

## CARE OF THE TEETH.\*

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Prepared for the Canadian Oral Prophylactic Association.

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### HISTORICAL.

It is quite evident, according to researches made through the history of ages, that it has always been considered of more or less importance that the teeth, as well as other parts of the body, should be cleansed, in order that the individual might enjoy good health and the esteem of his fellows.

The earliest Chinese works on medicine show that eighteen hundred years before Christ some attention was given to the care of the teeth.

About 1500 B.C., some of the Hindu sacred works, as well as those on medicine, contained, among other laws of health, rules for the cleansing of the mouth after eating.

The early Romans, too, had knowledge of the advantages to be derived from the cleansing of the teeth. J. Grasset St. Sauveur, writing of these people in "L'Antique Rome," said: "In order to keep their teeth clean and white, they used a great deal of a certain liquid of curious composition. They knew the use of *small brushes* and toothpicks of gold, of silver and of quill." Jacob von Faulke, in "Greece and Rome, Their Art and Life," referring to the matter of growing old, says: "She resisted to the last, concealed her wrinkles, helped her figure with judicious padding, and replaced lost teeth by artificial ones of ivory, fastened with gold."

As early as the second century dentistry was a recognized art, but during the dark ages, with many other of the arts and sciences, it languished, and had it not been for the monks, to whom the later generations are greatly indebted for preserving records, it might have been lost sight of entirely. In fact, it is believed they did more or less to relieve suffering due to diseased conditions of the teeth.

With the exception of references to cleaning the teeth, history shows that about the only form of dentistry practised by the ancients was the restoration of lost teeth by artificial substitutes. In those times artificial teeth were very crude affairs, and the wearers were usually objects of ridicule. If the dentistry of to-day were not of such a high order we would probably take more care to preserve our natural teeth.

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