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B. R. Townend

MR. PATENCE, QUACK

By
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MR. PATENCE, QUACK

By B. R. TOWNEND, L.D.S.Lpool

"Man is a dupeable animal. Quacks in medicine, quacks in religion, and quacks in politics know this, and act upon that knowledge. There is scarcely any one who may not, like a trout, be taken by tickling."—*Robt. Southey.*

THE eighteenth century, the age of the gold-headed cane, was also the golden age of quackery. There flourished in London during that period among scores of others of a like kidney, one Mr. Patence whose advertisements in the newspapers of the time are so numerous and so entertaining that one can draw from them a fairly close picture of an impudently engaging fellow who appears, and certainly deserves, to have tickled many a credulous trout. These advertisements which are contained in *Lysons's Collectanea*, Vol. 1, British Museum (Press Mark, 1881-b.b.), to

which my attention was drawn by Sir Ambrose Heal and which through the kindness of the Trustees of the Museum I obtained photostats, are the only sources of information I have been able to obtain concerning the gentleman in question.

C. J. S. Thompson in his entertaining *Quacks of Old London* quotes a few of his advertisements but gives no information other than this. A query in "Notes & Queries," a usually fertile source of information, was sterile, and an inquiry from the Royal Humane Society—with the foundation of which Patence seems to have played some part—elicited the sad information that their premises had been bombed and all their records buried, if not destroyed. The war has prevented any further research, but the 114 advertisements I have at my disposal, ranging from 1770 to 1802, are a rich

enough field to give some idea of the colour of the man.

We find him in 1770 practising at No. 8, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, the home of Dr. Johnson, and not far away from Racquet Court, which was the home for many years of such famous dentists as Watts, Rutter, Berdmore and the Parkinsons. He claims to have "invented, and makes Artificial Teeth, which will retain an excellent white, with a fine enamel polish, till worn out, without that dangerous method of transplanting." It is claimed that these teeth are not made of bone, ivory, human, or sea-horses' teeth and the price is half-a-guinea each for front teeth, whole sets less in proportion. Possible competitors are warned off with the remark: "No operators need apply out of curiosity, as they will not be treated with." Evidence, which will grow with our study, of Patence's versatility is shown in a *nota bene* to this advertisement:

"N.B. Dancing taught in the most masterly manner, to grown persons, or children; and those who have learned may practice on Monday and Friday evenings at a very easy price."

It is interesting to speculate of what these teeth were made. Du Chateau and De Chemant did not experiment with porcelain teeth until 1774-76, and De Chemant did not bring his patent to England until 1791, and then it was a jealously guarded secret. However, we shall see that Patence later claimed to have experimented with porcelain teeth before De Chemant, with what truth I know not. In support of his claim there is a reference in an advertisement of 1776 to the colour of his artificial teeth being "secured by fire." It may be that further research will wrest the laurels for the discovery of porcelain teeth from the brows of Du Chateau and De Chemant. It may be that these teeth were made of some kind of paste similar to that recommended by Jacques Guillemeau in 1597 consisting of gum elemni or mastic, white coral and prepared pearls. (See Lindsay, Lilian: *A Short History of Dentistry*. Lond., 1933; p. 45.)

In 1775 Patence is puffing the famous "Goddards Philosophic or Universal Pills for all internal and external disorders incident to Men, Women, or Children."

W. Goddard was physician to Kings Charles I and II according to Salmon, who, in his edition of Bate's Dispensatory, says that Charles II gave him £1,500 for the formula. Other accounts give £5,000 and £6,000. Salmon says that the principal ingredient was an oil distilled from human bones, the oil to be distilled from the bone or bones of that part of the body where the disease happened to be; thus for apoplexy or vertigo the skull was used, for sciatica the femur, and so on. There is some doubt as to Salmon's veracity. Dr. Munk in the Roll of the Royal College of Physicians (1878) says the inventor was Jonathan Goddard, who was associated with Cromwell and made Principal of Merton College and M.P. for Oxford University. At the Restoration he was removed from his Wardenship, but later became Professor of Physic at Gresham College, London, and it was there that with a few scientific associates he helped to found the Royal Society. (See A. C. Wootton: *Chronicles of Pharmacy*, 2 vols.; Lond., 1910; Vol. II, p. 179.) Patence "improved" these pills and cites thirty-three complaints "etc. etc. etc." which they will cure, finally stating that "With these Pills Mr. Patence always preserved his florid complexion and constitution."

In the same year under the heading

"An Extraordinary Advertisement, VERITAS. To the Nobility, Gentry, and all who are afflicted. No Cure, No Pay. *Ne Plus Ultra*."

a claim is made to cure

"that most dreadful disorder, Loss of Uvula, and opening into the head, in the mouth, near the throat."

An appliance is used "hardly discernable [*sic*] from real flesh" and "I only advertise that the poor as well as the rich may have relief." This advertisement and a number following give the address as No. 403, Strand, near Southampton Street, and concludes:

"Mr. Patence makes Artificial Legs on the truest Mechanical principle."

The next advertisement of the same year is so priceless that I have transcribed it in full:

"We are well informed by persons of veracity, that the celebrated Mr.

Patence, near Southampton-Street, in the Strand, was foretold when sitting on his mother's knee at two years of age, that he would be a very great mechanic, a champion in physic, the greatest England ever produced; that he would be hated by many of the men, but be beloved by his king and the women; that he would accomplish the greatest cures which was ever performed, and live to a good old age, and go with crutches; and the person who calculated his nativity, foretold that he himself would die a miserable death, which he did accordingly, and we find the first part begins to be accomplished, for last week he had three Physicians under his care, who declared they never saw his equal. He last Sunday took a man under cure, of Mr. Carr's, in Little Britain, who has been ill ever since the year 1745, with both legs, and been turned out of four hospitals incurable, and could not by any means get relief."

The amazing self-confidence of the man is shown in yet another specimen of 1775, which commences:

"As it never was my intent to depreciate the merit of any particular person, so neither shall that gift that God has given me, be buried in oblivion."

He compares his pill to "a blazing star on rejoicing night, for break the cohesion and set one on fire, they show a royal lustre."

The following example, again from the same year, is particularly interesting because it makes reference to the practice of transplantation of teeth, an operation which was popularised about this time by John Hunter. Hunter rather ran the thing to death, and offered a number of somewhat specious excuses to justify the failures and untoward results—some of them fatal—which were reported as arising from it. Patence disapproved of the operation, but I will let him speak for himself:

"This morning at eight o'clock, with the blessing of God, arrived in perfect health, at his house opposite Fountain-Court, Strand, after a comfortable passage of eight hours sleep, that celebrated and ingenious Dentist, Mr. PATENCE, who begs leave to address the Nobility, etc., who chuse to have

that sinful and unnatural operation performed of transplanting of teeth, that without running the risk of danger, or extricating them from bunters, chimney-sweepers, rag-gatherers, cinder-women, kennel-rakers, whores, thieves, and pick-pockets, many of whom are eat up with the foul disease, and though they have undergone salivation, yet experience teaches him, that the corruptive matter cannot be eradicated from the marrow, blood, and bones. . . ."

There is no doubt that Patence was nearer the mark in this respect than the great Hunter, who argued strongly against the possibility of transmission of venereal disease by transplantation of teeth, a possibility which we now realise as most likely. The same advertisement then goes on to describe his own invention, which is to use the teeth of corpses "after purification." It is not stated if these teeth are used for transplanting, but from other evidence I am inclined to think that Patence used them—as was done well into the middle of last century—as pivots on a bone or ivory base.

In November of 1775 we find Patence advertising for a house "between Temple-Bar and Charing-Cross, not exceeding £40 a year; if just out of the main street the better." He was successful in getting a house in December of the following year, "a large commodious house, with every convenience, No. 2, Catherine Street, two doors out of the Strand." It seems that the house was a little too commodious, because in the same advertisement he offers to let unfurnished the second floor for £20 a year.

There is a certain ingenuousness in the way Patence jumps from one thing to another. In an example of the same year he tells how

"This week was brought to him Mrs. Ratcliff's Children in the Strand, when the wretches, those called faculty, not knowing what to do, has suffered a cancer to eat through the under jaw bone, so that part dropped into his hand. He pities you who trust to pomp and parade, your lives are not of long duration, for the daily complaints of the afflicted, through pride and ignorance, shudder human nature to hear them."

In the next breath he says: "Those per-

sons who send Mr. Patence threatening letters are desired to sign their names to them, and not like villains stab a man in the dark." Apparently, as might be expected, Patence was the butt of abusive and scandalous talk. The cleverness of his advertisements must have created many jealous rivals. We find later in 1787 his indignation at the top of its form concerning a scandalous report which had been published of his two daughters likely to injure "that virtuous system which has ever marked their conduct through life." He virtuously assures the public that "his daughters have never absented themselves one hour from him without his consent." What the two lasses had been up to—I do not know!

In April, 1776, we have our first specimen of Patence's versification which he continued to use at intervals later. His self-praise in prose is not marked by an undue amount of modesty, but in verse he throws diffidence to the winds.

"Hence, idle talk of Boerhaav, and his skill;
For Ratcliffe too, essayist—Stop your quill—
Ev'n Galen's fame it lessens in your sight,
And all his sons are left in endless night!
Patence, come forth! and prove your claim,
The first in physic! on the list of fame.—
For palsies, dropsies, and convulsion fits,
Ev'n falling sickness, to your skill submits.
The next as Dentist, all the world can tell,
How great your judgment, and how great your skill,
That all diseases, defects, deforms, obey your will.

"N.B.—Mr. Patence's teeth never turn black."

An interesting if not very complimentary reference to female dental practitioners is contained in the following of the same year: "This day he (Patence) took a Lady under care whose teeth are ready to drop from their Sockets; she has been under a She Dentist. Sure people will see their error in time."

The day of equality of the sexes was a long way off in 1776!

Patence showed his good sense in objecting to the immoderate use of mercury, which was a very prominent drug in the *materia medica* of his times. "Never uses a grain of mercury in any of his cures or operations," he tells us, and offers to supply "all the fore and hind parts of the upper jaw-bone, the septum nose, plate [*sic*, palate] bone, etc., fixed into the alveoli, artificial front of the mouth, natural teeth, restored perfect speech, regained the happy use of eating, drinking, drawing the breath without difficulty, smelling, etc., which had been destroyed by mercury and the unskilful practice of eminent bunglers." Whether these restorations were to replace the ravages of mercurial necrosis or of syphilis which had been treated by the mercury is not clear. In the same advertisement we have another comparison between Mr. Patence and some of the giants of medicine, much to the detriment of the giants:

"Mr. Patence rivals all the egilopical works of Æsculapius the fictitious God-Physician. Apollo's Son, and the Sons of Boerhaave and Galen, who knew no more of performing such masterly operations, which have been brought to perfection by Mr. Patence."

