

dent to the teething period. His conclusions respecting the operation were tersely stated as follows :

1. It is useless—(a) as far as giving relief to symptoms ; (b) as far as facilitating or hastening teething.

2. It is useful only as blood-letting, and ought not to be used as such.

3. It is harmful—(a) in producing local trouble ; (b) in producing general disturbances on account of hæmorrhage ; (c) in having established a method which is too general to do specific good, and too specific for general use.

4. It is to be used only as a surgical procedure to give relief to surgical accidents.

I have quoted these conclusions at length, because they fairly represent the opinions, and are the arguments generally put forward by that class of medical practitioners who do not know anything about the operation from practical experience, and still less from an intelligent understanding of the *rationale* of the procedure.

A critical review of Forchheimer's book appeared in the *Dental Cosmos* for June, '92, pointing out some of the fallacies that were apparent in his conclusions, and advocating the operation of gum lancing on rational grounds, from the standpoint of accepted knowledge of the anatomy, physiology, and nervous relationships of the tissues and organs involved. The subject was further discussed by numerous authors and editors in medical and dental periodicals, and finally Dr. Magitot presented it in a communication to the French Academy of Medicine. In his paper the author took the ground that inasmuch as dentition was a purely physiological process, there could be no such things as "accidents of dentition," or, as we express it in this country, diseases incident to or dependent upon dentition. His argument to sustain his position was, like that of Forchheimer, based solely upon analytical reasoning from premises which could not be accepted by anyone conversant with the clinical aspects of the subject.

As a sequel to this discussion of the French Academy, M. Poincot, one of the participants, has elaborated the subject in an interesting volume recently published, entitled, "Accidents of the First Dentition."

It will be seen, then, that the class of practitioners who are antagonistic to the operation of gum lancing are those who, like Forchheimer, object to it because they do not understand why it should be done, nor how to do it—mistaking gum scarification for gum lancing,—and those who, like Magitot, oppose the operation as a therapeutic measure because dentition is a physiological process ; *ergo*, there can be no diseases due to or caused by it ; hence lancing the gums for the relief of any disorders intercurrent with dentition is irrational and unnecessary. During the past twenty years it has been my lot to have been somewhat closely related