A history of dentistry from the most ancient times until the end of the eighteenth century

Guerini Vincenzo
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A

HISTORY OF DENTISTRY

FROM THE MOST ANCIENT TIMES
UNTIL THE END OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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PREFACE.

The idea of writing a History of Dentistry first suggested itself to me ten years ago, when I was charged by the Organizing Committee of the Eleventh International Congress of Medicine with the reproduction and description of all the appliances of ancient dental prosthesis existing in the museums of Italy.

The highly interesting researches in which I then became engaged in order to carry out worthily the important mission intrusted to me, awoke in me the desire to gain still further acquaintance with all that relates to dental art in the time of the ancients. I was thus urged on to ever fresh efforts, not only in the discovery of prosthetic appliances and other objects of ancient dentistry, but in the study, as well, of dental literature and of all the written matter that might throw light on dentistry in past ages.

This subject has already occupied many before me, and each one has brought to it his contribution of greater or less value, some in the form of short pamphlets, others in that of larger works.

The end I proposed to myself was to write a History of Dentistry which should be much more complete, more circumstantial, and more exact than those published hitherto, and which, instead of being, as are many of these works, simply a compilation, should represent, at least in part, the fruits of personal research and scrupulous examination of a vast number of works of various kinds containing elements utilizable for the purpose.

The first part of my work, which I now offer to the public, comprises the remote origin of Dentistry and its development throughout the ages as far as the end of the eighteenth century. In a short time I hope to publish the second part of it, viz., the History of Dentistry during the last hundred years.

I have carefully collected the greatest possible number of historical data, keeping in view the consideration that some facts, although of little value in themselves, may possess a certain importance for the student desirous of procuring historical information relating to some particular point of dental science.

If this book should, as I hope it may, contribute to the diffusion of exact historical knowledge as to the origin and gradual development of dentistry, my labor will not have been lost, for it will have realized the object, a highly practical one, which has guided me in writing it.

Vincenzo Guerini.
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