A month later he writes to the Editor of the *Morning Post* in this strain:

"To prove that the complaint of a dearth of poetical abilities is indefensible and groundless, the under-written lines are given to the public; it would be almost superfluous to add, they are the *elegant versification* of that *Poeta Nascitur*, that medical Phoenix, Mr. Patence; thus they smoothly run:

"Truth and candour's his guide, to be short, plain, concise,
Cures the mouth, teeth, gums, jaw-bones, head, body and eyes,
Go try all mankind, and when out of their power,
Your afflictions can *amortize* health quickly restore.
And should indigence offer their cases deplore."

This ebullition of poetic phrensy, though hardly in my opinion great poetry, apparently pleased Mr. Patence greatly, because he continues:

"A poetess in Rome, we learn, had

lately coronatorial honours decreed her; what a defect in our discerning judgment does it evince, that Mr. Patence's head (for who can deny he wears one) should be unencircled with wreaths of bays. Ungrateful nation! to suffer the *external* of that *caput* to remain bald of honours, from whose internal productions, such *harmonious members* have derived their source. But not to poetry alone is the *forte* of Mr. Patence limited—he, like the admirable Crichton universally excels; but the Prosaic walk, beggars all descriptions, *diction, energy, climax, anti-climax, connection, consistency, and sententiousness*, all his own; but in his choice of the *Literæ tonantes* all rivalry is defied; *egilopical periculosity, mucilaginary egressionary, dentification, etc. etc. etc. ad infinitum, verba sni generis*, amply demonstrate his *powers verbal*, as well as his capacity of *lexicographical degurgitation*. What a mortifying consideration, that such a man should be shamefully neglected;—Mead, Sydenham, Hulf, Radcliffe, and Boerhave, he tells you *himself*, were to him, in point of physical knowledge, as a *mite* to a *mountain*; yet, such the caprice of fortune, they all lolled in chariots, which *Esculapius Anglicanus*, or which is synonymous, Mr. *Patence*, continues maugre his profundity of knowledge, a *peripatetic*.* Shame, where is thy blush? Would it not be a just judgment on the nation, was the period to arrive, when man should not possess a sane tooth in his head, nor a uvula to express a *tontification* of his malady, to that salutiferous porter of Hygeia, distinguished here below by the *terrene* application of *Patence*.

“DENS DUPLEX.

“Oct. 29 (1776).”

* One is reminded by Patence's somewhat rueful reference to the gold-headed cane fraternity loling in their chariots, of the words of that worldly wise old French surgeon, Pierre Dionis:

“I have formerly seen a man at *Paris*, who continually strolled about the streets the whole Day crying incessantly, *Have you any Corns on your Feet or Toes? I take them out without pain*; but am not able to tell you whether he was as good as his Word: But if he was

After such a high-flown self-tribute the statement in another advertisement in the same month “Never goes journeys or gives credit” is something of an anti-climax!

An interesting sidelight on the methods of practice of the times is found in a footnote which says:

“Advice to the poor, gratis. No attendance after five in the evening, being obliged to attend patients abroad after that time.”

The use of testimonials is an old device of the advertiser, and one which Patence did not scorn. Here is a good specimen of 1776:

“To Mr. PATENCE
SURGEON and DENTIST,

No. 103, Strand, near Southampton Street.

SIR,

Good Heavens! What are you made of! (cried I)—after I had a month's experience of your artificial teeth!—the public indeed owes you much, and amongst the rest your humble servant,
A NOBLEMAN.”

In March, 1777, Patence advertises his removal from the Strand to No. 333, Oxford Street, “within two doors of Argyle buildings,” and later in the same year appears to be running a “branch practice” at No. 1, Falcon Court, Fleet Street.

In an advertisement of 1778 he bemoans the fact of the old proverb which tells us that a prophet is without honour in his own country, saying:

“... was he (Patence) not a native and citizen of London, and comes from the Lord knows where, he would roll in his chariot, like the many whose teeth he replaces, which may be seen;

he was very ill-paid, for he was very meanly and beggarly cloth'd. I believe he may be ranked among the Tooth-drawers, who always pretend they will not put their Patients to any Pain, though they know to the contrary; whence that Proverb, He lies like a Tooth-drawer; for if he had been dexterous enough to take out Corns without Pain, as he said, he might have kept his Coach.” (Dionis. *A Course of Chirurgical Operations*. Trans. from the Paris Ed. Second Edition. Lond., 1733, p. 434.)

and whose merit consist only of outside show and spurious pretences."

There is no doubt that a great number of foreign dentists had settled in this country at this time, having come over with the Hanoverians, or been driven from the Continent by religious and social persecution.

Early in 1779 the branch in Falcon Court is mentioned no more and apparently his name is being taken in vain, for he states that:

"... Some person or persons go round about the Country giving hand bills, and advertising Mr. Patence is just arrived from London, this is to inform the public, that he never goes journies; neither does any person under heaven know by what art or secret methods he so astonishingly cures mankind."

This secrecy as to methods of practice was a characteristic of the age. Great and small alike guarded their processes with great jealousy. The world had to wait a hundred years or more for the generous outlook of practitioners which is now one of the brightest glories of the healing art. We have another indication of the jealousy in an advertisement of 1780:

"It is necessary to inform the Public, that he never trusted his art with any, or employed assistants. He makes his own instruments, all his teeth, palates, etc. etc. which for neatness, preservation of colour, articulation, and mastication, he challenges the most ingenious artist to equal."

The year 1779 sees another ebullition of verse:

"EXTEMPORE

By PATENCE, on the loss of TEETH,
or any Affliction.

My daily cures, on those of any
Station,
Claim the pre-eminence o'er all that's
in the nation;
Hope those that value nature's great
construction,
Will prefer me—to save their own destruction;
For if you do not, you may as sure
depend

That to your teeth there soon will be
an end,
For as I'm honest—so likewise I will
be brief,
Fine houses—carriages—will cheat you
of your teeth.
Those are the men that take such
spurious pains
To gloss the outside—when inside have
no brains,
And sack your guineas, to add unto
their gains.
See here one comes—poor D——, in
sighs and groans,
And R—— and S——, they had destroyed
their bones,
Tho' now reliev'd do curse the luring
tribe,
For all their ills that to them doth
betide.
What! do you laugh—cease then—perhaps
it may
Be your own case—misfortune come
your way.
Go then to them—no doubt they will
prove civil
'Till got your cash—then go unto the
Devil;
And ere a day or two is past about,
Sicken—then groan—stretch'd dead—
and then laid out."

An advertisement of the same period gives us some idea of the type of work which Patence professed to do. We read that he

"Masked over a Lady's Teeth, beautifully and attractive. Made two whole rows, upper and under, with gold springs and compound lever. Made an under row, each tooth had a separate socket, with coral gums. Preserved a Lady's teeth which were all loose and scorbutic. Cured a cancer in a Lady's mouth."

Professional ethics were not very high in the times of which we write, and the cry of stinking fish about fellow-professional men was a common one. Knowing our Patence, it is to be expected that he would do this with some virtuosity, and we are not disappointed in our expectations as the following example of 1778 will demonstrate:

"... a bungler, who calls himself a Dentist, made her something like Teeth, which were bolstered with rags for they cut her gums to pieces. (His

teeth may be seen.) It has cost her Two Hundred Pounds, and never received the least benefit: and the last Physical Gentleman she employed told her no one could give her any (*infandum a um*). In six minutes I freed her from pain and infection: took away two of her teeth, by which I shall preserve the rest: gave her medicine, and she called on me last Monday chearful, and not like the same woman."

In July, 1778, he tells of one of his patients, Mrs. Wild, who had got into the hands of certain surgeons of the West End who first salivated her—that is, treated her with large doses of mercury—then determined to cut off her leg, but

"... Mr. Patence made her throw away the bungler's plaisters, freed her from pain, and has saved them the trouble!"

Another marvellous cure in 1780 was that of a young lady who

"... has been tapped nine times, and had nine quarts of water taken from her each time, by a Surgeon, who the world calls eminent, but will prove he is totally ignorant of the art of curing."

An advertisement of 1778 is interesting because it again raises the question as to whether Patence used some form of porcelain teeth in his work. He describes his

"... superlative, fine, natural, white, enamel Teeth. Whole rows fitted in without the least pain, tho' the gums be ever so intricate; also his other teeth, whose complexion are suited to all ages, from a single one to an entire whole set, upper and under, made to masticate a crust, never change their first colour, little inferior to those which Nature gives."

The year 1780 finds him practising in the Haymarket, near Pall Mall and the Opera House and about this time there is a recrudescence in his advertisements of sidelines to his dental practice. Essence of Roses for the Teeth, price 2s. 6d. Fever Powders 2s. and his Universal Pills "worth more than Diamonds" which appear to be cure-alls and recommended for Gout, Stone, "Distress & Despair," Palsy, Dropsy, Cancer of the Breast, King's Evil, Jaundice, Green Sickness,

Swellings of the Legs, Scurvy, Scorbutic and Venereal disease, Eruptions, Redness of the Face, Convulsions, Consumptions, and all Seminal, Vital and Natural Weaknesses. All this for 5s. the Box. He finishes his puff with the pious ejaculation:

"He lives not for himself, but for the world."

Some indication of his fees is given in an advertisement of 1782, a single artificial tooth 1 guinea, a natural tooth 2 guineas, 12 guineas for a whole row, 24 guineas for both rows, two whole rows of natural teeth, with gum sockets, etc., 40 guineas, 100 guineas for supplying the bones, "all his other curious non-equal works in proportion."

I referred at the outset of this paper to Patence's connection with the Royal Humane Society. In 1778 he refers to his

"... unequalled method of restoring to life persons apparently dead, which was displayed on the 6th of May 1778 when he restored a person to life at Blackfriar's Bridge, who had been under water thirty-five minutes."

