

professor of oral surgery, Northwestern University Dental School, Chicago, emphasised the fact that the physician today must take a greater interest in diseases of the mouth than at any time before.

"The physician's interest in diseases of the mouth," he said, "was increased when Billings, Hunter of England and others, showed the relation between tonsils and chronic oral infections of the teeth and jaws and diseases in other parts of the body. With few exceptions their statements have been accepted in full, or in modified form, but some members of the medical and dental professions have gone far beyond the claims of either Billings or Hunter, and attribute almost every conceivable bodily ill to the teeth and tonsils, when the symptoms do not definitely point elsewhere.

The two infections of the mouth which are instrumental in causing secondary disease are chronic alveolar abscess and pyorrhea alveolaris, the latter a disease only in the adult. Their prevalence is indicated by a study made by Dr. Arthur D. Black, of 6,000 radiographs of 600 adults' jaws, taken without reference to the condition of the teeth or health. He found 78 per cent had either chronic alveolar abscesses or pyorrhea, 55 per cent having alveolar abscesses and 53 per cent pyorrhea."

#### Removal of Teeth.

Speaking of the removal of teeth Dr. Gilmer said:

Indiscriminate removal of tonsils is reprehensible, but their loss so far as known is inconsequential as compared with the loss of teeth.

"It would be unfair to impugn

the motives of some dentists who daily remove many teeth, or some rhinologists who remove many pairs of tonsils, but one naturally wonders if there is not danger of the practice becoming commercialized.

"There are two terms commonly used by some physicians and some dentists, which should be eliminated, since they give erroneous impressions. These are 'dead teeth' and 'nonvital teeth'. Usually dead or nonvital teeth are abhorrent to adjacent live tissues, and when present eliminating forces are at once set up for their removal. What really is meant by those who improperly use these terms is not that the teeth are wholly devoid of life, but that they are pulpless.

"The pulp of a tooth is the formative organ of the dentine and is transitory. If one lives to very old age it disappears; the tooth still lives since the cementum of the root receives its nutrition wholly from the peridental membrane. The death of the pulp affords opportunity for apical infection, but if the root canal of a pulpless tooth is made aseptic and is hermetically sealed, the root does not usually become infected and alveolar abscess does not follow. This refutes the statement that 'all pulpless teeth are a menace to health'. If the peridental membrane of a tooth is completely destroyed the tooth becomes necrosed, and then, and only then, does it become a 'nonvital' or 'dead tooth.'"

#### Children's Teeth

Of children's teeth, the speaker said: