Clinical and other Notes.

DESCRIPTION OF A SMOKE TRENCH LATRINE.

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I desire to describe a latrine trench—which served under some unusually necessitous conditions—in the hope that it may be given a further trial, and a wider opinion formed regarding its claims.

As shown in the diagrams, the trench is half a metre wide and is dug to a depth of two metres. A convenient length is four metres. Laths—in the original male bamboos were used—are now placed across the trench, filling all the spaces between the five openings for four seats and one urinal. These supports should be about a metre long, well supported on each side of the trench. Built up on these is a platform of the excavated earth mixed with wood-ash worked up with water. The openings for the seats are to be round, the necks of earthenware water-pots give a finished appearance, to take lids of plaited grass, with a central tag as a handle. A pole about 9 or 10 cm. above the platform is fitted along the entire length, supported on Y-shaped posts. On one
side of the trench a small mud furnace is built with an upward slope of a two-way smoke flue opening into the trench. These flues are capacious, with a measurement of 10 square cm., and the furnace is large enough to receive an occasional armful of damp grass. The important point about the flues is that they must have a rather steep slope. The whole is now screened off and roofed with brushwood.

I may now state that this was the form of trench I had built for men when I was a prisoner-of-war in East Africa, modified from one the Germans had at their Base Hospital, and into which the enteric and dysenteric stools were emptied, after being mixed with wood-ash.

The conditions which this trench had to serve were these:

(a) The latrines had to be in the zariba, and in view of the guard.

(b) There was nothing in the way of bucket and lid or disinfectant to be obtained.

(c) These confined zaribas were our only living spaces for weeks on end.

I have had the trench with the important features of depth and darkness in full use by two days, and when very fortunate completed in four.
GENERAL.

These smoke latrines stood the shock of the terrible rains to which they were subjected. They dispense with the problem of ultimate disposal of the sewage—faecal matter undergoing a very rapid disintegration at the temperature obtained; urine also was speedily evaporated, due somewhat to the heat of the smoke-box.

Provided wood-ash is sprinkled on accidentally deposited matter on the rims of the openings, and swept in, it is practically fly proof. Nothing beyond the dows or pangas (bush choppers), carried by all units in the East, and the entrenching tools are required.

The diagrams are all to scale 1/50th nat., the dimensions being on the centimetre scale.

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