

The Gresham Lectures.

EVOLUTION AND DEGENERATION OF THE TEETH.

A course of interesting lectures was delivered recently at Gresham College by Professor Symes Thompson, Gresham Professor of Medicine, on the "Evolution and Degeneration of the Teeth."

The lecturer dealt with his subject in a manner which could not fail to interest the lay portion of his audience, as well as those devoted to the study of the profession, of which Professor Symes Thompson is a prominent member.

The first lecture dealt with the history and structure of teeth and dermatology generally. In the second, the value of geological records and the study of fossil teeth was pointed out as most important in correcting false impressions of evolution. Bone changes necessary to dentition, and the adaptability of teeth to function, as seen in various species, were shown by means of some excellent diagrams, and the lecture was further illustrated by limelight slides.

The next lecture treated of dental degeneration, chiefly ascribed to civilisation and cookery, the soft, prepared foods to which the human race is now so much addicted tending to deterioration in that they do not call forth the original functions for which teeth were created. Ours, however, is not the only period in which this deterioration has manifested itself. There were evidences of rapid increase in caries of the teeth during the progress of Roman civilisation, and a marked deterioration had been discovered in the Egyptian mummies of 4,000 to 6,000 years ago.

Lastly, Professor Symes Thompson spoke of disease in connection with teeth. Caries was described, the local effects of neglect brought home to his hearers, and the importance of giving infants the right sort of food for the production of teeth emphasised. The lecturer then proceeded to show that many diseases which attack the other organs of the body may be attributed to the same cause. Septic decomposing material from the mouth often got into the stomach and set up mischief there, or in other parts of the alimentary canal. Indeed, there was good reason to believe that the increase of appendicitis was largely due to neglect of the teeth.

In conclusion, the Professor said he was glad to see the matter was being taken up so earnestly in our schools, and he wished a tooth-brush drill could be made part of the curriculum. In reply to a question sent him, he said he had not been able to discover that bacteria had any special objection to nicotine; but he had found that smokers were generally more careful about cleaning their teeth, and on that account smoking might be recommended, a final remark which elicited much laughter.

Legal Matters.

THE LIVINGSTONE CASE.

In the Divorce Court Mr. Justice Bargrave Deane has had before him the case of *Livingstone v. Livingstone*, in which Mrs. Mary Evelyn Bisset Livingstone, Matron of a Glasgow hospital, petitioned for a divorce from her husband Dr. John Livingstone, alleging cruelty, and misconduct with the Matron of a private hospital at Barry. The charge was denied. The case was in the first place adjourned, as the question arose as to whether the respondent's domicile was not Scotch. The judge came to the conclusion that the charges of cruelty and adultery were established, but that the respondent had not acquired an English domicile; and had retained his Scotch domicile. He was therefore unable to grant the relief prayed for, and must dismiss the petition, but expressed his willingness to assist the petitioner, who deserved every consideration.

THURSTON v. CHARLES.

At the Liverpool Assizes Miss Audrey Thurston, Matron of the Rakesmore Hospital, Barrow-in-Furness, sought to recover damages for wrongful detention of a letter, and publication under libellous circumstances, against Mr. John Charles, J.P., a member of the Barrow-in-Furness Town Council.

As Matron of the Rakesmore Infectious Diseases Hospital she became acquainted with Alderman Huartson, Chairman of the Hospitals Sub-Committee. A letter, a portion of which was read in court, from this gentleman to Miss Thurston was lost. Subsequently the defendant, it was alleged, showed the lost letter to the Matron and to the Council. Before this the Matron had been acquitted of certain charges brought against her by a caretaker, but after its production an inquiry was instituted which resulted in her dismissal.

The jury awarded the plaintiff £400 for the unlawful detention and conversion of the letter, but gave a verdict for the defendant on the question of libel.—Judgment was reserved.

ALLEGED NEGLIGENCE OF A CORPORATION.

At the Liverpool Assizes, Mr. Justice Walton had before him the action of Mr. Cuthbert Evans against the Liverpool Corporation to recover damages for alleged negligence in the premature discharge of the plaintiff's boy from the Priory Road Infectious Diseases Hospital after scarlet fever, wherefrom several of the plaintiff's other children contracted the disease, and one died. The Corporation denied the charge. The jury found want of reasonable skill and care on the part of the doctor, but no negligence on the part of the nurses. The judge said the matter would require further consideration, and argument on the finding was postponed.

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