

RELATIONSHIP OF DENTISTRY AND MEDICINE TO THE PEOPLE'S WELFARE OF THE STATE, AND WHY

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Taken at one dose, this is a big question. I believe that any profession, properly handled, is of such great benefit to the community that it can and *does* leave its impress upon the people of the community. The intellectual side works so thoroughly that much of what was told remains, and eventually the public respond to good influence, when shown it is for their benefit. These associated professions stand side by side, but with fear on one side and friendliness on the other, and yet each is to relieve suffering and even more, to prevent suffering, or trouble; hence *prevention* is the theme of today. Why may this subject be given here, when the Academy meets? Because of its breadth of scope and character. Again, because we represent sciences and professions so closely allied that we cannot do without one another. The people of the state should have the best we can give. Our schools and colleges are the stepping stones for future advancement in all that elevates and teaches, and to this end your teachers should be paid so that you receive value for your future life work.

Without the aid of Science, be it Biology, Chemistry, Dentistry, Medicine, or their adjuncts, you cannot understand the body needs. Development of the human body is a serious and far reaching problem, for the Nation depends for its very life on the best that is in us. Hence, guard your youth, your health, your home, your work and play.

The physician advises, treats and helps you in sanitation and health. The dentist watches your food portals, to assist the physician and to aid digestion. The botanist provides the plants for samples and aids in beautifying the land with the forester and provides the health and quiet shelters in our woods. The chemist guards the water and food supply and aids the arts and industries in many thousand ways, and

these last two co-operate with the bacteriologist, physician and specialist. Remember, for this reason, no one man can know it all.

It seems as if in these days, "Specialism" is tending almost too far, and certainly some are too young and rapid in trying to succeed to that title before sufficient general practice has been studied. Experience is the best teaching for specialism, with a thorough, careful analysis of years of observation, together with research studies of the necessary kind, and less with the idea of a Ph. D. degree, which hardly fits the science group so much as the classic or literary ones.

To resume—Dentistry is really a part of medicine, just as much as the eye, the ear, the bones, etc. A certain amount of mechanics is necessary to all. And like a huge, first class engine of the highest type, the body must be treated as such and carefully cleaned, oiled and guarded. In spite of much work, dentistry, for some reason, creates fear, even more, perhaps, than surgery. Why? Because a child is early told by its mates that a dentist hurts. Hence, see to it that you take your child to the doctor and the dentist early and let him learn they are his friends. You can hardly go early enough, for like the parent and the rod, the sooner the better. Be kind, but firm, and mean what you say and do not vacillate. During infancy, many troubles creep along insidiously, which could be prevented either by physician or dentist, for by co-operation, they aid and advise the parent of danger. For example, a bad arch or irregularly placed teeth become a danger in child development and should receive early correction. You would not wait if it were a fine new tree! You must breathe through the proper channels, and how can you with a $\frac{1}{4}$ —1" width of mouth and your nostrils curved, closed or obstructed, when each of these conditions predisposes to adenoids, tonsils and catarrh? If adenoids are present, then the jaw develops badly. Pressure takes place and injures the nerves of the face, eyes, ears, nose, etc., and even may carry on these changes in remote parts of the body. A tubercular hip shows by pain and lameness in the knee, and like inflam-

mation of the bone, in its early stage, has been mistaken for cold, or growing pains in children's legs; when, if it had been attended to, many a heart lesion, like endo- or pericarditis, with arthritis, or so-called rheumatism, would have been prevented and a child saved from being damaged for life.

A mouth full of dirty decaying teeth is a danger to all organs near and far, whether tonsils, eyes, nose, or glands of head and neck. Think of swallowing many germs with all your food, pus in quantity, foul odors, etc. Few things are worse than a bad breath, mouth or nose. No wonder the stomach, liver and intestines object and by inactivity or an overload, refuse to work. Then the fermentation and decay begin to overwhelm the system and clog it up and we soon get crossness or irritability and the mother says, "I wonder what has got Jimmie today!" The lad feels bad, has foul taste, feels thirsty, has fever and headache and Nature steps in and tries, perhaps, to help by unloading through vomiting or diarrhoea. The castor oil and such remedies are only an aid if the sore, poor teeth with holes in them are put in good shape, just as the farmer's fence must be kept up, or he knows trouble will come. To prevent is better than to cure. Cavities in teeth open up the nerves or pulps, causing sensitiveness and pain. Then come fear to eat, bolting of food and dread of dentists and long and painful or tedious sittings. The use of drugs follows to kill or cure pulps, and so pulpless teeth and more troubles may come. You all know what happens to dead or dying trees. Teeth are the same, and great is the loss later on! New ones, not so good, are put in and though a great help in looks and force, yet lack the value of good, sound live teeth. Extractions and abscesses may precede, and who does not dread and fear these! We must be on guard and not lay all ills of mankind to the teeth, for we know there is a great tendency today to be too radical. Rheumatism is seldom if ever cured solely by extraction and eradication or destruction of the alveolar plates. Foci of the bacteria are present all over the body and too far to be reached entirely by the scalpel and chisel.

