

NEWBROUGH (J.B.)
J. A. Smith

164 West 34th St.

A CATECHISM

ON

HUMAN TEETH.

A

FREE GIFT

For the Use of the General Public.

BY

J. B. NEWBROUGH, M.D., D.D.S.,

FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF DENTISTS,

128 WEST THIRTY-FOURTH STREET,

BETWEEN SIXTH AND SEVENTH AVENUES.

J. A. Smith

New-York:

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See pages 18 and 21, this pamphlet.

J. B. NEWBROUGH,

128 WEST 34TH STREET.

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A CATECHISM
ON
HUMAN TEETH

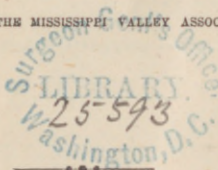
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1872.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1905, by

J. B. NEWBROUGH,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New-York.

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A CATECHISM ON HUMAN TEETH.

INTRODUCTION.

I AM asked, by nearly every one who calls, certain questions in relation to dentistry, the answering of which takes up much of my important time. Many of these people are strangers to me, and if I have not leisure or inclination to give their questions a full answer, they conclude that I lack the information, whether I do or not. They are hardly ever generous enough to think that I have already answered the same questions to other persons, perhaps a dozen times during the same day; and even now I shall not take the trouble to show how much I know, by dwelling on theories or mystified technicalities. I learned these things in the medical and dental colleges in this country, and by traveling for upward of six years, in all countries in all parts of the world, investigating the causes of the decay of teeth and the mode of arresting it.

The result of this information obtained, and of my own experience from many years' practice in this and other countries, I have here, in brief, set down, according to the best of my ability.

Cause of Decay in Teeth.

Query. Why do our teeth decay so rapidly? 'Twas not so in olden times?

Answer. Your whole physical structure is defective. Your teeth are subject to severer tests than the other parts of your body. They are composed mostly of lime, and any of the acids of the food or of the mouth decomposes them. This decomposition is usually called decay.

Q. And is it not decay?

A. No; a decayed tooth is detached in its socket, either by violence or disease, in which there is a general disintegration of its internal structure; but it may not have a hole in it.

Q. Why did not our ancestors' teeth equally fail?

A. Your ancestors were better developed physically; their teeth contained more animal matter, and the lime of the tooth was less easily acted upon. They had a free flow of healthful saliva, which of itself washed away the acid of the food; whereas, in your mouths, which are dry from the fever of a disordered stomach, the acids lie continually in the crevices of the teeth; also because the saliva that flows when the stomach is disordered, is of itself too acidulous.

Teeth of the Ancients.

Q. Why were the teeth of the ancients better developed?

A. For the same reason that they were better developed physically, but more particularly because they used them. In infancy they gnawed a bone and ate hard bread; the exercise strengthened their teeth, strengthened their jaws, strengthened their muscles, and all the organs of the face which are necessary for the resistance

of the elements that come in contact with the teeth. You, on the contrary, from infancy to maturity, eat soft food.

Your teeth have little to do ; they have no power of resistance, and are little better than dead substances. Nature considers them foreign and useless, and so discharges them ; she refers you to the mill and the stew-pot.

Q. But we frequently have good teeth until twenty or thirty years of age, and then, in a few years, they are all bad.

A. Exactly, in correspondence to your general physical failings.

Q. Is it not in the climate ? Before we came to this country, our teeth were good ; now they are all failing.

A. The climate has nothing to do with it—at least, no further than it has to do with the general organization. You had good teeth before you came to this country because you lived on plain food and kept a healthy stomach ; here, the various luxuries make you over-eat your needs ; your stomach becomes disordered ; the ducts that should discharge healthy saliva, keep your mouth either too dry or filled with injurious acids.

Besides this superficial destruction, your teeth are deprived of their natural sustenance. The lime and animal matter, which should nourish your teeth at the root, are miscarried, and, in a very disordered condition, discharged in the mouth, where the compound lodges on the surface of the teeth, under the name of tartar.

Teeth in other Countries.