In 1784 when, by the way, he discloses for the first time his full name—Theodore Mathew Patence—he describes himself as

"... the sole and whole cause of raising the Humane Society, by an unparalleled method of giving respiration; otherways bringing to life a man after having laid 35 minutes under water."*

* Since writing the above, I have been informed by Mr. Warren R. Dawson that a certain Mr. Patten was present at the inaugural meeting of the Humane Society which was held at the Chapter Coffee House in 1774 at the instigation of Drs. William Hawes and Thomas Cogan. Those present included such famous names as Drs. Heberden and Lettsom, and the poet Oliver Goldsmith. Patence is a most uncommon surname, and it seems possible that it was assumed, or maybe the scribe who took down the names at the meeting spelt it wrongly. Patence's claim to be "the sole and whole cause of raising the Humane Society" is, to say the least, an exaggeration.

This advertisement gives his address as No. 75, Haymarket.

The prize item of my collection which I will transcribe in full is the following:

"Saturday, May the 31st, 1783.

At the DENTARIUM, in the Hay-Market, near Pall-Mall, PATENCE, the Great and Supreme DENTIST of the world, addresses mankind, that he continues, every day from ten to four, to clear the teeth and gums instantaneously, from all manner of foulness, abolish their pains and diseases, and diseases of the whole mouth, whereby he so unprecedently preserveth the teeth for life. Likewise he supplies their loss, in ordinary and extraordinary cases, and the palate and the bones, superior in every respect to all the rest of mankind! Secondly to an absolute certainty, with two simple things, he can extricate the gout, dropsy, dissolve the stone, and every devaricated case of the scurvy! Thirdly, without vanity or self-praise, he is the most ingenious mechanic in the world! See extant, his organ work, clocks made of paper to beat seconds, without expansion, the chaise he rides in, his four wheel carriage, which went ten miles an hour without horses, without axle-trees, and above all without friction, and a variety of other curious works he has made with his own hand, master of every sort of dance, both ancient and modern, author of a large Treatise on the Teeth, anatomical, generative, and physical. Operas, both serious and highly comic, and a work of three years study, in prose and verse, he intends shortly to publish by subscription, called the Pantheon of the World, with a description of all the Heathen Gods and Goddesses, and all our modern ones now in London, the origin of King's Bench Judges, Lawyers, Priests, and Musicians, and prove that all sorts of music sprung from a f—t. His eight weeks journey to Bath, and ode in praise of the King, Queen, and Family, whom God preserve! With a multitude of other things, principally to show the follies of this Perditinarian age, catching the manners as they daily fly.

"To which will be added, Lucifer Triumphant, or Hell Broke Loose in the Hay-Market, on an opera night; with a song by old Lucifer and his eight Infernal State Ministers, suited to the times."

The year 1784 sees another diatribe against transplantation of teeth and the nefarious practices of his competitors:

"The dreadful calamities daily inflicted on both sexes and coming under my inspection, such as death by transplanting of Teeth from venereal persons, death by fracturing or luxation of the jaw-bones, often death by separation of the arteries in drawing teeth, and uneasiness through life, many bringing their teeth in their hands, having been rooted out from their mouths by using the nostrums of perfumes, going to Dentists whose outside appearance is all their skill, and Apothecaries, many of whom are as ignorant of the generation and consistence of the bones as the grave, to prevent the growing evils and that all persons may with safety and certainty be immediately relieved in the loss of teeth, teeth ready to drop from their sockets, pains, soreness, or diseases possibly to attend the mouth, even the loss of bones and deprivation of speech. . . .

"N.B.—Has in course of twenty-five years relieved 26,290 persons the principle part of whom had been under others, before they applied to him, he being generally the last refuge."

From this it would appear that Patence commenced practice in 1759.

In the year 1784 Patence was troubled with an anonymous letter, but it did not seem to upset him very much beyond stimulating his ready pen to one of its best efforts:

"The Curst Crow always thrives!

"MR. PATENCE'S Answer to the anonymous Letter sent him on Monday last, and the person who wrote it, no doubt, was thrown into a high fever, mad, on reading his advertisement, which was inserted in last Saturday's Morning Chronicle.

"WRETCHED BEING.

"Your letter received, which is with malice cram'd,
And genteel tell me—that I may be dam'd
To everlasting, — Much obliged to you—
Because your great thick skull can't comprehend,

My supreme methods, standing mankind's friend.

Know then base wretch, thy corps will stink & rot,

When my known skill, can never be forgot—

Honor's my aim—when your's is nought but fraud,

You must be damned, while I receive reward.

"Ladies and Gentlemen now begin to have their eyes opened, and are not so easily gulled out, of their money and their teeth by a group of bunglers, who hardly know the right end of a flie, much more the wonderful construction of the human parts. Solid—Humours and the Spirit—A Unity and Trinity, a Representation of God himself, of which a Treatise soon will be published. However, during the last four months, Mr. Patence has made more teeth than all the Dentists in London put together; and Ladies in particular, may be supplied without being put to pain and on terms suited to all circumstances, by applying to . . . etc."

The *diminuendo* of his passion to the final "puff" is masterly!

In 1786 he refers to an "upright instrument" for extracting teeth "of which there is not such another, and prevents every calamity attending common tooth-drawing." His fee for this is 10s. 6d. at home and one guinea abroad. He is never known to give pain "except in that disagreeable business of extracting teeth, of which he had much rather be without." The upright instrument referred to may well be some modification of several instruments which were invented about this period designed for the perpendicular extraction of teeth. One of these, of the year 1762, is depicted by Sir Frank Colyer in "Old Instruments Used for Extracting Teeth," *Brit. Dent. Jour.*, Vol. LXVII, No. 4, Aug. 15, 1939, p. 166.

