

Medical Matters.

DISINFECTION IN THE FRENCH NAVY.

The *Lancet* states that a recently issued order on disinfection in the French navy is published in a French contemporary. A disinfecting department is to be set up in the grounds of the naval hospital at each of the great naval ports, and is to be under the direction of the medical officer in charge of the bacteriological laboratory, who will have with him for this work three sick-berth stewards and four assistants, and additional men as may be thought necessary by the principal medical officer. The disinfecting station is to be surrounded by a wall, and divided by another wall into two sections—one the infected, the other the disinfected section—each with its own gate and its own separate staff. On the infected side will be a shed for the ambulances and for the carts which bring in infected matters, the boiler-room, the workshop for the necessary artificers, a small destructor, cloak-room for its own staff, baths, dressing-rooms, and water-closets, tanks for soaking and disinfecting soiled linen, and the steam and formalin disinfectors. There is to be no communication between the sections, and the bags and hampers in which the clothes for disinfection arrive are to be passed through the disinfectors to the disinfected side where they are stored. The disinfected side will be somewhat similar, but only the extreme ends of the disinfectors will project into it. There will be cloak-room, baths, and lavatory accommodation for its staff, an office for examining and checking the disinfected matters before they are sent back, and for noting any damages that may have occurred. Stores will be kept here for the portable disinfector, sprayer, and other apparatus, and for disinfectants. The destructor will deal with rubbish, with dead animals, and other laboratory dejecta, and especially with the combustible sputum containers which are recommended. Lessons and practical demonstrations in disinfection are to be given to the sick-berth staff when under instruction; they are to be warned of the poisonous nature of the disinfectants used, and the medical officer in charge is responsible for any accidents that may occur. Each man of the disinfecting staff is supplied with a sterilised outfit, cap, blouse, trousers, boots, and gloves. All offices are to be disinfected once a year at convenient times, but any office in which a tuberculous employee has been working will be thoroughly disinfected and cleaned at once, the completeness of the disinfection to be tested by laboratory controls. Workshops are

to be periodically vacuum-cleaned and disinfected. Ships are to be disinfected when required, during their general refit in the dockyard if this can be arranged, and no ship is to be recommissioned without a general disinfection. The explosives will be removed, exposed metal surfaces thickly coated with vaseline, the men sent to barracks on land, and the ship filled with 10 per cent. sulphurous acid gas, which must be well humidified, ventilation being re-established after 12 hours. The ship is allowed to air itself for several days, and is then further disinfected with formalin: $7\frac{1}{2}$ c.c. of 40 per cent. formalin solution and $32\frac{1}{2}$ c.c. water are vaporised into each compartment for each cubic metre of space and left there for seven hours before again opening it up. Or formalin spray may be employed, 12 c.c. of the 40 per cent. solution to each cubic metre but diluted with 488 c.c. of water. The bedding is to be sent to the disinfector, and it may be added that all hammock bedding is to be put through a disinfector twice a year. The bilges are to be disinfected with chloride of lime (1 in 1212 of water and filtered). If a ship has been sunk and refloated, 50 per cent. sulphate of iron solution is to be used as a deodorant. Officers' cabins are to be disinfected and cleaned, and the bedding disinfected on every change of occupancy. The water-closets are disinfected habitually by electrolysed sea water (as used by Mr. F. W. Alexander, medical officer of health of Poplar, and described in the *Lancet* of March 24th, 1906). Crude paraffin is used in latrines and urinals ashore for destroying flies and larvæ. The steam disinfectors now on board ships are to be replaced, as the ships come in for refit, by formalin disinfectors, closed tanks in which 50 c.c. of the 40 per cent. solution are used per cubic metre. These are heated by resistance coils fitted inside them and disinfection is complete in two hours.

The cleaning of water tanks is to be supervised by a medical officer, who will examine the men to see they have nothing the matter with them; they will then have a bath and put on clean suits and aseptic sabots before entering the tanks to chip and scrape them. After all solid matters have been removed the tanks will be flamed round inside with a painter's lamp or be steamed, and then they will be lined with cement. The supply system of pipes will be washed out with a solution of permanganate of potassium. Voice pipes are to be sterilised by steam. The official order on disinfection is long and fully detailed. If it is thoroughly observed in the spirit as well as the letter much good should follow.

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