

FOCAL INFECTIONS FROM THE TEETH.

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"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" is an old saying; and in the light of our present knowledge of teeth and focal infections, the author of the above phrase was surely referring to the teeth, rather than the head, when he mentioned crowns.

A properly functioning tooth is a live member of the body, with its own blood supply and its own nerves. Kill the nerve of the tooth and the blood supply dries up; the dentist "opens up the root canal" and drains the tooth of debris and pus. Unfortunately, the tendency of the poisonous material is to try to escape through the *apex* of the tooth instead of through the opening that the dentist has prepared, which is usually plugged up with food particles or "temporary stopping." At the apex of the tooth, these germs that have been pushed up or have gravitated up (or down) to the apex of the tooth root set up shop and await opportunity for some nice clean "dirty work". It is useless for me to endeavor to explain all the processes of infection and of focal infection to an audience who need it about as badly as I need a course upon the geology of the Rock River. My message is that of warning you against the dangers of devitalized teeth and the resultant focal infections.

I assert that appendicitis, heart lesions, ulcers in the intestinal canal, kidney lesions, various kinds of joint inflammations and a host of other diseases may result from the germs that keep shop at the apices of devitalized teeth. If you do not believe me, ask your old-tried-and-true friend, your family doctor, and unless he is a product of the pliocene period, I am sure that he will agree with me.

Ask my old friends and colleagues, Drs. Bain and Hull, sitting over there listening to me, how they would like to harbor a culture of streptococcus viridans (germs) and they will answer up very promptly that they are strongly "agin-it". Yet, each and every time a tooth is

devitalized the end result is some form of apical infection that may lie dormant throughout life, or may destroy life itself. Do not think that because your devitalized teeth have never caused you "rheumatism" that they cannot do it. Early in the war the British thought the submarine was only a joke—but they learned better. Have the respect for your devitalized teeth that was finally accorded the submarine. The analogy is not so far fetched. The sub slips in unseen and deals its blow; the apices of the teeth are unseen save by the x-ray, but they are as potent for harm as you can possibly imagine.

Now, why is it that hundreds, yea, millions of devitalized teeth have (apparently) gone through life without causing harm? Write this down upon your mental slate "Vis Medicatrix Naturae". But for this prescription the human race would have died out with the birth of the first baby. (Let us see, was it "Adam Junior" or "Cain?" Some of you ought to be able to tell.)

The antitoxins, or anti-poisons, manufactured by the system itself hold the virulent apical germs in check; otherwise they would score a far greater batting average. But, at that, the triumvirate of the "Three T's" (teeth, tonsils and toxæmia) cause about sixty percent of the sicknesses of mankind (and womankind).

In a New Jersey Hospital for the insane, scientific experiments concerning the "three T's" were carried out, with a conclusion that almost one half of the mentally unbalanced could be restored to reason by the proper attention to the "three T's".

It were possible to cite instance after instance, wherein the sickness of the individual could be directly traced to the teeth roots (apices), but it would be a great waste of white paper without consequent gain in argument. Those who doubt the deductions of such men as Rose now, Norvitzky, Arthur Smith, and many others, probably doubt the existence of the giraffe, and new varieties of Heinz's pickles.

To doubt is a human privilege. An iconoclastic dentist has written a wonderfully funny pamphlet suggest-

ing the removal of ALL TEETH as soon as they are erupted, thereby making an "100% Edentulous Society" and thus avoid all the diseases caused by teeth abscesses.

My answer to the pamphlet has been formulated by William Cowper Brann. "Assail a fool with reason and he answers you with calumny".

Deriding modern scientific procedure is not going to cause it to retreat within its shell for a hundred years. A couple of thousand years ago, it was great sport to feed Christians to lions, to make a holiday in Rome; but it did not kill out the Christian religion in Rome. It made it a poor hazard so far as life insurance was concerned, but it was nowise worse than the troubles resulting from focal infections of today. Roosevelt gave his life (unintentionally) rather than the offending tooth. It is just possible that had ex-Kaiser William lost his teeth early in the game, he might not have been so anxious for a bite at Belgium. But we are digressing—we are upon the subject of focal infections with especial reference to the teeth. I cannot tell you how to stop those which have already occurred save by extraction of the offending tooth, but to prevent apical abscesses it were well to

1. Have your teeth examined by a competent dentist at least once a year.
2. Time is proving that artificial dentures are safer and more sanitary than bridges and crowns.
3. A tooth that aches or has ached is safest when removed from your mouth.
4. Be suspicious of any dental work that necessitates the devitalization of a tooth (killing the nerve).

The real answer to the matter lies in the mouths of the school child of grammar school age. In Boston they have been doing heroic work among the school children, and results are astounding. The adult mouth cannot be reformed. Those teeth you have already had restored are a menace to your health. Were they mine, they would be OUT.

Difference of opinion made horse racing possible, and your ideas concerning teeth may be different from mine.

Let me impress you that my ideas as I have expounded them to you this afternoon are the ideas of Rosenow, Murphy, Norvitzky, Smith, and a host of others who have investigated the subject from a wholly neutral standpoint. I regret that I have not the "silver tongue" of Bryan, that I might plead the cause of a healthy mouth in a way that would send a string of you to the dentists this very afternoon.

But whatever idea you may carry away from this discourse please—oh—please see that this accompanies you wherever you may go:

"DON'T LET YOUR TEETH ACHE".