

The Public Health Journal

INCORPORATING THE THERAPEUTIST AND SANITARY ENGINEER

VOL. II

JANUARY, 1911

No. 1

Special Articles

PRESENT-DAY CONDITION OF HUMAN TEETH

By W. CECIL TROTTER, B.A., D.D.S.

The condition of the human teeth to-day, the world over, is appalling. Upon analyzing the results obtained from official examinations of school childrens' teeth in various countries, we find that from 90 to 97 per cent. of them have defective teeth. Ailments of the teeth constitute by far the largest percentage of defects among school children. A very comprehensive report just issued by the department of public instruction in New South Wales, upon the physical condition of children attending the public schools, shows from 80 to 90 per cent. with defective teeth, or an average of 4.4 defective teeth per child, whereas only 21.7 per cent. were otherwise physically defective; 57 per cent. had defective vision, 49 per cent. had nasal growths and 24 per cent. were afflicted with throat trouble. Many of these other defects really originated with the diseased conditions of the teeth, and consequent inability on the part of the child to properly masticate and

insalivate the food thereby inducing nutritional disturbances of greater or less magnitude. When one considers what an ideal culture medium the cavities of decay in the teeth afford for the development and propagation of myriads of bacteria, malignant or otherwise, one is not surprised at functional disturbances of many organs of the body following closely upon caries of the teeth.

Many of these carious teeth through the death and decomposition of their pulps or nerves are constantly though unconsciously discharging this infected putrifying material into the mouth, and hence infect the whole system by way of the alimentary canal. What is the use in being as particular about feeding the child pure food and pure milk only to be infected as soon as it enters the portals of the alimentary canal with germs in many cases more virulent than those that ordinarily infect impure milk. So the toothache which the child suffers from is