

## ANTHROPOLOGY

# Dental Health Decays

Since developing an over-bite, man has not given his teeth as much wear, but decay has increased. Children of broad-chested parents grow faster.

DENTAL DECAY is caused mainly by two factors: diet—especially carbohydrates, or sugar—and the way man chews his food, an anthropologist reported to the American Association of Physical Anthropologists meeting in Washington, D. C.

Dr. J. Lawrence Angel of the department of anatomy at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, said that from prehistoric to classical times, man used his teeth efficiently and gave his teeth a lot of wear. This is evident from early remains of man.

But, beginning with the Romans, teeth show less wear. Dr. Angel attributed this to better cooked food and to the development of an over-bite in man—the normal type in today's mouth.

In an over-bite the upper front teeth overlap the lower front teeth when the jaws are brought together. Before the de-

velopment of an over-bite, man's upper and lower front teeth came together exactly when the jaws were closed.

Dr. Angel said that of about 1,000 mouths from ancient Greece, he has found two groups that had a very small amount of dental decay.

The first group lived about 1700 to 1500 B.C. and were the bronze-age rulers of Mycenae, an ancient Greek city.

At this same time, however, the common people had very poor teeth, their remains show.

Dr. Angel also found good dental health among the Greeks of the Golden Age, who lived from about 600 to 300 B.C.

After the Greek period, dental decay became more widespread and common through the Roman and the Medieval periods.

Under the Turks, Dr. Angel said, not

only the dental health but also the general health of people degenerated. The Turks introduced the use of sugar instead of honey.

Since that time, the dental health of man has continued to decay. Already in the 19th century, general dental health had decayed to the level we know today.

Science News Letter, May 28, 1960

## Fast-Growing Children

THE CHILDREN of broad-chested parents grow faster and mature earlier physically than children of narrow-chested parents, an anthropologist reported to the meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists in Washington, D. C.

Dr. Stanley M. Garn of Fels Research Institute, Yellow Springs, Ohio, said that the motor behavior, or body movements, of the children of broad-chested parents developed earlier than those of children of narrow-chested parents.

He said the chest measurements used were based on X-rays so that only the bone structure was considered, not the flesh and body fat.

The chest measurements of the parents were taken first, and they were then divided into large and small chest sizes. Only the cases where both parents were either large or small were considered. Next the children of these parents were measured.

The data on the children involved: height, weight, bone development from birth through 17 years, and observation of motor behavior in infancy.

Science News Letter, May 28, 1960

## How To Reduce Radiation

HAND AND FOOT X-rays together show the physician as much about over-all bone growth of a person as if he had the more extensive series of X-rays that have previously been thought necessary, Dr. Stanley M. Garn of Fels Research Institute, Yellow Springs, Ohio, told the meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists in Washington, D. C.

The advantage of taking X-rays of just the hands and feet, in order to determine bone growth of the whole person, is that this involves less radiation exposure of the body.

Dr. Garn said that the X-rays used for this study were collected over a period of years, and consisted both of normal material and of clinical abnormalities from cooperating hospitals.

Science News Letter, May 28, 1960

## Facial Shape Changed

THE PAWNEE and Arikara Plains Indians of historic times have a medium-size head and medium-length face that are alike. They are quite different from Plains Indians of pre-historic times, of the Upper Republican River and the Nebraska cultures. The Pre-historic type had a broader head with a long face, Dr. William M. Bass, of the University of Nebraska reported to the American Association of Physical Anthropologists meeting in Washington, D. C.

Science News Letter, May 28, 1960



**MECHANICAL HAND**—A six-ounce mechanical "hand" enables persons with paralyzed hands to perform many daily tasks. It is demonstrated by Dr. Arthur J. Heather, left, of the Eugene du Pont Memorial Hospital, who invented the "hand" under a grant from the Easter Seal Research Foundation. Charles Daniels, right, assisted in designing the device.