

of tuberculosis, and with this every man and woman sympathises. But I am sure that were we to consider the infant's welfare during the first two years of life, we would contribute not only to lessening the amount of tuberculosis, but strike at the root of many other as important ailments which fill our hospitals, and account for the degeneracy of our urban population more especially. The early decay of the teeth is but one symptom of want of care of the infant, but it is an evidence of something wrong which is patent to everyone, and which causes anxiety to the parent, suffering to the child, and deterioration of the national health.

Have I made my case strong enough to induce this meeting to take some decided step? Are my arguments too illusory to stimulate you to serious action? If so, please neglect them, but do not, I beseech you, neglect the facts. They are these, that the condition of the teeth of our children is bad, that it is getting worse, that it has become aggravated during the past generation, and that it is controllable. Science is surely sufficiently advanced to deal with this subject, and the men or women amongst us who have the patience, the ability, and the patriotism to grapple with the subject will deserve well of their country, and eliminate from amongst us much unnecessary suffering and physical incompetency.

I would test the effects of my words and your earnestness in the matter by asking you to draw up a form of motion, to be submitted to the Council of the British Medical Association, to nominate a Commission to deal with the subject; on that Commission I would place two dentists and a physician, men who are versed in children's ailments and possessing the scientific attainments necessary for such work. I would suggest that a grant of £100 be asked for the purpose, and that the Americans, and perhaps the Germans, French and Italians, be asked to co-operate with the British Commissioners and to present a report, preliminary if only that form be feasible, by January, 1901.

I have ventured to bring forward various ideas that have occurred to me in connection with this subject, not that I wish to stifle or restrict inquiries in other directions, but that they may serve as a basis to argue from. Their condemnation, if it is done with real knowledge, may help the cause of the preservation of our teeth just as well as if my statements were accepted as true explanations of the matter. It is to gain an end—the preservation of teeth—that I aim at, not at getting my statements accepted. And if by condemning and rejecting my poor arguments attention can be called to this important question of public health, I will still consider that they have done their duty.