



**Books on Dentistry in the Library of the  
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow \***  
**James Beaton \*\***

OF the 24,000 books currently held in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, fewer than one hundred are classified in 'dentistry'. There are a number of reasons for this. First, is the relatively late involvement in dentistry of the College (or the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons as it was originally known.) This did not occur until 1879 when the first Licence in Dental Surgery was awarded by the Faculty. By that time the Faculty had been in existence for almost 300 years and the Library for about 200. Second, is the relatively peripheral status of the dental profession in relation to the College Library. The evidence of the Faculty Minute books is that the Higher Dental Diplomates from the 1920s and the Fellows in Dental Surgery from the 1960s were not involved to any great extent in the running of the Library by serving on its committee. Third, the Dental Hospital has had a library for some considerable time and this has been and continues to be a source of information, not only for dental students but also for dental practitioners, consequently the College Library has not been fully utilised.

There are about one hundred books on dentistry and many are historically valuable and interesting. Amongst the oldest is the *Libellus de Dentibus* of Bartholeo Eustachio or Eustachius first published in 1564, although the College's edition dates to 1727. Eustachius, best known for his eponymous tube made considerable contributions to the study of the anatomy of the teeth. Another important work on the same subject is Alexander Naysmith's *Researches on the Development, Structure and Diseases of the Teeth* which dates from 1839, the same year as his discovery of the structure which was named Naysmith's Capsule. In the latter part of the 19th century, histology of the teeth became important and this was reflected by the presence in the collection of *Mikrophotograpischer Atlas der Pathologie menschlicher Zahne* by the German pathologist and pioneer radiologist, Otto Walhoff.

Comparative anatomy was an important 19th century pursuit and features in the collection. Perhaps the most outstanding work in this respect is Sir Richard Owen's *Odontography or a Treatise on the Comparative Anatomy of the Teeth*. Owen's work deals with the anatomy of the toothed vertebrates, living and extinct. Comparative anatomy was also the subject for a work by Robert Blake, a Dublin dentist.

His *Essay on the Structure and Formation of the Teeth in Man and the Various Animals* appeared in 1801 and was a translation of his inaugural dissertation for the degree of MD which he obtained from Edinburgh University. A late 19th century addition to this subject is Francis Hancock Balkwill's work with the intriguing title, *The Testimony of the Teeth to Man's Place in Nature*.

The collection also holds student textbooks such as, *On Extraction with Notes on the Anatomy and Physiology of the Teeth* by William Woodburn, Dental Surgeon to the Western Infirmary in Glasgow. Henry Sewell, Dental Surgeon to the West London Hospital wrote a work entitled, *Student's Guide to Dental Anatomy and Surgery* which also features in the collection. Perhaps most interesting in this area is the work of Edward Roughton, a general surgeon, not a dentist but who nonetheless published *Oral Surgery: a Textbook of Diseases of the Mouth for Students of Dentistry*.

The most noteworthy work on dentures and dental mechanics is the *Dissertation on Artificial Teeth in General*, published in 1797 by Nicols Dubois de Chemant. Also important in this respect is one of the works of Sir John Tomes, often referred to as the founder of British dentistry, the Library holds his *Instructions in the Use and Management of Artificial Teeth* published in 1851. It is interesting to note that many of the dental books came into the Library almost as soon as they were published. A good example of this is illustrated by another of Tomes' books, *A System of Dental Surgery* published in 1859 containing a hand-written note on the front pastedown recording that it was purchased by the College Library on 12th August of that year.

Paediatric dentistry is not forgotten in this small collection of books. One of the most important in this field is Robert Denison Pedley's *The Diseases of Children's Teeth and Their Treatment*, published in 1895. The most outstanding work on dental surgery is James Edward Garretson's *A System of Oral Surgery*. This is the second edition of his *Treatise on the Diseases and Surgery of the Mouth*, published in 1869. The work of Leonard Koecker also appears in the collection. Koecker, although German practised in America and the Library holds the second edition of his *Essay on the Diseases of the Jaw and Their Treatment*. The editor of this work is one J B Mitchell a Glasgow graduate who obtained the MD of Glasgow University in 1838 and died on 29th August aged 67. One of Koecker's works, *Principles of Dental Surgery* appears with annotations, none too complimentary. Of one of Koecker's descriptions of a procedure, the anonymous annotator notes "Shameful and disgusting fibbing. The author is not to be trusted."

Many of the classics of dentistry appear in the Library. Amongst these are Hunter's *Natural History of the Human Teeth* and Joseph Hurlock's *Practical Treatise on the Dentition*. Thomas Berdmore's *Treatise on the Disorders and Deformation of the Gums* published in London in 1768 is also present, he was one of the first to use the microscope to examine the minute structures of the teeth.

The work of the "Father of Modern Dentistry," Pierre Fauchard is also represented. This is his 3rd edition of *Le Chirurgien Dentiste* published in Paris in 1786. The early 19th century work of Joseph Fox is also in the collection. The Library holds the first and second editions of his *Natural History of the Human Teeth* published respectively in 1803 and 1814.

The provenances of the books in the College's dental collection are also interesting. Dr J Menzies Campbell's work, *Dental Bibliography: British and American 1682-1880* was gifted first of all by Dr Campbell to Professor T K Munro, Regius Professor of the Practice of Medicine at Glasgow University and subsequently after Munro's death to the College. Other local owners or donors of books include Dr J F Webster formerly Dean of the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School who gifted five items to the Library. An eminent local medical practitioner who also gave a dental book to the College was Mr G H Edington, who donated a copy James Sim Wallace's *Variations in the Form of the Jaws*. George Henry Edington was President of the College from 1927 to 1929.

There are examples in the collection which indicate that some dental books were possessed by medical practitioners. J C F Maury's *Traite's Complet de Van du Dentiste* was published in Paris in 1828. Maury's work was the first to describe a mouth mirror and he is considered to be the inventor of the dental probe. The signature on the cover of the work reads "Wm McTyer, Paris 1828." McTyer graduated MD from Glasgow University in 1826 and the following year obtained the Licence of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He was evidently in Paris in 1828 but in 1829 he was back in Glasgow becoming a member of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. McTyer spent the greater part of his career as a physician in Maybole where he died in 1878.

A book from the library of the Greenock Medical and Chirurgical Society is also to be found in the dental collection. This is John Fuller's *Popular Essay on the Structure and Formation of the Teeth*, dating from 1815. The Society was disbanded in 1851 and was succeeded by the Greenock Medical Society in 1865. The latter possessed the 3rd edition of Chapin Aaron Harris's *Principles and Practice of Dental Surgery* published in 1848 which has subsequently found its way into the College Library. The catalogues of the Library published in 1885 and 1901 show that many of the books originally in

the Library are missing and probably lost. It is hoped that in the future an annotated listing of all the dental books owned by the Library up until the end of the 19th century will be published.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* An abridged version of a paper delivered to the Autumn Conference of the Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry at Glasgow, September 1998 and published in the Dental Historian No.34: November 1998.

\*\* James Beaton, Librarian, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow and member of the HDRG.