

THE RELATION OF MASTICATION TO PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Everything which influences the health of the people is of interest to physicians, and no question more important than dietetics could engage the attention of such a representative body as the American Medical Association. No one could understand the powerful influence which improper food is capable of exerting upon physical structure and development so well as they, and this subject deserves the special study of American physicians who are desirous of seeing a healthy and vigorous race grow up in this Western Hemisphere. De Toqueville said that the white race in this continent is doomed to extinction. If this ever comes true, it will be because of the long continued neglect of some of the simplest rules of physiology.

That there are at the present time a large number of adults with imperfect teeth is a well known fact. Poor teeth means poor mastication, poor digestion, poor health and poor physical development. The early loss of teeth among the people of this country is explained by the unscientific habits of feeding generally practiced among young children. When the infant is brought up on pap and pre-digested foods the function of mastication is not required. As a result of want of use, the jaws imperfectly develop; the arch is narrow and the teeth are crowded and irregular. Nature does not reduce the number of teeth, but she attempts to force thirty-two teeth into jaws that have only room for twenty-four, and the quality of the teeth is not up to the standard, so that they readily commence to decay. When the child has grown up, it is too late to prevent the mischief. The decay of teeth is more due to insufficient nourishment than to injury or decay of the enamel.

The rational means of preventing the state of affairs just referred to is to commence early, and give the child food that requires mastication. The result will be increased function of the gums, teeth and salivary glands, and of the masticatory muscles, and the full development of the lower part of the face, with a corresponding improvement in the appearance of the man. In the average family the questions of diet are relegated to the cook, whose duty seems to be to provide food which is so soft as not to require to be chewed, and is accompanied by large quantities of coffee, or tea, or ice-water, which takes the place of the salivary secretions. The evil effects of this system of feeding can be seen on every hand. The remedy suggests itself.

Mastication is the most important step; by it the food is reduced to a pulp and is thoroughly incorporated with saliva. The act of chewing also stimulates the flow of the gastric-juice, and is necessary to perfect stomach digestion. General health of the body intimately depends upon digestion and assimilation of sufficient food of pro-

per character, but no matter how a man regulates his diet he cannot altogether overcome the evils of his early training in this direction. Just here we are confronted with a danger which strikes at the very life-blood of the nation, and is already sapping its strength,

If the proper care be observed in rearing children and giving them sound wholesome food requiring the use of their masticatory muscles, there is no reason why a superior race of men might not be developed, just as we raise the fastest horses and the finest cattle in the world. The appeal is made to physicians especially, to see that the glorious birthright of the American citizen is not bartered away for a mess of pottage or other soft food.

By pursuing the plans adopted by the ancient Greeks, we might not only equal their achievements, but even surpass them in physical development and personal beauty.—Dr. E. A. Wood, in *Dietetic Gazette*.

TREATMENT OF EXOPHTHALMIC GOITRE.

Dr. E. C. Seguin (*N. Y. Med. Jour.*) says;

The usual treatment by iodide of potassium, iron; etc., and by Galvanization of the neck, is familiar to all. The two new measures I wish to call your attention to are first, the systematic employment of aconitine, and, second, bandaging of the protruding eyeballs. In 1884 I rather accidentally discovered that aconitine (the crystallized aconitine of Duquesnel) exerted a powerful reducing influence on nervous or irritative fast pulse—*i. e.*, a fast pulse with high tension and normal heart, easily distinguished from the fast pulse of cardiac disease or general debility or fever. Aconitine, in doses of one two-hundredth of a grain, greatly reduces the pulse-rate and also the arterial tension. In Basedow's disease I give from three to eight pills a day—enough to produce slight tingling in the lips and extremities—for day and weeks, occasionally stopping for a few days. On the average, it is necessary to give two pills three times a day; under this the pulse-rate steadily falls from the upper limits of 160 to 140 a minute to below 100. After that the fall is slower; but in many cases goes on until 90, 80, and even 60 beats are recorded to the minute. At the same time the eyes and neck usually improve. This treatment occasionally fails, but it never does any harm. I have used it in quite a number of cases, some without goitre and exophthalmia, since 1884, and it has been tried with good results by several of my professional friends.—At the same time iodide of potassium or iron may be given, and Galvanism applied in the usual way.

Bandaging of the eyes has never to my knowledge been practiced. In the last two years I