

or size, although their function has well-nigh, if not wholly, gone. I make these statements for the purpose of showing that developmental changes are gradual, very gradual—so gradual, indeed, that neither tradition nor recorded history has any change to notify—and so it must be in the case of our jaws. The generation immediately before us had fairly good teeth and well-shaped jaws, and to assume that in one generation the development of our jaws should have so modified as to affect the teeth of the rising generation is contrary to natural law. I would, therefore, dismiss these two theories—namely, the starvation of teeth by the development of our brains, and the sudden arrest in development of our dental and maxillary apparatus—as wholly unworthy of serious consideration. Were the evolutionary theory true, the fight would be a hopeless one, for neither art nor science could stem it. Were it true, we cannot expect to raise a healthy race of people, and must be content to succumb before a people with better physique.

In spite, therefore, of all that has been said, it is not natural that the teeth of our children should become carious at an age when they are most required. They are not developmental changes that are at work, but, in my opinion, causes which are capable of demonstration and arrest if we have but the courage to deal with the question.

The dental art has attained so high a position in this country and in America, that, so far as the mechanism of the art goes, there is but little more to be done. But I would like to induce our dental brethren to look a little further afield, and to tell us how to rear the child so that the teeth, while yet unerupted and within the dental sacs, may be allowed to grow to the greatest perfection. It is not only when the teeth are through that I would ask the dentist's aid; it is to a period when the basis and substance of the tooth is being formed that I would wish him to direct his attention. If dentistry is to aspire to its highest ideal, it must not be content with merely repairing or removing damage done. We look to it to tell us why do our children's teeth decay so early, and what steps are we to take to remedy the evil, so that sound teeth in the young may be hoped for. It is during the period of growth and development, during the antenatal stage perhaps, or at any rate during the first few months of infant life, that we must look for guidance and direction. We want to know what error of diet or mode of living on the part of either the mother or the child fills our children's mouths with painful stumps and festering abscesses.

In elucidating this point the first question that suggests itself is: Has any radical change in the feeding of children taken place during the past fifty years? The answer is known to every one, and it is this: Artificial food, and, more important still, an artificial manner of feeding has become a general custom within the period