead of killing them. And so the two great schools of modern surgeons came into existence; the one which pinned its faith to germicides and the destruction of bacteria, the other which made cleanliness its great creed, and which demanded boiling water and soap, not corrosive sublimate—fresh air and not the carbolic spray. For a time, the magnificent results achieved by the antiseptic system, the unheard-of successes in old operations and the brilliant recoveries after surgical procedures, previously regarded as heroic if not unjustifiable, made the former school triumphant. But gradually the great truth made itself felt that, after all, antisepticism was only cleanliness in desperation, and then germicides began to take their proper place. Now every abdominal surgeon sees that his sutures, dressings and instruments are sterilised, and that he, his assistants and his patient are scrupulously clean; and then he feels rather more comfortable without poisonous germicides than with them, and feels more confident in the recovery of his patient than he did in the most palmy days of antiseptic precautions. One of the greatest difficulties of the present day is how to preserve dressings, bandages and so forth from infection. It is almost impossible to make or keep tins or other usual receptacles air proof, and wherever air enters, there germ-laden dust finds its way. Then, again, a constant disadvantage of ordinary receptacles is that however carefully made these may be, if through carelessness or ignorance they are not kept perfectly closed, their contents are exposed to the air, and, however carefully prepared, will thus be speedily rendered use-

less. One of the most ingenious and valuable inventions therefore which we have seen for some time consists of a dust-proof self-closing drawer, made by Messrs. Reynolds and



Branson, of Leeds. As the illustration shows, this is extremely compact; the drawer fits tightly and has in front a small opening, the back of which is packed with an antiseptic filtering medium, so that any air which gets into the drawer is purified. By means of a handle the drawer can be pulled out, but, on removing the hand, the drawer immediately closes itself. The invention is a most valuable and practical one, and should be widely adopted by all surgeons and Nurses.

THORN PRICKS.

A SWISS physician has recently told a story which goes far to explain the popular belief that a prick from a blackthorn is more dangerous than a similar scratch from other prickles. He observed that a butcher bird, after killing and eating a number of insects, began to catch and carry others to a certain spot, and on going there he found that the bird had impaled his victims on a blackthorn and that they were vainly attempting to escape; the thorn, in fact being used by the bird as his larder. It is a well-known fact in natural history that this is the ordinary habit of the shrike, and it is therefore easily comprehensible that if the insects are left to decay on the thorn it must be thereby rendered septic, and that a scratch penetrating the skin and conveying such decomposing matter, would probably cause unhealthy suppuration at the seat of the puncture.

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