The year 1787 sees him basking in the patronage of the Empress of Russia and Prince Oginski, late King of Poland, and advertising his Imperial Styptic Powder, Diadem Tooth Powder, and Anodyne Amulets or Necklaces for teething, "Softly bringing forth teeth." Such Anodyne Necklaces were first introduced

by the Chamberlens, the family of Huguenot doctors who introduced obstetric forceps, and they had a great vogue in the eighteenth century.

In the same year Patence again complains of persons personating him in the country and again solemnly avers that he "never goes journies." In the same year he tells us that his pills of life at 5s. 4d. are "a whole college of physicians of themselves." Another advertisement places the blame for the loss of teeth on persons employing "barbers, wig-makers, knife-grinders, and even shoe-blacks, that commence dentists and whose teeth always destroy the natural ones." In the same advertisement he contracts to attend to the teeth of the children of noblemen at school for two guineas a year and at home for three guineas.

There is in this year an interesting if somewhat cryptic reference to Ruspini, the celebrated Chevalier of the period who practised dentistry in the grand style. Patence claims to

"... performing all Mr. Ruspini's capital operations for 14 years last past (which have now ceased) must convince the most prejudiced he is absolutely master of the professions."

Another reference is made to Ruspini in 1790:

"A young Gentleman lately arrived from the East Indies, rascally treated by Impostors; they had destroyed his Speech, Palate, and the Bones, and no relief could be obtained in that part of the World: Mr. Patence to his no small joy and comfort, restored the whole at Mr. Ruspini's, in Pall Mall."

A third reference is made in an attack against the Mineral Teeth of De Chemant in 1791 in which it is said that:

"He (Dé Chemant) offered his Teeth and Service gratis to Mr. Ruspini, Pall-Mall; but Mr. Ruspini had character to lose, and had more honour than to propose such ridiculous stuff to mankind."

These references seem to indicate some association between the two men, and if reports of Ruspini are true they certainly had something in common, because Ruspini, in spite of his benefactions to charity (he was largely instrumental in founding an orphanage for girls under

the auspices of the Freemasons), was something of a mountebank. What the association between the two men was it is difficult to say, but Patence's obvious respect for Ruspini is quite out of character with his usual attitude towards his colleagues and rivals.

In January, 1788, Patence styles himself *Compte*, "having been honoured with the title as above by those who had princely power to give it, is what no dentist in this kingdom ever attained to before, or evidently is there one, with all their boasted skill . . . etc. etc." In the same advertisement we are informed that the two Miss Patences, concerning whom we noted some scandal earlier, attend young ladies, "being thoroughly instructed for that purpose." We are not told who conferred the title of Count upon our hero, but as such titles were three a penny in the eighteenth century it did not apparently amount to much and Patence discarded it later in the year and appears in later advertisements as plain Mr. Patence once more.

In a piece of "friendly" advice to the Nobility and Gentry, Patence draws a terrifying picture of the evil results of the treatment of the "bungling dentists." He tells how

"hundreds have come to him, some even not 20 years of age, without either Teeth or Gums: others with Teeth as black as ebony, burnt so with the Nostrums daily advertised, several in having the molares extracted, bleed many hours; some their jaw-bone luxated; some Mr. Patence saved, some have died; others, by taking mercurial preparations, had their palate bones so destroyed, you might see the lobes of the brain. Two ladies of fortune had venereal Teeth placed in their mouths, taken either from prostitutes, hanged men, or those that died of the foul disease in hospitals, which seizing the corotide arteries, soon communicated to the brain: and although no man under heaven can eradicate the disease sooner or better than himself, Death lent his friendly assistance to ease their calamities."

The idea of seeing the lobes of the brain through the palate does not speak too well for Patence's vaunted knowledge of anatomy!

Another branch was opened in Janu-

ary, 1790, in Shafts Court, directly opposite the East India Office, Leadenhall Street, "to comply with the request of many ladies and gentlemen, his patients, in the environs of the metropolis." In July of the same year we are told that he must soon move from No. 79, Hay-Market, as the house is to be taken down to make room for the Opera House, and in 1791 we find him established at No. 38, Great Suffolk Street, Charing Cross.

The year 1790 witnessed what appears to have been an entertaining squabble between Patence and a certain Mrs. Cuyler, an actress. The details I have available are irritatingly incomplete, but I will give them for what they are worth. It is evident that the bickering created some stir in London at the time. On the 2nd of August the following appeared:

"Mrs. CUYLER, the actress, having been rudely broken in upon by Mr. PATENCE, the Lady threw a bason of water over him. The Gentleman has appealed to the public, and concludes his address with this line:—

"N.B.—A woman disappointed becomes a dragon."

What the appeal was I have no information, but Mrs. Cuyler's reply of August 5th is decidedly to the point:

"For the WORLD.

"A most scandalous and impudent *Forgery* having been published by Mr. PATENCE of the Haymarket, Dentist, in the *Morning Post*, of this day, importing to be a *Card of Apology* from she to the said Mr. PATENCE—I think it necessary publickly to declare that I never wrote or caused to be written any such Card, Letter, or Message whatever; and that the Public is grossly imposed on by Falsehoods, and a direct Forgery, fabricated for the most detestable purposes. I shall take no further notice of any paragraphs or letters. Either anonymous or under the respectable name of *Patence*—intending a course of legal redress.

