

THE CARE OF CHILDREN'S TEETH.

By

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THE importance of caring for and preserving the teeth of children seems to be a matter that is very little understood, not only by the parents but by nurses and doctors as well. We often hear the remark that "it does not matter, as they are so soon lost." Are they so soon lost? True, a child begins to lose its teeth at the age of 5 or 6 years, but the process goes on until it is 12 or 13. During all this time it is growing rapidly and the different tissues of the body need special nourishment. Now the first requirement for good digestion is undoubtedly a proper mastication of the food which it eats. If the child is allowed to have a mouth full of decaying teeth, or even a few bad ones, it will to a large extent bolt its food, and in this way set up disorders of the digestion which may affect its health throughout life.

Aside from the harm that may be done to the digestion it will suffer from toothache, abscesses, gumboils and the like, the same as grown persons. When these manifestations of trouble arise the child will probably be taken to a dentist for relief. But by this time it is usually too late to save the teeth as little can be done with baby teeth in advanced stages of decay.

Decaying baby teeth will infect the second set as well and they in their turn will begin to decay.

The first teeth have also a great influence on the regulation of the second set. If they are lost too soon the development of the jaw is to some extent arrested, and when the second set make their appearance they are overcrowded, and we have an improper occlusion and an ugly mouth as a consequence.

Therefore the care of the baby teeth should begin with the appearance of the first tooth and go on until the disappearance of the last. They should be carefully watched, and when decay begins to appear the child should be taken to a dentist and the teeth stopped. If this is done early enough it can be accomplished with very little pain, and when the dentist has once gained the child's confidence he will have little trouble in doing more painful operations should it become necessary.

Golf Maniac: "And pray, Sir, what may your favourite recreation be?"

Hypochondriac: "Indigestion."
