

indecision and resistance to change all hindered plans set out so hopefully in Tenon's fifth memoir, with his vision of 'How splendid hospitals can be'. It is tempting to see parallels in some of the problems faced by Tenon in drawing up his reports and in the politics of the finance, administration and location of hospitals today. The recent Tomlinson Report on hospitals throws the same shadows of the debates within the medical and political professions as were seen in the late eighteenth century. And many people today would agree with Tenon that "hospitals are a measure of civilisation" and that a country's ability to give adequate care to its citizens is a crucial yardstick.

This publication is made all the more useful with a helpful introduction discussing the 1772 fire in the Hôtel-Dieu which started the debate about its future, the background to the production of the *Memoirs*, and Tenon's career itself. In addition, reproductions of plans, elevations and sections of a number of hospitals, biographical sketches, a glossary of technical terms, and a bibliography of Tenon's work round off the translation. This is an excellent reasonably priced study.

Julia Sheppard,

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Jean Théodoridès, Pierre Rayer
(1793–1867): *un demi-siècle de médecine française*, Paris, Éditions Louis Parente, 1997, pp. 266, illus., no price given (2-84059-011-5).

To the historian of infectious diseases, the name of Pierre Rayer at first sight brings to mind the casual observation of the rod-shaped bodies in anthrax blood in 1850, made with Casimir Davaine, who in the 1860s was to make further contributions to the understanding of the aetiology of anthrax. Now Professor Théodoridès, who thirty years ago wrote a definitive biography of Davaine, has added an attractively produced volume on Rayer, which reminds us forcefully of all his more pressing claims to our admiration for his contributions

to comparative anatomy, pathology, teratology, dermatology, and not least nephrology. In this biography, Théodoridès, with his keen insight into the development of French nineteenth-century medical science, displays his talent for an engaging and enlightening mixture of the personal and the scientific history of his subject, during a period which was particularly rich in both social, political, and medico-scientific developments in France.

Rayer's life and work are here set in the context of his times, from his birth in the "year of terror" of 1793, until his death in 1867, during the "Second Empire" of Napoleon III and only three years short of the outbreak of the disastrous Franco-German war of 1870–71. Through the work of Rayer and his contemporaries, this account demonstrates very clearly that far from being merely a "frivolous interval when 'tout Paris' hummed to the tunes of Offenbach" this was, more importantly, a period of inspired advance in the biological and medical sciences in France. The roll call of illustrious colleagues making their mark in the 1850s and 1860s here include Pasteur, Claude Bernard, Brown-Séquard, J M Charcot, Charles Robin, and Casimir Davaine, who all in one way or another influenced, or were influenced by, Rayer. They also all played their respective rôles in the Société de Biologie, founded in 1848, otherwise the year of revolution, four years before Louis-Napoleon became Napoleon III.

On the personal side we learn of Rayer's early life in Normandy and his family background. His birth certificate is quoted in full, as are later marriage certificates of both Rayer himself and his wife, and of the one daughter who lived (her elder sister had died at the age of 16) to make a satisfactory, though childless, marriage to Count d'Escayrac. The list of those present to witness the signing of the marriage contract is impressive. In addition to the family, the fifty-odd guests included several ministers of state and other important politicians, as well as no less than thirty members of the Académie des Sciences and other Academies of the Institut de France. Apart from many such original documents and

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letters reproduced here, the book's main focus is on the work of Rayer: five chapters are devoted to meticulous analysis of his contributions to nineteenth-century medical science. It is an impressive collection of observations on a wide variety of subjects: from his doctoral thesis on the history of morbid anatomy to the observations on human and animal teratology. His pioneering studies in comparative pathology range from classic papers and books on glanders and tuberculosis to foot-and-mouth disease, animal pox diseases and anthrax, and culminated in a textbook of comparative medicine (1863). His plates of glanders lesions reproduced here are haunting in their realism, as are those accompanying his other major texts on kidney disease, produced between 1837 and 1841. The reproductions of both glanders and kidney disease colour plates here are of high quality, and join other well chosen illustrations in a text which will be treasured as an invaluable source of reference by present and future historians.

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Don Finley, *Mad dogs: the new rabies plague*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1998, pp. 215, \$22.95 (hardback 0-89096-804-7), \$14.95 (0-89096-922-5).

Britain is a nation known for its numbers and varieties of dog lovers, many with a penchant for travelling, and shorter or longer stays abroad, preferably accompanied by their pets; and public arguments for and against quarantine laws never cease. This well informed account of recent outbreaks in the United States, by a medical journalist who has done an impressive amount of homework, is of interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

The main story here concerns an outbreak of canine rabies, vectored by wild coyotes, in Texas. Beginning in 1988, the disease was introduced by coyotes and spread to domestic dogs and pet owners along the US-Mexico

border. It is a sobering and well told tale of an epidemic in a wild life population on the move, respecting no borders, and no individuals of its own or other species.

The second strand of Don Finley's story concerns the efforts to develop protective measures for those—humans and their animals—in the path of the epidemic: in this case the development of oral vaccines for wild life, to be air-dropped, suitably camouflaged in the form of various baits (unappetising to various degrees, in order to discourage children in the area from sampling them). The focus here is primarily on the V-RG (vaccinia-recombinant glycoprotein) anti-rabies vaccine, developed since the beginning of the 1980s by scientists at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, collaborating with colleagues at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. When in 1984 the bio-engineered V-RG vaccine was found, almost by chance, to work as an oral vaccine in racoons—raccoon rabies had been steadily moving north since the mid-1970s, reaching Pennsylvania in 1982—the two American institutions joined forces with French commercial vaccine producers. The battle to prove the safety and acceptability of oral rabies vaccination for wildlife began in earnest.

It was to be a long drawn-out battle, largely because of the complexity of rabies problems in the USA. Unlike Europe and Canada, each with just one or two major rabies host species and where comparable schemes had been successful, the United States have distinct viruses in racoons, foxes, skunks, dogs, coyotes, and a number of bat species. The very number of vector species presents difficulties in baiting arrangements. Adding to the obstacles in the 1980s and 1990s were political difficulties, and the sometimes unyielding attitudes and differences of opinion between leading scientists and public health officials involved in the tests and negotiations concerning safety and eventual approval of the live oral vaccines to be used in the air drops.

In Texas, air drops of V-RG vaccine bait have taken place annually since 1995, the last in January 1998. Reported cases in coyotes and