

Correspondence.

DENTITION.

To the Editor of DOMINION DENTAL JOURNAL:

SIR,—In the November issue of the DOMINION DENTAL JOURNAL, page 389, is an article by "B.," entitled, "An Old Error About Dentition," which is so at variance with the leading writers and teachers on infantile pathology, that it should not be allowed to pass without a protest.

It has been quite *the* fad during the past few years, among a certain class of men—wholly within the dental ranks—to talk much of this "old error about dentition," and basing their assertions upon the high-sounding phrase that dentition being a physiological process, cannot, therefore, give rise to any morbid phenomenon, and likening it to *normal* menstruation and pregnancy; an equally fallacious argument, as it is not the *normal*, but the abnormal that is being considered.

Were it not that there is in this the semblance of credibility, and, therefore, misleading, it would not be worth while to notice it. But there is danger that men, without the time or the ability to investigate for themselves, will be led by this semblance of credibility to overlook or entirely disregard some of the greatest dangers threatening the infant life.

True, dentition is a purely physiological process, but, nevertheless, it is almost always accompanied with some degree of suffering, which not infrequently causes functional derangements and true pathological conditions. It is also true that with thousands of children, tooth after tooth appears without the slightest premonitory symptoms. The period of dentition comes and goes, attracting attention only when a new tooth is discovered. But as Tomes remarks: "Instances of teething such as these are comparatively rare, and can only occur in children who are and have been perfectly healthy, which involves a series of conditions our artificial state of living does not tend to bring about, even if it can allow."

Dr. J. Lewis Smith, in "Diseases of Infancy and Childhood," page 571, says: "An early recognition and appreciation of the fact, that difficult and painful evolution of the teeth frequently causes derangements in the functions of organs, even those remote from the mouth, and sometimes produces in them a real pathological state, will lead to a more intelligent treatment of grave and serious affections."

In support of the position of Tomes and Smith, we have the well-nigh unanimous testimony of the leading pathologists in infantile disease the world over, and while there are some who