

of view, but the unfavorable results I have seen are only the confirmation of certain beliefs held which are based upon theoretical considerations. This being so, I feel inclined to pass in review considerations which refer to the advantages and disadvantages (virtues and vices) of plate-work and bridge-work respectively, and then to consider if by any means the virtues which ordinarily belong to the two classes of work separately can be combined in one of them. Of course I leave out of the question all those cases where bridge-work is entirely impossible, and concern myself only with those which enthusiastic bridge-builders would consider typical cases for their work.

To begin with plate-work.

The advantages of plate work are just the counterpart of the disadvantages of bridge-work.

The disadvantages of bridge-work are :

(1) That a larger number of artificial teeth are fixed to a smaller number of roots than nature intended.

(2) That the roots to which the bridge is fixed are immovably united together, which is the reverse of what nature intended.

(3) That the very useful support which is offered by the bone of the alveolar process and by the gum is neglected.

(4) That the articulation of bridges for masticating purposes is never so good as that of a well-made plate.

(5) That bridges in the making often present a great temptation to mutilate sound teeth.

(6) That they are difficult to alter or repair.

(7) That the temptation exists for a patient to go on wearing a bridge for long after it has become useless for mastication, owing to loosening of the roots.

On the other side of the picture are the advantages of bridge-work, which may be summed up under three heads :

(1) That no large portion of the gum is covered by the work.

(2) That the work is not to be removed at night.

(3) That the natural teeth in the vicinity are not so likely to be damaged by caries.

With regard to the disadvantages of bridge-work, we have seen that a larger number of teeth are fixed to a smaller number of roots than nature intended, and the very efficient support of the gum and alveolar process is discarded, also that the roots or teeth which serve as the foundations of bridge-work are often immovably fixed together, whereas nature arranged that they should have a slight lateral play in mastication. What then theoretically would one expect to happen to a large bridge which is fully opposed to the force of mastication? One would expect, first, that the roots serving as foundations would be in time loosened by the abnormal strain, and second, that the bridge would try hard to