"M. CUYLER.

"Great Suffolk Street,
"August 4th, 1790."

This was followed on the 6th August by another paragraph in the *World*:—

"Doctor PATENCE is threatened with a 'legal course of medicine' from Mrs. CUYLER:—she is, it seems, determined to bring *the Doctor down on his knees*.

"Doctor PATENCE is not only an extraordinary Surgeon and Medical Professor, but he is allowed to dance the best hornpipe of any man in town. He was a Professor of the *Pump* formerly in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, where Doctor JOHNSON resided, who, it is said, was once under his tuition."

Later in the month the following verses were printed in the *World*:

"EPISTLES not OVIDIAN.

Dr. P—T—NCE to Mrs. C—Y—R.
Had she as many TEETH as hairs
My great Revenge had stomach for
them all!

Had C- - - r's teeth a thousand scales
Of mould'ring crust—or like park pales
In zig-zag fence the tongue surrounded,

Thy PATENCE ne'er had been confounded!—

But when that tongue o'er-leapt its bounds,

I fled like Hare at cry of Hounds.

—Then let those Teeth prevents its rushing

And *gratis* they shall have a brushing.
Change, angry fair one thy demeanour,
For I'm no Tongue—but a Tooth-cleaner!"

"ANSWER.

Mrs. C - - - to Dr. P - - - .

Go, naughty Man, I can't abide you.
I scout your service, filthy Scraper,
My teeth are white as sheets of paper.
Take care!—When next you make a push in,

My Premises:—there's Mop and Brush in,

By Maid of all Work kept for sweeping

Such Insects as are fond of peeping!
Until a Jury, bold and true men,
Shall guard the rights of Injured Women.

And when the *naked Truths* before 'em

Even PATENCE shall be taught *decorum!*"

That is the extent of the information I have at my disposal of this entertaining quarrel. What the upshot of it was I do not know, but some indication of the mountebank qualities of Patence are shown in the following extract, again from the *World*, which appears to have sided with Mrs. Cuyler in sympathy at least:

"So much has been said of Dr. PATENCE, that the following little Anecdote may not be unacceptable to the public, as they may draw from it some faint idea of his character.

"In the younger part of his life (at that time a Dancing Master) he felt a strong propensity for the Stage, and full of dramatic furor, obtained an audience of Mr. GARRICK. After desiring him to be seated, GARRICK enquired into the motives of his visit, and could not help expressing some surprise, when acquainted with it. Recollecting himself, however, he requested to know what cast of characters best suited his talents. The DOCTOR answered—'He was capable of every thing, from the crook-backed Tyrant down to a Hornpipe.'

"This general bill of fare did not add much to the opinion which the Manager entertained of him from his appearance; but, however, requested he would favour him with a speech. The DOCTOR selected one from the *Orphan*, and tortured poor CHAM-ONT so cruelly, that he was interrupted in the middle, and told that he was not tall enough for the stage, and that the town would never like him.—'Not like me, Sir,' says the DOCTOR—'How came they to like you?' 'I am taller than you, by at least half an inch. - - I beg I may finish my speech.' GARRICK not assenting to this, the DOCTOR became so boisterous, that a servant was desired to shew him downstairs. - - 'Stop; not so fast,' says PATENCE, 'I must give you one other proof of my talents.' He then drew a chair in the middle of the room, threw a somerset over it, pulled out his kit, made his bow, and then his exit with a hornpipe step, to the tune of *Nancy Dawson*.

"If any one should be sceptically inclined, as to the truth of the above, the writer can only say, that he had it from—the DOCTOR himself."

Shortly before this—in April, 1790, we have a further insight into the character and practice of our hero. He tells us that he attended three London hospitals, the London, Bethlem and St. Thomas's, for three years "for amusement and improvement and having devoted twenty-one years to the Study and Practice of Cleansing, Regulating, Filing, and Filling Hollow Teeth, to prevent foetid smell, and being painful etc." He has another blow for his rivals:

"N.B. A Gentleman has been made blind by a Dentist, not a hundred miles from Fleet-Street, in cutting one of the canine Teeth, commonly called Dog's Teeth, and by drilling into the arteries, which totally deprived him of sight. And pity it is, there is not a law to prevent such consummate ignorance and want of skill, of which many instances could be given."

We are nearing the end of our study of this remarkable man, and the last attack he made, according to my available information, was on Dubois de Chemant, the reputed inventor of porcelain teeth. De Chemant had come from France in 1791. I have already suggested the possibility that Patence may have employed some such material as porcelain for artificial teeth, and his criticism of De Chemant's efforts support this view. Before coming to this criticism we find the following advertisement in June, 1791:

"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY
CONCERN

TEETH, made of the TEETH, and of the bones of every eligible creature in the Creation: of a composition as hard as a Stone, of Earthen ware, Nankeen China, of Gold & Silver; finely Enamelled Human Teeth, from one to the complete Double Set, with the Loss of Speech and Bones supplied, excelling every Native or Foreigner existing, by
Mr. PATENCE - - - -"

He then quotes his fees, from 10s. 6d. a tooth to 3 guineas, from 10 guineas the complete double set to 40 guineas.

