THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

DIET AND THE TEETH.

The influence of diet on dental structure is becoming more and more recognised, and the *Times* recently referred, in a most interesting article, to the report made by Mrs. Mellanby on "Diet and the Teeth" after most laborious researches. The formation of perfect teeth, says our contemporary, is a process demanding for its completion the presence in the food of certain elements other than lime and phosphorus, which in the past were believed to be the important constituents. Lime and phosphorus are necessary, but if the diet is rich in vitamin D the amounts of these elements necessary to produce sound teeth may be very small. In the absence of vitamin D calcification of the teeth will not take place, no matter how much lime and phosphorus the diet may contain. This vitamin, in short, ranks first in importance in the process of calcification. How important that process is to the health of the child is clear. Imperfectly formed teeth soon break down and become the seat of disease. They fail in the performance of their function and so become the indirect cause of numerous disorders of the digestion and of nutrition. As decay advances ill-health invariably develops.

In these circumstances the importance of securing for all children a diet rich in vitamin D is evident. Unfortunately, the foods containing that vitamin are few in number and, in general, expensive. The richest sources are egg yolk and fish fats, including cod liver oil; but vitamin D is present also in milk, butter, cheese, and animal fats, other than lard and bacon, which contain as a rule very small quantities. Mrs. Mellanby is of opinion that the ordinary diet in this country, and especially the diet of the poorer members of the community, will tend to produce imperfect teeth since vitamin D is either absent from or deficient in such articles as bread, rice, oatmeal, barley, sugar, fruits, jam, most vegetables, lean meat of various descriptions, and white fish. Recent research work carried out on behalf of the Medical Research Council has, however, shown that, though the essential vitamin has a limited distribution in nature, it can be produced artificially in large quantities by irradiating foodstuffs. For example, vegetable oils, although naturally without effect on the teeth, become powerful calcifying agents after irradiation, and the activity of milk and butter is much increased by this process. Even oatmeal, which normally interferes with calcification, can be made to assist it by being exposed to ultra-volet light. The success which has attended the use of irradiated milk in the treatment of rickets fully supports Mrs. Mellanby's views, and the hope seems therefore to be justified that by irradiation of various foodstuffs in the future both rickets and imperfect teeth may be avoided. The gain in health would, says our contemporary, be very great.

THE TREATMENT OF DIABETES.

The most recent method of treating diabetes is that prescribed by a German physician, and consists of a ten minutes' inhalation of pure oxygen two to four times a day.

The doctor claims, says a contemporary, that a patient's condition shows improvement after the first inhalation, and that after from ten to fifteen days' treatment all symptoms disappear and the blood sugar may become absolutely normal. This, he says, takes place with a normal diet.

If this treatment makes good its claim diabetic patients may presently make their choice between these inhalations and injections of insulin.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Members of the Nursing Profession who attended the International Congress of Nurses in Montreal, who were entertained so hospitably by Dr. and Mrs. Martin in their charming house at Senneville, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, will remember Dr. Martin's geniality and kindness, and will wish to offer their congratulations to him on being privileged to make a most important announcement.

The Faculty of Medicine of McGill University, Montreal, has announced an important discovery in the biochemical laboratories by Professor J. B. Collip.

Dr. Charles F. Martin, Dean of the Medical Faculty, announced the discovery that Professor Collip has succeeded in the purification and standardisation of a hormone, or internal secretion, having an effect somewhat similar to the anterior pituitary gland. This substance, which has been isolated in a crystalline form, is derived from the placental gland, and is of great importance, because it offers a remedy for certain feminine disorders, and influences in a very remarkable manner the metabolism and general health of patients who have received the drug. He declares that clinical observations, carried out by Dr. A. D. Campbell, Demonstrator in Obstetrics and Gynæcology, of McGill University, in selected cases, have given conclusive evidence of its practical value, and the field of usefulness of the drug can hardly be overestimated.

The placenta is known to contain a substance which, being ingested, exerts a strong influence on the uterus after delivery.

Professor Collip and Dr. Campbell, in a joint article published in the February number of the *Canadian Medical Journal*, give an account of the result of their experiments, which are based upon earlier investigations, particularly those of Weisner of Edinburgh. Professor Collip was associated with Dr. Banting in the work which led to the discovery of insulin, and has been Professor of Biochemistry at McGill University, Montreal, since 1927.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIET.

Nurses are more and more beginning to realise the importance of diet in the successful treatment of the sick. To build up the system of the sick person with food which he can assimilate, so that his resistance to disease may be raised, should be the aim of every nurse, and dietetics are a fascinating study if we regard them from this view point. Palatability, nutrition, attractiveness, all should influence the service of food to the sick. When a patient is on full diet this is comparatively easy, but it is often difficult to vary the diet, so that a sufficiency may be taken without the patient becoming indifferent to it by reason of its sameness, when a fluid, or semi-solid diet is ordered. Milk—pure milk—for impure milk may be a deadly danger, is the sheet anchor of the nurse under these circumstances.

Milk pure and simple, milk and soda water, hot milk, tea made with milk, whey, and junket are all well known varieties, and now there is obtainable Cow and Gate Chocolate Milk, which a child, and also an adult, who cannot be induced to take ordinary milk will take readily, enjoy and digest. It is manufactured by Cow and Gate Limited, Guildford, Surrey, and, incidentally, we may mention that their Royal Surrey Cream Cheeses would tempt the palate of any invalid who is allowed to take them.

On February 17th the Mental Treatment Bill passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons, having already passed the House of Lords, and has since made good progress in the Committee Stage.

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