

resident of long standing that a tooth a year was the average loss to be expected.

(Treatment of dental caries may, says the author, be divided into (1) preventive, and (2) curative. If the former were to be adopted, the latter would become unnecessary. Every dentist who has the welfare of his patients at heart looks forward to the day when the majority of these will require merely preventive work, the dawn of such an elysium would be at hand, if the public would learn and practice certain fundamental principles. In 1913 Dr. Charles H. Mayo said "the next great step in preventive medicine should be made by the dentists. The dental profession has now performed its duty, therefore the next step in preventive medicine must come from the people themselves. They must be willing not only to acquire, but also to follow that advice which, thanks to Howe, and other research workers, is now at their disposal."

The author advocates regular visits to a dentist every six months, and that such periodic visits should begin at the age of two years.

A very important chapter is devoted to pyorrhoea alveolaris, a disease affecting the bony sockets, or more correctly the alveoli, which surround, and form a bed, for the teeth. The author quotes Howe as saying "the health conditions which you find in the mouths of your patients are merely the oral indications of the conditions of the tissues throughout the body." We should do well to remember this always and take warning. Again we are told that "pyorrhoea does not appear like a thief in the night, suddenly and without due warning—it is not the result of one improper meal, but of many years dietetic errors."

So we come back to supreme importance of prevention, by means of proper dieting, and other hygienic measures, realizing that to keep the teeth in good preservation one must keep the body in a healthy condition. A striking illustration of this is given by Dr. Willis A. Sutton, a well-known American Inspector of Schools of Atlanta, Georgia, showing the relationship existing between decayed teeth and wayward and backward children. He relates:—

"About ten years ago there was sent to me a sort of 'round robin' signed by seven teachers, about a certain boy in the school of which I was then principal; from it I realised very clearly that I could either expel a certain boy from the school, or I could accept their resignations. Previously, I had had a great deal of trouble with this boy; he had been repeatedly sent to my office and had never displayed interest in anything I said to him. I sent for him. When he came into my office I gave him the 'round robin' to read. I then said, 'You know I cannot lose seven good teachers, and you will have to be dismissed.' To my utter astonishment the boy began to cry, and then I noticed that his teeth were in a very bad state. I examined his mouth by the light of the window and found it to be the foulest mouth I had ever seen. Then there flashed into my mind a method by which I might save that boy, for that was my sole object. I told him that

I would write a note to these teachers, saying that I thought that his teeth were responsible for his conduct, and that I would not expel him from the school until his teeth had received attention, on condition that he and his father promised that dental treatment would be started immediately. This boy thereafter remained in the school for two and a half years, graduated with distinction, proceeded to Georgia Technical College, graduated from there, and is to-day in receipt of a large salary in the State Highway Department of Georgia. From that day to this I have never heard a single complaint as to his misconduct. The entire trouble with this boy was that most of his teeth were decayed and there was in consequence a nervous and diseased condition, which made it impossible for him to sit still, made it impossible for him to be obedient."

Lastly the author emphasises in his Epilogue:—

"It is the duty imposed upon each learned profession eventually to eliminate itself by its own efforts. The scrupulous lawyer must counsel justice, must refuse to stimulate strife that might fatten his purse. The fervent minister must save all souls, including his own, after which his mission on earth must end. The conscientious doctor must work, night and day, to stamp out the very

diseases which promise golden gain." Thanks to the research work of May Mellanby, Howe, Toverud, Sim Wallace, Thoma, Fones, Owre and many others, the dentist is now enabled to prevent those diseases, the curing of which constitutes his means of livelihood. In the words of Dr. A. C. Fones, "Dentistry, perhaps more than any other profession, has the knowledge and the opportunity to practise true prevention."

"If unhygienic teeth were popularly regarded as social and financial disabilities, as indeed they are, the demand for preventative measures would soon come from the people themselves."

"The story has been unfolded; to derive benefit, it now remains for the reader to apply the knowledge contained within the covers of this book. No dentist, however eager, can force people to embrace suggestions, the adoption of which will ensure the possession of sound teeth; he can merely point the way."

One last word concerning the expectant Nursing Mother and her responsibility, as it is of supreme importance. "Few people," the author states, "realise that all the temporary and most of the permanent teeth have begun to form in the jaws several months before a child is born. This means that one of the most important of the responsibilities of the expectant and nursing mother is the laying of the foundation for strong, healthy teeth for her child. 'How can she accomplish this?' The answer is—by the eating of food of a proper nature, because on the type of food she eats at this important period will depend the condition of her child's teeth, and through them, his or her health. . . . *The diet of the expectant mother is the Alpha and Omega of preventive dentistry.*"

We are indebted to Messrs. Heinemann for our illustration.



By courtesy, James R. Devereux.

#### SOUND TEETH IN SOUND BODIES.

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