

## DISINFECTION.

From time to time in asylum practice it is found necessary to disinfect apartments, and as knowledge of disease increases the more attention is paid to the various chemical substances offered for that purpose. Perhaps the most popular and efficient is formalin, which has also been found very serviceable in the pathological department. Steam at low pressure has been declared effective for articles of clothing, etc., and can readily be applied at most institutions. We shall be glad to have communications in regard to this practical and important subject.

## THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE INSANE.

The *Lancet* of 28th October refers to work done at the Wernersville State Asylum, Pennsylvania, where chronic patients considered fit to labour are received from the other State institutions. The results of five years' experience of agricultural labour are given as follows:—(a) Of the patients 6 per cent. can perform work equal to paid labour, 30 per cent. can perform labour equal to one half of paid labour, and 50 per cent. are equal to one fourth of the value of paid labour. The balance of 14 per cent. are non-working, and this includes those who are ill or are found on trial not to be able to work. (b) The estimated value of the gross amount of work done during the current year, on a basis of 400 men, is \$29,000. The estimated cost of food per head is 20 cents per diem, or \$1.40 per week. (c) The health and welfare of the patients are medically attended to, and the medical reports regarding the health and mortality are found to be entirely satisfactory. Indoor work, *e. g.* brush-making, is now being introduced as an extension of the original industrial scheme, and it is believed that this also can be pursued with profit. These results are representative of our experience in asylums of this country where an adequate area of agricultural ground has been secured. It is somewhat surprising that the *Lancet* should go on to recommend that the example of Wernersville should be followed by other institutions in Britain and America. Old-established asylums such as Wakefield and Utica are veritable hives of industry; it is years since machinery was introduced in the shoemaking department at the former, and the old men were encouraged to make and repair stockings; while the useful trades at Utica are representative of the greatest possible variety, and would be still more efficient but for the interference of trades unions. Of course every asylum ought to have a farm proportionate to its size. It is late in the day to advocate that primitive measure.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## SYPHILIS AND GENERAL PARALYSIS OF THE INSANE.

From W. GILMORE ELLIS, M.D., Medical Superintendent, Government Lunatic Asylum, Singapore.

At the last Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association, Dr. Campbell, of Rainhill, opening a discussion on syphilis and general paralysis in the psychological section, says: "The third argument against the syphilitic origin of General Paralysis is that among certain races where syphilis is rife General Paralysis is said to be uncommon. Christian, of Charenton, is responsible for such a statement concerning the Arabs of Algeria, but I believe it requires substantiation."

In the Straits Settlements syphilis is most prevalent, more especially so since the unfortunate repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts by order of the home government. With our teeming population of Chinese, about 120,000 in Singapore alone, out of a total population of 184,554 at the 1891 census, with a percentage of seven males to one female, to whom prostitution is but little if any disgrace, what else can be expected?