Q. Is there no difference in the condition of people's teeth in different countries ?

A. Very great. The Swiss have good teeth; so have the Highlanders of Scotland. The serfs of Russia and the lower classes of Northern Germany have good teeth; they are regular, large, and well formed. These people all live on coarse, hard food. The same class of people in the south of France have poor, defective teeth; they are probably injured by eating too much fruit, the acids of which are permitted to lie around the teeth, owing to the filthy habits of the people.

The upper classes of Italians, French, English, and Irish have poor, defective teeth, compared to the middle classes of the same countries. The aristocratic people of all those nations are equally troubled with disordered stomachs and emaciated forms. The Austrians, Turks, Persians, and Chinese have all good teeth, seldom having toothache from infancy to old age—the exceptions are those who are able to live on luxuries. All the North-American Indians have good teeth. The Oregon and California Indians crack walnuts with ease with their teeth. They never lose any of them in old age. They always live on hard food. The Australian Indians are a very thin, emaciated people. Their teeth are not much subject to decay, but fail chiefly through the accumulation of tartar. Some of these hideous creatures, especially on the southern and western coast, are to be seen in their old days with scarcely a tooth in their heads, and scarcely flesh enough on their bodies to cover their bones. Their food consists chiefly of bugs and worms, thus showing that nature famished or nature gormandized, gives to man a toothless skeleton. In New South-Wales, New-Zealand, and South-Africa, the aborigines have good teeth. The British settlers of those countries have not; and their descendants have the same lank forms as Ameri-

cans, the same whining voice, and the same defective teeth.

Q. Then must it follow, that those who live in great altitudes and in rigorous climates have better health and better teeth?

A. Only so far as the necessities of those regions compel man's obedience to the laws of his existence. Exercise and temperance grow the man; without these, he is a shadow. Yet it is equally true, that when man's better judgment rules over his appetite, and he maintains true abstinence, and when the mother shall forego the pap to a crust for her teething infant, then shall man attain, though in genial climes, that stamina perfect, even to the soundness of his teeth.

Q. What facts illustrate the point?

A. In the lowlands of Germany, the teeth are more defective than in the highlands. In Scotland, the same rule holds good; but in Mexico, the people in the lowlands have good teeth, while those who live at an altitude of several thousand degrees, have poor, defective teeth. The same is also the condition of the teeth of the East-Indians. We are, therefore, compelled to believe, that chiefly in the mode of living lies the cause of health or disease, not only of the teeth, but of the whole physical structure.

Q. Is there nothing in hereditary descent?

A. Certainly; but that touches not the philosophy of this case. Once disease has set in, its increase is governed by the same cause as that which brought it on. It is a law of nature, that an imperfect thing begets its like. Yet it is equally true, nature, being very considerate to man, gives to delicate beings enough power to be healthy and happy through life, if man, on his part, would obey

its laws. The offspring of toothless parents have often good teeth through life, and, no doubt, could, in most instances, by proper attention and care.

Proper Attention.

Q. What is proper attention and care of the teeth of an adult?

A. Cleanliness and temperance.* As before remarked, the decomposition of the tooth is caused by acids. Food lodged about the teeth forms acids which destroy them, provided it be not removed after eating. Next to this is temperance, by which the stomach may be kept in proper order, so that the acids of the mouth may remain healthy. But when teeth have once begun to decay, the cavities should be thoroughly excavated and filled, so as to exclude air, water, or acid.

Filling Teeth.

Q. What should it be filled with?

A. Gold, if possible. But many other things are in use, the chief of which are amalgam, gutta-percha, and bone filling.

Gold fillings should be so thoroughly condensed in the cavity of the tooth, that it can not be penetrated by a sharp steel instrument, and afterward filed off and polished smooth with the surface of the tooth. To insert a gold filling requires from one to two hours' labor; but difficult cavities sometimes require from four to six hours each. The labor is very tiresome, and requires more skill than any other mechanism ever done by man. Ordinary cavities cost from three to four dollars each, and the filling will last for any number of years.

