

The Menace of Civilisation

A Dental Expert Surveys the Physical Effects of Diet Deficiencies and Unhealthy Habits of Living

By DR. ERIC CARO

THE dentist sees hourly, day after day, the results of faulty living generally and of faulty diet in particular.

From long experience I know that New Zealanders

have, on the whole, very poor teeth. We are not the only people in this deplorable condition. In varying degrees all civilised nations are in the same trouble. We have, however, the name of being the worst off and those of us who are constantly seeing the ravages of dental caries (or tooth decay) especially in children, must reluctantly admit that the name is well deserved.

One naturally asks "Why?" to all this dental trouble among civilised nations. It is now realised that faulty, deficient diet stands at the back of all other causes. Among the many pronouncements of investigators I will quote Dr. Kappes of the Mayo Clinic, who says, "The only feature that seems to be of definite etiologic significance in preventing decay of the teeth is a diet composed largely of fruit and vegetables. Heredity, infectious diseases and care of the teeth seem to be of little relative significance. The meat diet of New Zealanders—for such it was termed in a newspaper resume of a Government report on the amount of staple foods used per head last year—is badly lacking in the elements necessary to tooth development.

THE human body is composed of myriads of cells, each cell a complete physico-chemical laboratory requiring for its special purposes special elements and complexes needed for its work. One needs lime to enable it to build bone, and it needs also vitamins of a special kind to enable it to use the lime wherewith to build the bone. Another needs chlorine to enable it to produce the hydrochloric acid of the gastric juices; but it also, again, needs vitamins of a certain kind to enable it to use the chlorine in the making of gastric juices. So on throughout the myriad cells of the human body.

Mineral salts are the scavengers of the body and the purifiers of the blood, they neutralise the waste products and assist in removing them from the system. A knowledge of the actions and reactions of mineral elements in the body is the foundation on which the natural system of

THE problem created by determination of physique in the civilised communities has become one of world-wide importance. In this article a dental specialist summarises the conclusions arrived at by his own experience, and gives clear indication of the new trend of preventive medicine.

living and healing must be built.

IT may surprise some of you to be told that, until sixty or seventy years ago when the work of Pasteur, Lister and Koch lightened

the darkness, we knew practically nothing about the cause of disease. These men and many others after them showed that all round and within us were microbes that caused disease. For many years—indeed up to the present day—this idea has dominated medical thought. There are microbes and viruses and toxins, therefore there is disease.

But it did not seem to occur to people that for every evil there is some contending good. The microbe is no exception to the rule. The human race would long since have been annihilated by the microbe had it not some efficient means of defence against it. This is where food comes in; food should be of such a nature that it assists to maintain the defence of the body against the microbe.

DR. McCARRISON, one of the world's greatest nutrition experts has said, "Two things are of paramount importance: first, no organ or tissue of the body escapes the effect of faulty food that is deficient in vitamins or other elements necessary for normal nutrition. Second, animals fed on such faulty foods are prone to be invaded by microbes of all kinds."

According to the kind of food fault—the kind of vitamin, mineral or other food essential lacking—this or that organ or tissue of the body becomes structurally imperfect and therefore functions badly. In one case it is the bone (rickets), in another case (beri beri), in a third case teeth (dental caries), in a fourth the eyes, in a fifth the stomach or intestines, in a sixth the kidneys or bladder and so on, right through all the organs and tissues of the body. Thus, depending upon the kind of invading microbe, diseases of different kinds are produced.

You all know that calcium or lime is one of the elements most needed in bone and tooth development. In order to retain health and strength, food should contain the necessary amount of lime salts. Even in the

(Continued on page 44.)



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