

irregularity of the teeth under two heads—  
 (a) simple irregularity, in which the misplacement is confined to one jaw, and is independent of the position of the teeth in the opposite jaw; (b) compound irregularity, which depends upon the position of the teeth in the opposing jaw. In “simple irregularity”—that is, where the misplacement is confined to one jaw—the crown only of the tooth may be irregularly placed, the apex of the root retaining its normal position; or the entire tooth may be displaced, or faulty in its development. Such irregular teeth are often entirely removed from the dental arch, and may be impacted in the substance of the jaw-bones. In the former condition, when the apex of the root retains its normal position, much good may be effected by judicious treatment, but in the latter case little can be done to remedy the evil, except by the removal of the displaced tooth. As examples of “simple irregularity,” we may mention the appearance of the upper canines above the alveolar ridge, or in the palate, owing to insufficient room for them in the dental arch. An early loss of their temporary predecessors, by permitting the first bicuspid and the lateral incisor to approach each other, is not unfrequently the immediate cause of this displacement. Sometimes, however, the retention of the temporary canine, or the presence of a supernumerary tooth, will occasion its deformity. An overlapping of the incisors is another form of “simple irregularity,” and frequently requires for its treatment a resort to some mechanical appliance in order to obtain regularity in the position of these teeth. Another not uncommon form of irregularity is where an incisor tooth is more or less twisted, sometimes to such a degree that the side of the crown will occupy the position of its anterior surface. A forcible twisting of the tooth into its right position is very generally adopted. Some, however, are averse to this prompt treatment, and suggest the employment of a plate carefully adjusted to the palate, and having certain properly-constructed points of resistance. An unsightly separation of the central incisors in the upper jaw sometimes occurs, and the teeth may be readily drawn together, but have a great tendency to return to their former

position. In treating these cases, great care should be taken to prevent the ligature from slipping below the edge of the gum—between the necks of the teeth and the gum,—for the irritation set up by such a mishap has been known to cause the death of the tooth. In order to prevent this displacement of the ligature, a small vulcanite plate may be constructed, to which the ligature can be attached, and thus prevented from shifting its position. The second form of irregularity of the teeth—that depending upon the position of the teeth in the opposing jaw—is much more complicated. As an example might be cited the “underhung jaw,” in which the “bite” is intersecting; some or all of the six front upper teeth being shut behind the corresponding teeth in the lower jaw. This condition, in its extreme extent, arises from an undue development of the lower over the upper jaw, or from a want of development in the superior maxillary bones. It may also arise from a retardation in the eruption of the superior incisors, or by these teeth being pushed inwards by the prolonged occupation of the dental arch by their temporary predecessors. An early treatment of this irregularity is all-important, and should consist in preventing the contact of the opposing teeth. An opposite condition of the lower jaw sometimes occurs, in which the lower incisor teeth bite close up to the palate, so that they press against the necks of the upper teeth, and push them forward. A separation of the teeth in the anterior portions of the jaws has been described, and is occasioned by a congenital malformation of the lower jaw. The early obliquity in the position of the ascending rami is unduly maintained, and there is a want of development in the alveolar portions of the jaws, especially in the regions of the molar teeth. This irregularity may be caused by the contraction of a cicatrix in the throat or neck. The bicuspid teeth are not infrequently misplaced, and, when so, they usually occupy a too inward position. This may arise solely from their having been prevented from assuming their proper position in the dental arch by the prolonged retention of the temporary molars. But usually it is dependent upon a diminished capacity of the jaw,