Amalgam is composed of silver, tin, and quicksilver;

* Temperance in eating.

it is mixed into the form of a paste, and, if well washed, will not tarnish after being inserted in the cavity of a tooth. It will also last for many years; but when inserted in front teeth, it has a cheap, unsightly appearance. The usual charge is from fifty cents to one dollar for filling teeth with it; some dentists, however, call it by other names, such as platina, adamantine, metallic cement, etc., and charge four or five dollars a cavity.

Gutta-percha is used extensively in France, but not much in England or this country. It is put in the cavity of the tooth with a hot knife. It is not very reliable, though considered sufficiently so to fill children's first teeth with.

A TRICK ON WASHINGTON.

Bone filling, or white zinc paste, has been used in France for upward of one hundred years; it has also been introduced in this country, but not very generally used. Dr. Marshall, of Chestnut street, Philadelphia, filled George Washington's teeth with this substance. The General complained of his breath hissing through his front teeth, in consequence of long-standing decay. Marshall told him he could stop that effectually, and so he did, smearing his paste from one tooth to the other. It got hard, and, owing to the pressure, set the old General's teeth aching, contrary to the promises of the Doctor. The old General called upon him, and, according to report, operated on the Doctor with the toe of his boot, and thereupon went straight off and had his front-teeth pulled out. This was a quietus to bone filling; but since that time there have been several original inventors and discoverers of the same thing; but whether they have received the boot degree, is not publicly known.

Some dentists pretend to fill all cavities and build up

old roots with it, and warrant them for life. Such talk is all nonsense. Yet it has some worth. When properly prepared and properly inserted in the cavity of the tooth it will last for several years. Owing to the ease with which it can be used, dentists seldom heed its correct component parts, or the happy point of its first intention.

Q. Do you recommend filling decayed teeth?

A. I do, if they are not much decayed, if they are sound in their sockets, if they have never ached, if you are willing to pay enough to have it well done.

Q. When is a tooth not worth filling?

A. After it ulcerates; after it has ached for a week or two, and when it is loose; in which cases they should be extracted.

Q. If we have all our decayed teeth pulled out, we will have but four left in the upper row.

A. Then you should have the four, or any less number, also extracted.

Q. Is not a sound, natural tooth better than an artificial one?

A. Certainly; but four natural ones are not equivalent to a full upper set of artificial ones. If you retain only three or four natural teeth, you can not have a good set of artificial teeth, whereas, if you have them taken out, you can, for the simple reason that a full set is a much better and more comfortable piece of work. Nevertheless, if you have plenty of money, retain the three or four natural ones, and have an imperfect set of artificial teeth; then, when you are tired of them, have the work done as it should be.

Q. Can not we have an upper set of teeth inserted and no lower ones?

A. If you have no lower teeth, or only three or four natural ones, an upper set of artificial ones will not be of much service, unless you have also a partial lower set of artificial teeth. You can not cut with one half of a pair of scissors, nor eat with half a set of teeth.

Extracting Teeth.

Q. Then comes the pain of extraction?

A. That can be entirely obviated by inhaling

Nitrous Oxyd Gas.

Q. What is its mode of operation?

A. Nitrous oxyd gas contains a very large percentage of oxygen, and when inhaled, increases the size of the globules of the blood, so that it does not circulate through the minute vessels of the system; and this prevents communication on the sensitive nerves, and, to some extent, on the motor nerves, which condition is improperly termed sleep, from its resemblance to it.

Q. Does it produce entire unconsciousness?

A. It does in about ninety-nine persons in a hundred.

Q. How long must the gas be inhaled before sleep ensues?

A. From two to three minutes.

Q. How long does a person remain insensible?

A. Generally about one minute, and sometimes two.

Q. How many teeth can be extracted in one minute?

A. About fifteen, by an experienced dentist; but if the teeth are difficult to approach, he may not get out more than one or two—it being the duty of a dentist to be careful more than to be rapid.

Q. Is it dangerous?

A. It is not. If the gas is impure, or too fresh, or too

stale, it is too disagreeable to inhale, and consequently prevents danger.

