

impressed him that he has consecrated his life to its relief. It seems as though he constantly hears and heeds the injunction, "Suffer little children to come unto me." So he has gone from state to state urging the establishment in each commonwealth of a free hospital equipped with all the orthopedic and surgical apparatus, all the professional and nursing skill available in this wonderful age, and at the service of the helpless ones. His name is George Washington Sweney and his home is at Marion, Ohio. His plan is nation wide, involving the expenditure of one dollar for every citizen of the United States, or over \$90,000,000. As for him, he contributes as his share, himself and all of which he is capable.

No more worthy object ever commanded the utter devotion of any man, and he meets with approval and encouragement wherever he goes.

DEATHS FROM POISON.

Every few days the papers announce the accidental or suicidal death of some one from taking poison which was conveniently at hand. These deaths are rarely from narcotic poisoning. The law makes it troublesome to procure such in any quantity without attracting undesirable attention. The purchase of strychnine or arsenious acid must also be explained. But crude carbolic acid "for use about the water-closets," or the still more deadly "antiseptic tablets" containing overwhelmingly fatal amounts of corrosive sublimate, can be found in a very large percentage of urban American homes. Carbolic acid is seldom taken by accident, but the list of heart-breaking tragedies from the bichloride tablets mistaken for acetanilid, or soda, or, in the case of children, for candy, grows longer every year. The whole country has been shocked into sympathy and admiration this summer by the death of the banker in Macon, Ga., who swallowed the poison by mistake and discovered the error too late for his life to be saved, but, like Socrates, bravely watched and re-

corded his symptoms and sensations to the end. During the months of May and June several more deaths from the same cause occurred in the South. It is unfortunately true that our own profession is greatly responsible for this condition. When a doctor gives a woman a prescription for bichloride tablets to use for leucorrhoea, it is like handing a loaded pistol to one who does not know how to use it. Thousands of such pistols are in such inexperienced hands and do no damage, but once in a while tragedy results.

So when a box of bichloride tablets is on the sewing table, or the mantelpiece, with probably other boxes of like appearance scattered about, though in hundreds of such cases no accidents may occur, yet *some one somewhere* will be certain to suffer. The pity of it is that there is not the shadow of a necessity for any but druggists and physicians to touch either phenol or bichloride as disinfectants. Sulphate of iron, known as copperas, in lump or solution, is a cheaper and safer deodorizer than phenol, and if one were to swallow some it would promptly be vomited.

For douches there are other substances equally efficient and non-poisonous. One of the best is chinosol. This is not said because it is advertised in this JOURNAL, but because it is true. One $7\frac{1}{2}$ grain tablet in a pint or more of warm water destroys all odor and diminishes the ordinary leucorrhoeal discharge, and if the patient were to drink the solution no harm would result.

Had such tablets been relied on in that bereaved Georgia home Mr. Walker would now be alive and well. Another preparation which is innocent and cheap is the "Alkaline Antiseptic Solution," sometimes sold at an outrageous price under the trade name "Glycothymolene." Druggists should sell it at not more than 25 cents per pint bottle, and every family should keep it on hand. Two teaspoonfuls of this Alkaline Antiseptic Solution in a teacupful of warm water, used to wash out the rectum after each dysenteric discharge, will afford

magical relief from tenesmus and often stop the attack. The same quantity in a pint of warm water is useful as a vaginal douche for purposes of cleanliness, but is not so good a deodorizer as some others, though quite efficient. But no matter what antiseptic or deodorizer we direct our patients to use, for the sake of human welfare let us stop placing in their hands those two unnecessary, deadly poisons, phenol and bichloride of mercury.

THE SERUM DIAGNOSIS OF PREGNANCY.

In the A. M. A. Journal, of June 21, Dr. Charles C. W. Judd, of Baltimore, has an article, entitled "Serum Diagnosis of Pregnancy." His technic is as follows:

A fresh placenta is boiled and reboiled until the water in which it is boiled is negative to a biuret test. Then the placenta is dried, or preserved in toluene for future use.

The apparatus used is, (1) a dialyzer, (2) glass containers for the dialyzers, (3) capillary pipettes, test tubes, and a Bunsen burner, (4) apparatus for procuring 6 c.c. of sterile blood from the vein of a patient, (5) reagents for doing the biuret test. The procedure of making the test, though it may seem simple and easy to those accustomed to such work, will not be generally employed by the general practitioner or obstetrician. They will follow the old road to a diagnosis. But there is a place for such a method of ascertaining the true condition in doubtful cases, and if the many sources of possible error can be eliminated it may prove very useful therein.

A LIVE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY WITH A LIVE WIRE SECRETARY.

The Medical Society of Titus County, Texas, is to be congratulated on its secretary, Dr. W. H. Blythe. He is not contented with the mere performance of the duties pertaining to his office, but is constantly on the lookout for

new means for adding to the interest felt by the members of the Titus County Medical Society, so as to insure their regular attendance, and to attract doctors who have not yet affiliated, and induce them to join the society. Largely through his influence and efforts every meeting is provided with entertaining and instructing features. He keeps in constant touch with all Titus County doctors through the mails, and on the outside of his envelopes he prints a message with some sort of a copying device. This message is in his own hand, and so is the whole program he promises, in pale blue, and is generally illustrated with an original drawing that suggests Mutt or Jeff, and a motto, such as: "Don't say, 'Doc, bring along your microbes, facts and theories,'" and so on. No wonder the society flourishes. If "a little leaven leavens the whole lump," such an inexhaustible bundle of energy and genius must result in keeping things moving. He sets a good example for the rest of us. We may not be able to copy his methods, but we *can* exert our energies and our intellects in such ways as seem to us most beneficial to our societies. It is an honor to be elected secretary of a Southern county medical society. The organization is composed of the foremost physicians, who are generally the most intelligent citizens. Their judgment in selecting their acting agent, the secretary, proclaims their confidence in his integrity and ability, and it behooves him to justify their action. Any one can sit behind a table and keep a memorandum and call it "the minutes of the last meeting," but when a secretary is loyal and earnest, like Dr. Blythe, he has a golden opportunity to show the profession the benefit they can receive from a *man* who is devoted to his profession and to the general welfare.

May such secretaries of medical societies multiply everywhere! There is a crying need for them in many counties, where ability slumbers awaiting the clarion call to action.