In July we have his attack on De Chemant:

"EARTHEN-WARE TEETH to make your Mouth the scoff of Boys, and

ridiculous to all your acquaintances.

Dear Ladies, did you never stop
To look into a Potter's Shop
See a Monkey with Earthenware
Teeth—

Mr. PATENCE, No. 36, Great Suffolk-Street, Charing Cross, whose integrity, soundness of judgment of the Human Constitution, with uprightness in the three Businesses of the Dentist, the Surgeon, and Physician, stands as an example to the residue of Professors: and his multiplicity of works prove him not to be excelled, if equalled, by any Foreigner in the Universe; more especially in supplying every lost part of the Mouth, ornamentally, naturally, and usefully—out of curiosity went and examined the Incorruptible Teeth now published, and found them truly earthenware, (a stale invention) and he himself tried the project twenty years ago, and found these Teeth a nasty, livid yellow, no more the aspect of Human Teeth than a piece of dried salmon! their intercesses choaked up with Potter's Varnish made of lead; the Gum part redded more like Bullock's Liver than Human Flesh, which the Almighty has put out of the power of Man to resemble, the Indention to receive the Gomphosis, and the Prominency of the Jaw Bones, no real workman would ever put such out of his hands; the springs horrid, no one could ever open or shut his mouth with them with any comfort; their hardness, of a stone, to a certainty must destroy every natural Tooth; and those who commend them, are enemies to their fellow creatures, besides betraying their ignorance to The Teeth generation and formation. He modestly asked Eight Guineas for Two Teeth, Fifty for a set, thinking the English a set of fools, more money than prudence or wit."

Then follows the reference to Ruspini already quoted, and the advertisement continues:

"A Doctor Graham's piece of business.*—Husbands, take care of your

* The Dr. Graham referred to is probably the notorious James Graham (1745-94). A long account of him is to be found in the Dict. of Nat. Biog. and also in Chambers's *Book of Days* and Comrie's *History of*

Wives and Children—else—Twenty-five Guineas a year—for that, give your Teeth a rub—then you are free for a year—A Word to the Wise is sufficient—March is the word—and Du—is his Fellow-Traveller—in iniquity.”

It is perhaps fitting to complete this study with an advertisement of 1791 which gives us an almost modern picture of the evils arising from oral sepsis. In spite of his charlatanry, there can be no doubt that Patence “knew his stuff,” as is evidenced by the following extract:

“... Bad Teeth, encrusted with Tartar, and surrounded with animalcules, which may be seen with a glass; their crown parts rotten, imbibing worms, the origin of those in the stomach and bowels, causing lividness of face and breath unbearable; gum parts flabby, inflamed, and separated from the teeth, veins, nerves, arteries, and muscular parts losing their strength, sense and motion; the antrims and gomphosis drying away, leaving the Teeth ready to drop out of the mouth; salival gland and crotide [*sic*] arteries filled with animal corruption (all have more or less) hid from the sight, and unknown to the pretenders of the times; or the blood made foul by its wonderful action, which in common health pulses through the teeth and vessels 3660 times in an hour, much more when the blood is diseased by infection; the Teeth, of all the human construction, being the first that suffer and need extraordinary assistance.”

Patence takes his bow so far as my

Scottish Medicine. He set up a “Temple of Æsculapius” in London where he lectured and sold his nostrums, employing Emma, later Lady Hamilton, scantily clad, as “Vestina, Goddess of Health.” An entertaining account of his exploits and associations with Emma can be read in Walter Sichel’s *Emma, Lady Hamilton*. The allusion (if any) in the final words, “March is the word, etc.,” is beyond me.

collection is concerned with an advertisement dated July 1st, 1802:

“Mr. PATENCE, honoured and esteemed by the late Empress of Russia, and King of Poland, whom he personally attended; also hundreds of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, and allowed to have no equal in the world for supplying the loss of Teeth, and Stopping, in a minute, whatever affliction distresses the mouth, be the case ordinary or extraordinary: Therefore the residue of mankind, who have lost one or all their Teeth, to chew a crust of bread, and speak articulately, especially those of the Pulpit, Bar, or Stage, or in private life, as well as for human ease and happiness. Nor a man of the world possessed of an art like his, either in the above or their preservation; for, as the late Lord Clive publicly declared, that, in the course of years, Mr. Patence would be the most skilful man on earth, he may be found as such, on applying in Great Suffolk-Street, near Charing-Cross, any day, Sunday excepted.”

What can we say of him? What judgment can we pass upon such a man? He was certainly no better or no worse than many of his contemporaries. What a list they make! Cagliostro, Spot Ward, Mrs. Mapp, Read, Valentine Greatrakes, Perkins and a score of others. Even the giants were not free from mountebank tricks. The capable Huxham was in the habit of having himself called out of church and galloping through the town to give the impression of an extensive practice. He stalked about in a scarlet coat flourishing a gold-headed cane with a footman in attendance at a respectful distance bearing his gloves. Quackery, to quote Garrison, “if not universal, was at least, in Thoreau’s phrase, ‘universally successful’” Patence, if he had nothing else, was possessed of a puckish and entertaining sense of humour, and I trust that this record will afford the reader as much amusement as it has given me to write it.