Q. Does it produce sickness?

A. Not unless the stomach is very much out of order.

Q. What measure of gas does it take to produce sleep?

A. The bag should contain about six gallons, but should not be inhaled longer than three or four minutes. If the person be not then asleep, the bag should be emptied, washed, and filled again with fresh gas, and tried again. One bagful is sufficient for most people. When the gas was first introduced as an anæsthetic, many dentists never emptied the inhaling bag, but used the contents over and over. Two or three deaths occurred in this way, not from the gas, but from the poisonous breath of other folks. *

Q. What is the sensation?

A. Very different on different people. Some declare that they have had the happiest dream of their life; some hear sweet music; some ride in the cars; some fly in the air; some go to heaven; some see their long-lost friends and relatives. One man, who was slightly inebriated, said, that when he went to sleep with the gas he went to hell, and that a million devils threw stones at him. One old woman, on awaking, cried out, "Which whipped? which whipped?" and immediately added, that she dreamed she had had a terrible fight with her husband. She does fight him nearly every day, but on this occasion she was pleased to find she had lost sixteen teeth in the combat. One young lady said she thought twelve different suitors appeared before her; each had a bouquet of flowers, and presented them to her, one at a time, with an awful jerk. She had twelve teeth extracted. But the

* Since the above was put in type, there have been extracted in my office 120,000 teeth under the influence of gas, without any ill effects.

majority of people sleep soundly and dream nothing at all, sitting perfectly still and quiet.

Q. Is it not better to have teeth extracted without as?

A. More sickness and death occurred before its use than now. In twenty-one hospitals in Paris, where teeth are extracted without charge, there is an average of sixty-four patients a day. In the year 1857, out of eighteen thousand two hundred patients, seven deaths occurred from the extraction of teeth; yet there were but thirty-six thousand four hundred teeth extracted. They took neither chloroform, ether, nor nitrous oxyd gas. There were also, in the same year, eighty-eight cases so debilitated from the shock, that they had to return to the hospitals for medical attendance. There is no convenient mode of gaining exact information of the number of teeth extracted and the deaths that occur from it, either in London or New-York; but we know that Dr. Colton, of the Cooper Institute, Drs. Flagg and Osgood, Boston, and myself, at 264 Sixth Avenue,* have extracted more teeth during the past year than all the hospitals in Paris. None of us have had a death, or even sickness requiring medical attendance. My own extraction, during the past year, amounts to about twenty-one thousand teeth.†

A Poor Family Doctor.

Q. Our family doctor says that persons having consumption, or inflammation of the lungs, heart disease, or inclined to apoplexy, should not take anæsthetics.

A. Your family doctor seems to feel very solicitous of your health. Ten chances to one, he knows nothing about anæsthetics, knows not what they are made of, or how they produce their effects on the system; that

* Removed to 123 West Thirty-fourth Street, November 1st, 1869.

† This was in 1865, since which time my business has nearly doubled.

he never gave them, that he never saw them used half a dozen times in his life, and that he does not know how or when they should be given. Also, ten chances to one he does not know whether your lungs are diseased; a hundred chances to one, he knows not the condition of your heart; and a thousand chances to one, that if it is diseased, he can not tell what is the matter with it. What is such a man's opinion worth, compared to a dentist's, who has studied and used anæsthetics for a dozen years? Every family doctor should remember his graduating injunction: "Not to give his opinion on a thing without knowing what he says." When a person in delicate health has twenty or thirty diseased teeth and roots that should be extracted, the family doctor, not knowing what to do, should call upon some intelligent dentist, and counsel with him as to the easiest mode of performing the operation. Instead of this, he sends the person to the dentist, cautioned not to use anæsthetics, but to have their teeth extracted; the person is filled with fear, and magnifies the symptoms of her supposed disease to the dentist; he can not prevail upon her to take nitrous oxyd gas, and she finally attempts to have the operation performed without taking any thing. One tooth is extracted; she sees the blood and faints; her friends who accompany her become frightened, and begin to howl in her behalf, and that's the end of it. She goes home with her stumps in her mouth, for another few months, but finally concludes that her family doctor may not know more than he ought to. She goes back to the dentist, and takes nitrous oxyd gas. Her teeth are extracted without pain; she claps her hands, and thanks God that it is all over. Then comes her blessing on the family doctor, who has kept her in continual fear

for the last ten years about the condition of her lungs. This is no exaggerated case ; it occurs every day in our office, and in the office of every dentist that does a large business.

