

THE TOOTH-BRUSH.

By E. C. MOORE, D.D.S.

After promising *The Odontoblast* a short paper for its initial issue, I began to think of some important subject upon which to write. Naturally, the editor would think I would choose a subject within the realm of mechanics so far as it relates to the mechanical laboratory, but as I am considered something of a crank on the subject of tooth-brushes among my patients, and of which title I am rather proud, it occurred to me that I would, in the hope of doing good, carry my crankiness a little outside of my practice and endeavor to impress the readers of this journal with the important office of the "tooth-brush," and if I succeed in that, they are in a position to carry the war still farther into Egypt.

It has been said that "the pen is mightier than the sword," so I will say that the tooth-brush is mightier than the excavator and plugger. Now, while I verily believe this, I am at a loss for language to sufficiently and forcibly impress the readers of *The Odontoblast* with the importance of the proper tooth-brush, properly used. "Ah, there's the rub;" proper brush, properly used. The proper brush is the one which will, by its shape, reach as nearly as possible all parts of the mouth and all parts of the teeth in the mouth. By its shape, I mean the shape of the handle or that part into which the bristles are set, the arrangement of the bristles themselves and the strength or stiffness of the bristles. The handle part should be a little curved in shape, the bristles being on the inner side of the curve and set in tufts, not close together, and because of this fact they should be very stiff, the writer preferring the unbleached bristle when he can get it. All brushes grow less stiff after being put into commission, and this is the very reason they should be stiff to start with. This and the fact of not being set closely together is another very good reason for not setting the bristles compactly in the brush. The fact of such a brush becoming very filthy, anyone may convince himself of by taking one of these brushes after it has done duty a few months; by parting the bristles and looking closely into it, it is just like parting the hair on a dog's back in flea time. You don't see the fleas quite so plainly, but they are there just the same, armies and myriads of them. With open brush this condition does not exist, because the construction of it allows of thorough washing and a thorough circulation of air, and consequently a thorough drying of the brush and return of a rigidity of the individual bristle and series of bristles. The curved shape of the handle is for the purpose of