

attention now. The remedy suggested by all who have dealt with this matter is that carious teeth should be immediately attended to; that misshapen jaws should be corrected, and to effect these ends, recommendation is repeatedly made that children's teeth in our schools should be systematically inspected, stopped or removed, as occasion requires.

The cause for this premature and abnormal decay is, however, scarcely dealt with. True, I have indeed received innumerable suggestions as to the cause, but scarcely two people are agreed on the subject. One blames sweets, another infant foods, a third declares that children partake at too early an age of animal food; some contend that it is a developmental change, and that in time the human teeth will disappear; some ascribe the decay to two such opposite conditions as gout and rickets. In fact, there is scarcely an inherited disease or a variety of human food or drink which has not been suggested to me as the cause. The developmental idea is a favorite theme; it is even seriously discussed by persons of respectable scientific attainments. The idea is that, in our quest after education, we are attracting a superfluity of blood to our brains and thereby starving our teeth and our jaws. A very pretty theory, indeed, but it is not true. The future of our teeth, in common with the general state of our adult physique, depends largely on the care taken of the infant during the first two years of life. The future of our teeth is laid before the child has begun to use its brain; and not only is this true of the milk teeth, but also in regard to the permanent; and one may fairly gauge what the state of the permanent teeth is to be by a study of the development and shape of the jaws at that period.

Another phase of the developmental theory is that our jaws are getting smaller, leaving less room for our teeth. The teeth, therefore, it is contended, become overcrowded and overlap, leaving nooks and recesses in which particles of food may find shelter, setting up decomposition, eroding the enamel and leading to caries of the dentine.

This is stating an actual condition whilst begging the cause. Our bodies are not changed thus rapidly. We are acquainted with various functionless remnants in our bodies. The hair on our bodies has lost its original purpose, and the gradual disappearance has been going on ever since man was known—yet it is with us. The appendix veriformis still appears attached to the cæcum, and has been there to all appearance unchanged since anatomy first revealed its presence. The nictitating membrane still occupies the inner canthus of our eyelids ever since it performed the function of a third eyelid. In like manner many developmental structures are present in our bodies, but it is not within the knowledge of man that any decisive change has taken place in their structure