

for, as has been said previously, caries has been known in all ages. But any observer will gather from a study of skulls of different races, and of different ages, that civilization has a great deal to answer for in regard to caries of the teeth. It is known not only that teeth have deteriorated, but also that there has been a gradual narrowing of the jaw, which is becoming so marked as to cause justifiable alarm. The primary cause which has led to this, is lack of use. To produce strong teeth is almost as simple as to produce strong arms—use them. If children could be sent to a chewing school as they are sent to a kindergarten, there would be marked improvement in the race.

There is but little food for the child which affords any exercise for the teeth and the muscles of the jaw; and there is but little advice or encouragement given to induce children to masticate their food properly. The average meal for the average child is likely to be a bore, and he hurries through it, washing his food down with water in order to seek a more congenial occupation. It is necessary that children have at each meal some wholesome article of food that calls for vigorous mastication, and the parent should see that the child masticates it properly. If this plan is persisted in, the habit will soon become established and will never be forgotten. Bills for dentistry will be reduced, the child's teeth will become strong and well polished, and there will be distinct enlargement of the jaw and a strengthening of the facial muscles. There can be no exaggeration of the marvellous results achieved by vigorous mastication. It is because uncivilized races live upon food that is tough and but imperfectly cooked, and which requires a great deal of chewing, that they are invariably shown to have excellent teeth, free from irregularities and firmly planted in the jaws, to which are attached strong facial muscles.

It is not the purpose to advocate any particular diet, but merely to call attention to the fact that the presence of teeth in the mouth cries aloud for such a modification of the diet of the child as will produce in them functional activity. Even the temporary teeth must have a goodly amount of exercise since exercise insures a goodly amount of blood supply, and upon this depends not only their own preservation and usefulness, but also the size and shape of the jaw, and the texture of the permanent teeth which follow. While the jaw is undeveloped and the bones are soft, it is obvious that it is more susceptible to the various influences which affect it than after full development has taken place. And during this period exercise will do much to insure proper development. Even after eruption, permanent teeth are not fully formed. Exercise of the teeth then is necessary to assist in their proper development, which is not complete till several years after their appearance.

In addition to the careful mastication of food and a careful selection of food, the child should be taught to cleanse its mouth just as carefully as it does its hands and face. This habit, once instilled into the child, will always remain. Even at the early age of two years, a child can be taught to use a brush, and before that time the nurse should carefully wash its mouth with a boracic acid solution.