

The Body's Ellis Island

Parasitology

PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID, of the University of California, in an address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The vertebrate mouth from the standpoint of the parasitologist is one of the main portals of entry for parasitic infections of the digestive tract and its morphological annexes. In the case of civilized man, whose body is so generally protected elsewhere by clothing, shoes, hat and gloves, its relative importance becomes even greater, especially when we add the additional factor of the mobile hand and opposable thumb, the use of implements and the infantile tendency to put anything the hand grasps into the mouth.

The mouth of man is one of the greatest areas for contact with the environment. Through the posterior nares the inhaled air and the dust and germs collected from it on the surfaces of the nasal cavities have an indirect access to the buccal cavity. The food daily passed through the mouth, though weigh-

ing only several pounds, has passed through the hands of who knows how many hundreds of persons, sweating coolies rolling tea leaves in Chinese godowns, laborers in Arabia, Sao Paulo or Limon washing out coffee beans, Malays in Batavia roasting chocolate beans, negroes in Havana or Filipinos in Honolulu handling sugar, Mexicans picking oranges in Riverside, and so on through the long list of essentials and relishes that supply and embellish our daily menu. How far we should have to travel if we should attempt to subvert the rest of our bodies to the geographical range of environment which has been in contact with the foods and drinks which we daily introduce into our mouths. Truly, how provincial is the rest of our corporal substance in comparison with the travelled versatility of our oral cavity! How varied, too, are the substances which come in daily contact here with delicate mucous membrane. They range in temperature from below freezing to nearly boiling point and include both acids and bases, essen-

tial oils, fats and alkalis, sugars, salts and proteins of the widest range. Even under the most rigorous treatment of any mode of physiotherapy no other part of our body could receive daily so varied applications of the stimulating materials from the external world.

The mouth is also a region of no little mechanical shock and impact. Powerful muscles bring the teeth in contact with food which is ground up and mixed with the saliva. The teeth upon which this impact is first received transmit the pressure to the delicate tissues which invest their imbedded surfaces, and thence to the bony alveolar sockets in which they rest. No other part of the body receives such an impact upon so restricted a surface, except possibly the soles of the feet of the hobo or the athlete.

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".. And On Our Children"

Evolution

REV. BEN M. BOGARD, of Little Rock, as quoted in the *Arkansas Gazette*, December 10, 1928:

If the worst comes to the worst, we had better let our children suffer from disease and even die from neglect than to instill into their impressionable hearts the idea that the Bible is false and that it especially lies when it says God created man in his own image.

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