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A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE ETIOLOGY OF IRREGULARITIES.*

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The causes which produce irregularities in position of the teeth may be divided into two groups, viz., general and local.

General Causes.—One of the first facts which must strike any investigator into the etiology of irregularities¹ is the comparative freedom of ancient and even uncivilized modern races from such deformities. This has been well demonstrated by many observers; for instance, Messrs. Cartwright and Coleman failed to find any irregularity in the large collection of skulls in the crypt of Hythe church² and Dr. Nicols, quoted by Talbot, in an examination of thousands of Chinese and also of Indians on the Pacific Coast and in the Rocky Mountains, did not find a single example of irregularity of the jaws. Talbot himself, in 1881, examined 300 Chinese and found no irregularity in the shape of the teeth and jaws. On the other hand, Dr. J. M. Whitney³ has found among the Hawaiians, a race in which for at least 1,400 years there has been practically no admixture, irregularities as numerous as in civilized races of the present day. The balance of facts seems, however, to point to a distinct connection between irregularities and modern civilization. Certain irregularities of the teeth and jaws are undoubtedly transmitted, and, indeed, may be looked upon as family peculiarities. A slight overlapping of the centrals, not the result of crowding, may be present, and in one case, out of a family of seven, the father

* A lecture delivered to dental students at Charing Cross Hospital in January, 1899.