

Book Reviews

scientist and politician eventually sacrificed his scientific pursuits to his politics, but in his later years he was able, as a deputy, to urge upon the French parliament the necessity for a number of reforms in social medicine which he had developed over the preceding decades.

Raspail's long life—for he lived to be eighty-four—spanned a period of great turmoil in European history and of fundamental development in science and technology. It began under the Terror of the French Revolution in 1794 and he grew to maturity with a passionate belief in many of the principles which had inspired it. After an early training at a seminary in Avignon, abandoned when he found he had 'lost his faith', Raspail took up scientific studies—botany, zoology, anatomy, physiology, chemistry and physics—and when he manned the barricades in the abortive rising of 1830 he was already the author of fifty scientific papers. Among them were the reports of much original work on the physiology and pathology of the cell, so anticipating Schwann and to some extent Virchow, to the point that Broca claimed 'Le cellule est toute française, et appartient à Monsieur Raspail'. This is probably too sweeping a judgement, but Raspail may certainly be regarded as the founder of histochemistry. After two years in prison for his part in the rising, years spent in writing works on organic chemistry and plant physiology, he began to turn his attention to medical problems and succeeded in rediscovering the *acarus scabiei*, first noticed by Bonomo and Cestoni in 1687 and since lost to view. But his political sympathies soon led him into the field of social medicine and from 1840 to 1848 he gave his services to the sick poor without fee, although he characteristically refused to take a medical degree on principle. In 1848 he was again active in the revolution against Louis Philippe and himself read the announcement of the establishment of the French Republic from the Hôtel-de-Ville in Paris. When Louis Napoleon, who defeated him in the presidential election, betrayed the democratic principles of the revolution by assuming dictatorial powers, Raspail was again in trouble and had to live in exile in Belgium for nine years. It was as the 'people's friend' (*L'Ami du Peuple* was the title of a newspaper which he edited) that he was most popular in France, but his medicinal preparations, many of them employing camphor, and especially his 'liqueur Raspail' (a tincture of vegetable extracts) were also extremely well known. There is still a Pharmacie Raspail in Paris, as well as a boulevard named after him, but, curiously enough, his dramatic life has had to await an American biographer for a comprehensive and scholarly account. The interesting, if poorly reproduced illustrations, are a definite addition to the text, and the craggy and determined face of Raspail at the age of forty (looking some twenty years older) is a true index of his character. Dr. Weiner is to be congratulated for seizing upon a subject of such universal interest and for her competent handling of many disparate themes in a well-written text.

F. N. L. POYNTER

The Operator for the Teeth, by CHARLES ALLEN, reprint of 1685 edition with a new introduction by R. A. Cohen (limited edition of 250 numbered copies), London, Dawsons, 1969, pp. x, 22, illus., £10 10s. 0d.

This slim volume contains a facsimile of the original edition of *The Operator for the Teeth* by Charles Allen published in 1685 at York, with an introduction by Mr.

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R. A. Cohen of Warwick. It is an elegant production, and while one is grateful to the publishers for making available the original text of the first work on dentistry written in English, its price is undoubtedly high.

There are only two known copies of the 1685 edition, one is in the library of the College of Dentistry at New York University and the other is in York Minster, and from the latter the present facsimile has been taken.

After the death of Robert Davies (1793–1875), who had been Town Clerk of York, his widow presented a collection of valuable books to the library of York Minster and among them was a copy of the 1685 edition of *The Operator for the Teeth*. In 1868 Davies had published a list of books printed by John White of York which included *The Operator for the Teeth*, but surprisingly medical and dental historians were unaware of the existence of this edition until a description of a copy then belonging to Dr. Theodor Blum appeared in the American press in 1931.

It is perhaps the fascinating story of the confusion surrounding the three editions of the book, so admirably unfolded by Mr. Cohen in the introduction, which will make the publication of this facsimile most welcome to dental historians. The second edition of *The Operator for the Teeth* was issued in Dublin in 1686, and the third edition with the title, *Curious Observations in that Difficult Part of Chirurgery relating to the Teeth* was published in London in 1687.

The introduction represents many years of diligent research by its writer, and it is a matter of regret to him that it has proved impossible to find any real information about Charles Allen himself. 'Operator for the Teeth' was the title then used by dentists who held appointments to the Royal family. After Allen's name on the title-page is 'Professor of the Same', and this phrase has in the past given rise to some discussion. It was merely meant to imply that the author followed the same profession as operator for the teeth.

The treatise itself is a slight affair. It is not easy to be sure for whom it was intended. The poem seems to be directed at the public, whereas the advertisement at the end of the book appears to be addressed to such gentlemen as were inclined to practice the art of dentistry.

The anatomy of the teeth and jaws is dealt with in an elementary fashion, the causes of 'the Tooth-Ake, looseness of the Teeth, and the decay of the Gums' are explained in an ingenious manner, but little practical advice is offered on how to treat these conditions. The final section of the work is devoted to children's teeth but it is no more concise than the preceding sections, although it does contain one pertinent piece of advice 'that in drawing the old, or sucking tooth, a great care is to be taken not to hurt the new one lying under it.'

J. E. MCAULEY

Volksgesundheit. Probleme und Forschungsgeschichte, ed. by ELFRIEDE GRABNER (*Wege der Forschung*, Band 63), Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967, pp. viii, 575, illus., DM.60.

The roles played by folk medicine (practised among the people) and school medicine (handed down in written form at universities) changed in the course of the centuries when folk remedies were written down in herbals and other compilations, and