

## ORAL HYGIENE--ITS MEANING

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**D**URING the past few years a great movement has been started which has rapidly spread the entire length and breadth of the United States and has extended to many foreign countries. I refer to the Oral Hygiene Movement, or the Gospel of Clean Mouths. Possibly the one who started this movement will never be known, but whoever he was, he was a great benefactor to the human race.

During the past decade educators all over the world have been awakening to a realization of the importance of mouth hygiene on the health and efficiency of the school child. In a great many schools arrangements have already been made whereby the pupils have their teeth regularly examined and put in good condition. The greatest thing in this life is good health. The knowledge of how to obtain and preserve it should be acquired by everyone. How to live? In what way to treat the body? are questions which everyone should know how to answer. All children should know that sound teeth help boys and girls to win success in life by aiding in the development of physical vigor and mental efficiency; that bad teeth handicap children in acquiring knowledge and in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this life to which they are entitled, by interfering with digestion and retarding the growth of both mind and body.

We all realize the importance of good digestion on the health and strength of the body. We know that health depends absolutely upon the nourishment derived from food, and if we will give the matter a second thought we must realize how much digestion depends upon the proper preparation of the food in the mouth. Nature intended the teeth to be the instruments to prepare our food, and every lost tooth, and every decayed tooth, as well as every unclean tooth, is a handicap to Nature's process of digestion; for diseased teeth cannot properly perform their normal function, but force food to pass into the stomach unprepared for that organ to receive it.

Our stomachs can do much churning; but they cannot grind, consequently these masses of unground food remain in the stomach and putrify; they throw off poisonous acids and gases that the body must get rid of or die. The organs which remove these acids and gases from the body are called the organs of excretion and when they are overworked the machinery of the body becomes clogged and disease comes on. Let us realize that the diseased tooth is the unclean tooth, for food lodges