Look to your body upkeep, your immunity or reserve forces. As every farmer knows, the soil needs treatment and rotation

of crops to prevent slow or bad growth, smuts, disease and failures, and the best of seed is needed. Is that sufficient even in good weather conditions? No. Cultivation plays one of the biggest parts, in dry seasons, and at all times. Just so in the matter of health, dentistry and medicine. If these were taken care of, we would have fewer feeble-minded people and morons, and fewer cases of insanity, tuberculosis and cancer. Where there are badly developed jaws and arches, we also note an increase in asthma, tuberculosis, ear troubles and deafness, a lowered mentality and lessened resistance to disease, to courage, to development, physical or mental, and backwardness in growth and character of bone. Needless to say, such a youth grows up weak in character and yields to temptation, maybe alcoholism, the forerunner in many cases of tuberculosis and cancer. The irritability and nervousness create a craving or desire for stimulants of some sort. Smoking is common and easily induces the weakened mucous membrane to disease, and the air spaces and eyes are involved. Very soon the digestive tract is injured. How far reaching these seemingly remote symptoms may be, those working in co-operation, like the dentist and rhinologist, the oral surgeon or stomatologist and the physician know.

Why do parents shrink from having their defective children examined early, and worse, delay treatments or operations? Take the child's side of the question and ask anyone who has a cleft palate, or hair lip, or injury on the face, how he feels! They all wish something had been done to give them a clean or comfortable plastic operation, and it is *no kindness*, neither is it aiding their health or minds, to neglect your duty. If you fear, stop and reason a moment—put yourself in the others' place—would you like to be the injured party? What right have you to do things that injure and give your child such a life of misery and inheritance? They are innocent of their birth and you should do all in your power to give them as perfect health and body as it is possible. Life is a hard struggle at the best and you should help, not injure. If misfortune comes, at least get the men or women most fitted for the purpose to help you to remedy it as early as possible.

Train body and mind in the healthy way. The State and its taxpayers provide aid for all, and they should not be burdened by degenerates, criminals and ill-doers, when perhaps these persons could be helped to regain their lost power by appropriate treatment in the hands of properly trained, accredited research men and women, who spend their days in hard study and desire to help the afflicted. It is true, more careful legislation should be had, less law making and opening doors for faddists, and better laws. Surely the enforcement of justice for those who do conform to the rules, to have the right to practice legitimate medicine and dentistry, should be through only *one* portal of registration and so safeguard the commonwealth of the State. There is little doubt that if the criminal element had been disciplined rightly in early youth, their bodily health attended to from birth, their minds and bodies could be kept in rightful exercise with a proper amount of work and play. They could be taught respect for others, a higher moral code of study and pleasure, and an individual sharing of learning and labor. The hand of good fellowship would be able to withstand the storms of egotism, socialism of the narrow kind, and would prevent labor's interference with the desire to compete with industrial advance, for those who strive to become expert in their chosen life work.

The time to treat a human being for constitutional defects is in his infancy and childhood, not after manhood has confirmed his anatomy and physiology in its bad habits.* Today offers many opportunities never even dreamed of, for the rural communities can and do have the motor dentists and nurses. The auto brings the physician, and the various community and state gatherings offer lectures, clinics and schools in all varieties of work.

Look to your children and don't forget the parents, all who do need attention, and trust to your good faithful family friends, the true doctors.

*V. A. Latham. "Relation of Oral Hygiene to Man and His Community in Its Widest Application." *Oral Hygiene*, March, 1921, p. 362.

DISCUSSION OF DR. LATHAM'S ADDRESS

Dr. C. W. East stated that the remarks of Dr. Latham on the end results of operations in the mouth are of great value. "Too often in reconstruction work, temporary improvements are achieved and the chance for permanent improvement sacrificed."

Dr. G. W. Boot referred to three specific cases that illustrated admirably the points brought out by Dr. Latham. Each case referred to had formerly been considered hopeless.

Dr. Latham thanked the members and closed by adding that early work on young people in preventive medicine brings about better oxidation, physical developments, prevents lowered mentality, and aids specialists to diagnose remote conditions.