

RELATIONSHIP OF DENTISTRY TO HEALTH CONSERVATION

It is only within a very few years that any considerable number of people have appreciated the value of clean mouths and good teeth. The services of a dentist were sought for the purpose of bringing relief in acute toothache, the repair of broken teeth, or providing artificial substitutes. Not many people have visited a dentist because of an appreciation of the fact that the mouth is a breeding place for many different germs of disease, and therefore should be kept in a hygienic condition. A woeful ignorance exists even to-day of the far-reaching effect upon the general health of pathological conditions about the mouth. Medical examiners for life insurance companies, industrial establishments, etc., pay particular attention to unusual condition in every part of the body except the mouth. Small boils and pimples are usually scrutinized with great care to determine if there is any conditions that might make the applicant a poor risk. There might be a dozen foci of infection in the mouth, pouring their poison germs into the blood stream and the stomach, but little, if any, attention is paid to these.

This lack of recognition of dental lesions is not confined to the laity. The medical profession itself has been slow to realize the importance of proper mouth conditions. There has often been an antagonism between physicians and dentists, and the patient has been made to suffer, on account of a lack of reasonable co-operation, but happily these conditions are fast passing away. Medical men now realize that many cases of chronic diseases, acute diseases, and special local diseases come from mouth infections. For example—neuritis, sciatics, acute paralysis, etc. Ulcerated stomach diseases of the gall bladder, appendicitis, etc., are often caused by local infections. Cases might be cited of rheumatism, neuritis, arthritis, chronic valvular disease of the heart and many others that have been greatly relieved or cured by proper dental attention.

Bacteria may enter the body in various ways, but the most common situation is in the mouth. There are many places about the mouth to harbour germs of infection—carious cavities in the teeth, pyorrhea pockets, abscesses about the roots of the teeth, the tonsils, etc. That disease germs found in the mouth are a prolific source of disturbance in other parts of the body has been conclusively proven by investigations made by Rosenow and other eminent authorities, who have been able to produce, with bacteria cultures from man, similar diseases in animals. Eminent medical practitioners and health authorities are alive to the fact that mouth sanitation offers a prompt and permanent cure for many of the ills of the body.

The X-ray has been of very great value in diagnosing many of the conditions to be found about the mouth and particularly about the roots of the teeth. Medical men have for some time recognized the fact that many disturbances in remote parts of the body have been caused by infected teeth, and that the removal of the cause has resulted in a speedy restoration to normal health, but a correction of dental disturbances has not always been a cure for every other ill. Much harm has come from the insistence by the medical man upon the extraction of all teeth showing a rarefied area in the picture. At the same time considerable damage has been done by dentists in an unreasonable insistence upon saving every tooth. Medical and dental practitioners will in the end ac-

complish far greater results, and will be rendering a much more valuable service to their patients, if, instead of a blind insistence upon their individual opinions, they will co-operate with each other more cordially and decide upon operative procedures only after reading and interpreting the pictures in connection with the history of each case. By so doing much needless and ruthless extraction of useful and valuable teeth will cease. Of course, it goes without saying that any competent dentist will give the benefit of the doubt to the patient, rather than insist upon the retention of a tooth that is a menace to health. Equally so the medical man should realize the importance of retaining healthy teeth for the purposes for which they are intended.

There are many well-authenticated cases of a complete restoration to health and normal function by people suffering from insanity, and the various nervous disorders, caused in many cases by nerve pressure from unerupted and impacted teeth. It is also well known that many cures are effected, particularly in rheumatism and neuritis, by removing sources of infection about the mouth and teeth.

The value of the work of the dentist is recognized by medical authorities, health officers, school authorities, the United States Government and prominent business men.

Any movement that has for its object the improvement of the physical condition of man, naturally increases the efficiency of the individual and tends to prolong life. There is absolutely no question but that proper attention to the mouth and teeth will do these things.

It seems to me that life insurance companies and other national institutions interested in public health, may render a most valuable public service by becoming interested in this subject.

The tremendous army of life insurance solicitors, medical examiners and employees generally, could exert a wonderful influence in every community, because none is without them. They could show municipal, school authorities and philanthropists the value of medical and dental clinics, and exert an influence in advancing the general health of the people, far beyond that of any other organization.—HARVEY J. BURKHART, D.D.S.

PROMPT COLLECTION OF CASUALTY PREMIUMS.

Manager William S. Collins, of the Casualty Insurance Exchange of New York, has formally notified brokers of the rules recently adopted to enforce prompt collection of casualty insurance premiums. After reciting the text of the resolution adopted, and giving a list of the companies which have pledged themselves to enforce the resolution, Manager Collins says:

"Your attention is specifically directed to the fact that each company is obligated to send a cancellation notice direct to the assured as to all policies, the premiums of which have not been paid to such companies by the 10th day of the second month following the effective date of the policy, and it is important that you should understand that, without further notice to you, the companies will hereafter automatically issue cancellation notices direct to the assured in accordance with these rules. Your attention is also called to the fact that additional premiums upon payroll adjustments are due and payable upon the 20th day of the month immediately following the month in which the adjustment is made."