

DENTAL HYGIENE AND ITS RELATION TO HEALTH.*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,—I esteem it a privilege to have this opportunity of addressing you on a subject of such importance and so far-reaching in its effects as the one forming the title of this paper. The teaching profession and the dental profession, although seemingly far separated in their lines of work, after all, are aiming at a common goal, namely: the fitting of men and women physically and mentally to do the best work of which they are capable throughout life. Just how much the physical and mental efficiency of an individual depends upon the condition of his teeth and mouth is the subject under discussion in this paper, and in placing this matter before you I shall endeavor as far as possible to avoid the use of terms that are of a technical nature.

The close relation existing between physical health and mental activity was never more emphasized than to-day. In order that a man may be at his best and fit to do his best work every organ in the body must be perfectly healthy, and so able to perform its natural functions. Each organ in this wonderful human machine is dependent to a greater or less extent for its health, its power and its efficiency on every other organ in the same body. For example, a dyspeptic can never be the strong man, mentally, physically, socially or morally, that he would have been had his stomach been in a normal condition. It has been stated that Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo because of over-indulgence that morning in his favorite dish of fried potatoes. Investigation has disclosed the fact that when the mummy of Rameses II., known in history as the Pharaoh of oppression, was examined, it was clearly manifest that that tyrant ruler must have suffered greatly because of decayed and diseased teeth. Medical science is inclined to attribute much of his cruelty to this fact. Be this as it may, the important point is that modern scientific research and observation have proven undoubtedly that many of the ills of the human race, both physical and mental, can be traced directly to an unclean and diseased oral cavity. Nor are we surprised at such a conclusion when we consider the fact that the mouth is the gateway or vestibule to the whole body. Through it must pass the food, and

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