

DISEASES OF THE ORAL MUCOUS MEMBRANE.*

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THE subject is an important one, not only to dentists, but to the general public. One of Toronto's pathologists remarked to me, when he heard I was going to talk to dentists on the subject, "For goodness' sake ! tell them to keep their instruments clean ; it is simply criminal the way they jab unclean instruments from the mouth of one patient to that of another."

The modern and better class of dentist keeps his instruments clean, though rarely, perhaps, aseptic. The uncleanly ones are, however, too common, and, more than that, few dentists can tell the mucous patch of syphilis from an ordinary ulcer. From what I can learn, there has never yet been a clinical demonstration of syphilis of the mouth exhibited to the students in the Dental College in Toronto. My opinion is that dentists should be more practically educated in reference to the diseases of the mouth, so that, in all cases where there is a possibility of contagion, they will not only have their instruments properly cleansed, but also rendered thoroughly aseptic.

The ordinary medical practitioner, too, is all too ignorant frequently of oral diseases, and if dentists were better educated in this respect they would be often invaluable in consultation with their medical confrères, and especially in the country.

The mouth serves as a breeding place for the specific germs of many diseases. Among these are diphtheria, syphilis, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and typhus.

Diphtheria bacilli have been found in the saliva of healthy people, thus proving that the saliva is not inimical to the life of this dread germ. Mild and even advanced cases of diphtheria, and the various forms of tonsillitis, are not infrequently found in patients occupying the dentist's chair.

The pneumonia coccus is also found in the mouths of healthy people, while a primary tuberculosis of the mouth seems to indicate that the tubercle bacillus occasionally finds a favorable abode in the fluids of the mouth.

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