

The
Public Health Journal

State Medicine and Sanitary Review

VOL. III

TORONTO, CANADA, MAY, 1912.

No. 5

Special Articles

**WHAT IS BEING DONE OUTSIDE OF THE DENTAL
OFFICE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
THE HUMAN MOUTH**

BY ARTHUR DAY, D.D.S., TORONTO.

Former articles in *The Public Health Journal* on dental subjects have shown the different conditions of the human mouth, and shown what is being done to correct some of those conditions by the dentist. Probably few people know the amount of work being done outside of the dentists' individual efforts to correct the unsanitary state of the mouths of the public at large.

The civilized world is being swept by a great Oral Hygienic Movement. Those in charge of the health crusades, and in charge of the School Children's Inspection, are devoting more time and energy towards the improvement of the mouth and throat than to all the other parts of the body. They have found that it is in the mouth that the germs of quite a proportion of the most prevalent, and the greater proportion of the contagious diseases find a harbor. Also it is in the mouth that lies the power to a great extent to fortify the system against these germs, for proper mastication is the first necessity for bodily strength. The Societies fighting tuberculosis are beginning to recognize the importance of a mouth in proper condition. It is possible and probable that defective teeth cause indigestion, and consumption gets a hold after that from lack of resistant force.

The mouth of the child being put and

kept in proper condition, will help to prevent the decline of a general nutrition to the danger point. The Brooklyn Committee of the Society for the prevention of tuberculosis, have joined with the second district Association of Brooklyn to maintain an up-to-date dental office free to the poor. The work is done by forty members of the dental Society, who give an afternoon a month of their services. Authorities agree that a poor condition of the teeth not only helps to breed the disease, but in cases of apparent cures the patients may re-infect themselves through decayed teeth. Physicians now send their patients to the dentist to help cure not only indigestion, but a great many other ailments, as gastro-intestinal trouble due to Pyorrhoea Alveolaris, pernicious anaemia, and systemic infections directly due to conditions of the teeth and mouth, and even for mental depression and hypochondria and many perplexing nervous troubles in women.

The Germans are probably the farthest advanced in the public oral hygiene movement, both among the children and the grown people. They have recognized that the problem of dental hygiene is not altogether one of benevolence,—it is largely a problem of economics. Their insurance companies find that it is to their financial