

EDITORIAL

ORTHODONTICS

ORTHODONTICS, a discipline within dentistry, is concerned with the correction of dental irregularities. Darwin wrote that no two individuals are alike in all respects, so our standard of regularity is of necessity arbitrary and orthodontists are called to treat genetically determined conditions which have been labelled malocclusions.

Treatment is sought most frequently for dental arrangements which are not in our society today aesthetically pleasing, less frequently for masticatory inefficiency and occasionally for conditions which, if allowed to persist, would lead to a breakdown or deterioration of supporting and adjacent structures.

Slowly, a scientific analysis and approach is being developed and empirical methods discarded, but orthodontics is still in its infancy. It is, however, important that what is sound and proven in the discipline be made available to any who can benefit from treatment. Modern diagnosis will disclose the aetiology of abnormalities in teeth, the arrangement of teeth within the arch, or the spacial relations of the jaws, giving a firm basis for treatment planning. Within the limits imposed by inheritance it is now possible to prevent many undesirable developments or even to correct established ones. Overcrowding of teeth within an arch, unsightly and damage-prone protruding incisors, rotated individual teeth and the bizarre state arising in some cleft plates can all be at least improved, as can the imperfect inter-cusping which by adverse inclined-plane action may lead to disturbance of temporo-mandibular joint function.

Treatment of these and of many other conditions whether by simple or sophisticated methods falls to the orthodontist. He may work alone but more commonly as a team member with the dentist, oral surgeon and the surgeon.

Colonel Foster's paper, which appears in this issue, is commended as an introduction to this discipline, the scope of which, within the Army, may not be fully appreciated.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A copy of the telegram sent to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on the occasion of Her Birthday is given below:—

Representative Colonel Commandant and All Ranks Royal Army Medical Corps with their humble duty send their greetings to Her Majesty The Queen Mother their Colonel in Chief on Her Birthday.

The following gracious reply has been received:—

I am most touched by your message of Birthday Greetings and I send My Very Sincere Thanks to you and to All Ranks of the Royal Army Medical Corps.