Q. Is there no danger of the jaw-bone breaking ? We know a person who the doctors said had her jaw-bone all broken to pieces by having her teeth extracted.

A. That story is alike malicious with the doctor's advice against anæsthetics. The jaw-bone never was broken by extracting teeth. There is indeed a thin shell of bone, that proceeds up round the tooth, just beneath the gums, and this thin shell frequently comes off when the tooth is extracted, but it does no material injury. In fact, these prominences in many cases should be trimmed off, especially when a large number of teeth are extracted at one time. The gums get well quicker by it, and it leaves also a smooth and better foundation for artificial teeth. Some operators are too timorous to do this as effectually as it should be done.

Treatment of the Gums.

Q. The teeth being out, how should the gums be treated ?

A. Put two ounces of borax and one ounce of alum in a pint of water, and gargle the mouth five or six times a day with it.

Q. How soon can we have teeth inserted after these are extracted ?

A. If you have many teeth extracted, wait for three or four weeks, then have a set inserted. They will answer a very good purpose for six months or a year. When your gums are shrunk away, so that the plate

does not fit well, you can have a new set, or the same ones reset, which will last for many years.

Artificial Teeth on Rubber, Gold, Etc.

Q. What is the cost of a full upper set with gums on rubber?

A. Fifteen dollars.*

Q. Then, if the first set cost fifteen dollars, how much must be paid for having them reset into a permanent set?

A. Six dollars. A new duplicate set is ten dollars.

Q. How is it that some dentists charge thirty or forty dollars for an upper set on rubber?

A. That is their privilege. Some dentists labor for the dignity of the profession, and others for the benefit of their fellow-creatures. The former go on the principle of the man that kept the hotel in Arkansas. He had but one traveler in a year, and he charged him two hundred dollars for a night's lodgings, in order to support the dignity of his tavern. The cost of material to the dentist for a full set of teeth on rubber is—teeth, seven dollars; rubber, one dollar; wax and plaster, fifty-five cents; labor, five dollars.† The cheapest quality of plain teeth costs the dentist eight cents each, and the cheapest rubber four dollars a pound; but the labor of making four or five teeth on a plate is nearly the same as for a full set.

Q. Is rubber as good in the mouth as gold?

A. It is; and for a full set rather more comfortable for one or two teeth only, gold is less clumsy in the mouth.

Q. What of platina?

A. It is the finest work that can be put in the mouth,

* Since the above was printed, a demand of five dollars on a full set has been made by the Goodyear Rubber Company, against every dentist in the United States.

† See article on whalebone rubber on the fly-leaf, at the title-page of this pamphlet.

but only suitable for full sets. To persons who can afford the expense, I would recommend platina above all other work.

Q. What is the price of an upper set on platina?

A. Fifty dollars.

Q. What is the relative strength of all of these?

A. About the same. Rubber or gold is easily repaired; platina is difficult and expensive.

Q. What of silver?

A. Nearly all good dentists have abandoned its use, as unfit to go in the mouth.

The Cheapest Way to get a Set of Teeth.

Q. What is the cheapest way to get a set of teeth inserted, and have them good?

A. Go to any good dentist, have him take the impression, and make them for you. Talk much of your respectability, your acquaintances, your influence to send him custom; and after the teeth are ready, and tried in, tell him you did not call to take them, but were just passing, and was anxious to see if they were done, and especially that you want your friend to see them beforehand, and, too, that you did not bring the money to pay for them. The dentist will undoubtedly be too much of a gentleman to let you leave them; and so you get them away without paying for them.

Q. But he may send in his bill?

A. No matter; always send back word that the teeth do not suit. By a little perseverance in this manner, you will succeed in getting a set of teeth for nothing. Another way is to order two sets; first, one on rubber, and then one on platina. As soon as the rubber one is done, get it away, saying that as the platina will be done to-

morrow you will call and give a check on your banker for the whole amount in one bill. In that case it is better, however, that you give your wrong address, and that you never call for the platina set.

Dental References.

