

# ORAL HEALTH

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## EDITORIAL

### Dental Infections, Oral and Systemic

**D**R. WESTON A. PRICE has recently edited a two volume work upon the subject of Dental Infections, Oral and Systemic.

The first volume presents in great detail researches upon the fundamentals involved, and the second researches upon the many and varied clinical expressions of dental infections. Attention is drawn to the frequent misapprehensions and misconceptions of both dental and medical practitioners regarding infection about the teeth and surrounding parts. These the author claims have arisen chiefly because of a presupposition that the quantity and virulence of the organism determined in large part the danger of the host, and that comfort and serviceability were synonymous with safety and efficiency. Upon this erroneous fundamental conception it has been presumed that a large *quantity* of dental infection would do harm, whereas a small quantity would not.

The author, at the very outset, clearly sets forth that an essential factor in these cases is the individual's capacity for reaction, and that the person with the large quantity of pus, as evidenced by the flowing fistulæ, did not necessarily have more infection, but rather a difference in defence and the establishment and maintenance of a local and systemic quarantine. The lack of reaction about the tooth, and the resulting comfort, might only mean that the "quarantine" was not

in operation, and that toxin and bacterial invasion were passing to other parts of the body, there to break down tissues and shorten life.

Dr. Price also urges the view that the degenerative processes which we have thought of as various diseases, such as Bright's disease, heart disease, nervous system involvement, digestive tract disfunction, etc., are primarily the end products of disturbed processes of anabolism and catabolism, and that an important factor in disfunction will be found to be focal infection, whether of dental or other origin.

The two volumes are well written in readable style, and are submitted by the author as evidence (obtained through clinical and animal experimentation, extending over a period of twenty-five years, and conducted by himself and many collaborators), that focal infections are important contributing factors to many local and systemic lesions.

The vivisectionist will be pained to learn that Dr. Price's researches have required the use of upwards of five hundred rabbits a year for several years, but ought to be reassured by the statement that "many of these rabbits made a far greater individual contribution and service to the welfare of humanity than hosts of human beings," and that "rabbits that run wild and are chased by their enemies have not been as well fed and as happily housed, or been privileged to die under chloroform." Rabbits, like human beings, do not always appreciate their many privileges.

The many friends of Dr. Price, who have always admired his unbounded energy and enthusiasm, and who have followed his work with great interest, will welcome the publication of these two interesting volumes.

### Apply the Golden Rule

ONE hears much regarding codes of morals and ethics in these days, but after all, no "code", however carefully or cunningly contrived, will regenerate the man who is immoral or unethical at heart.

The dentist or other human being who has arrived at years of discretion, who has to be guided at every step by authority and instruction, is a mental and moral defective whom no code of ethics, however comprehensive, can save from his own folly or wrong doing.

Moreover, if a man gives out his thinking, instead of trying to do it for himself, he is an intellectual pauper who counts as a dead weight in the body politic. In so far as dental codes of ethics are rules of etiquette, they serve a useful purpose, but in the true sense it is impossible to codify conduct in the practice of any profession.

Let the principles of honesty prevail. With the application of the Golden Rule, and the exercise of courtesy between professional confreres, questions of ethics would be a thing of the past.