Q. Can you refer us to some good families for whom you have inserted teeth?

A. Certainly; but unless the importance of your case demands it, and unless you first furnish me with references of yourself, I can not send you into the houses of my most respectable patrons to examine their teeth. People generally feel a delicacy about artificial teeth, and they expect a dentist not to be exposing their misfortunes to every curious passer-by. He is not even at liberty to mention their names, unless he knows beyond all question that they have no objection. Some ladies have holes through the roof of the mouth, and are obliged to wear artificial palates; some have various fixtures to improve their looks; and it is quite unjust for a dentist to give their names, even to their most intimate acquaintances.

Deformed Teeth.

Q. What can be done for our little girl's teeth that are coming in crooked? She is nine years old.

A. When she is between the age of thirteen and sixteen, her teeth can be made straight and even by tying on ligatures. In the mean time, have her baby-teeth extracted at the proper period, to make room for the permanent ones.

Q. One more question: Our grandmother has been

without teeth for thirty years ; she is very feeble. Could she use a set of artificial teeth to any advantage ?

A. No.

Q. Only one more question : How long does it take to make a set of teeth ?

A. On rubber, five or six hours * on silver or gold, three or four hours ; on platina, two days.

Q. Just one more question : When is the best time to have our teeth extracted ?

A. When you please ; we make gas fresh every day.

Q. Only just one more question : Can I have an upper set of teeth without any lower ones ?

A. No. No more questions ; you asked that one before, and I answered it ; you are going all over it again, and that is just the reason I have written these things down.

* Allusion is here made to ordinary inelastic rubber. Whalebone rubber requires nearly double this time.

APPENDIX.

CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT.

For many years I have made it a custom to give Nitrous Oxyd Gas, and extract teeth free of charge to all persons getting artificial teeth inserted at my office. When I began this mode, I was acquainted with all my patrons; but since then my business has extended to many thousands of people. In consequence I can not be acquainted with so many; besides, many of them are transient residents. Some of them, in order to get three or four "back-teeth" extracted free of charge with the gas, promise they are "going to have" some inserted. Many never do. In a business as large as mine, I sometimes have half a dozen such persons in a day, which necessarily runs me to considerable expense. Others, again, move away before their gums are sufficiently healed, and so they are obliged to go to another dentist to get their teeth inserted. Another thing that urges people to doing things this way is, that there are many dentists who doubt their own ability to extract teeth well, and keep constantly an advertisement in the papers: "To insert teeth at a great reduction where the teeth are already out."

It is my purpose hereafter, from the fact of these things, to curtail my extensive extracting with the nitrous oxyd gas, by operating only for those who can conform to these conditions, to wit: For extracting teeth under the influence of gas, for the first tooth, one dollar; and for each additional tooth, fifty cents. The amount paid will be receipted and credited as so much paid on the artificial teeth, if inserted by me. For example: I extract for you fifteen teeth; you are to pay at the time eight dollars. Now you get a receipt for this, stating that you have paid this much on your account, and stating what your account is to be; so that in reality you are at no cost in the end for the extracting.

These conditions go into effect on the first of March, 1866.

Other Items for people who live at a distance from town.

If your gums bleed badly where a tooth has been extracted, observe if it bleeds "by jumps." If so, an artery is ruptured. You can stop it by putting a tight plug of cotton in the hole for thirty hours, and keeping quiet. When you take the cotton out, do it carefully. If it do not bleed "by jumps," it is of no account.

If you take cold after your teeth are extracted, and your face pains you, put on a large hot poultice of hops and vinegar.

If your gums heal slowly, use an alternate wash of tincture of myrrh diluted with water.

Wear your artificial teeth at night as well as day. Wash them with soap, and brush twice a day, no matter what they are inserted on.

Mothers should clean off the green tartar on little children's teeth by polishing them gently with a stick and pulverized pumice-stone.

Toothache from exposed nerve may be stopped temporarily, by inserting a little cotton saturated with a mixture of equal parts creosote and sulphuric ether. Ten drops oil of sassafras to the ounce of creosote and ether makes it better. To persons in the country, who can not run to a dentist the moment a tooth aches, this is a valuable recipe.

