

A FOOTNOTE TO LUÍS GOMES
FERREIRA, *ERARIO MINERAL*,
1735 AND 1755

By C. R. BOXER

THE *ERARIO MINERAL* of Luís Gomes Ferreira, an outstanding work on Luso-Brazilian medicine and surgery in the eighteenth century, is known from two editions published at Lisbon in 1735 and 1755, respectively. Both are very rare, especially the latter, of which I have only been able to locate one apparently complete copy, bought from a Lisbon bookseller by the Lilly Library in 1969. This two-volume edition was described in some detail in an article which I contributed to *The Indiana University Bookman*, no. 10 (November, 1969), pp. 49-70. A tentative comparison was made with the 1735 (1 volume in-folio) edition; but as I could not find a copy of this edition anywhere in the U.S.A. or in the United Kingdom at that time, I was unable precisely to determine in what way the contents of the two editions differed. The Lilly Library having recently acquired a copy of the first edition, I have now been able to make a page-by-page comparison with the result given below. I may add here that shortly after the publication of my article, Dr. Francisco Guerra drew my attention to the fact that a copy of vol. 2 of the 1755 edition was held by the Faculdade de Medicina at Lisbon, and is listed in the catalogue of that institution's library compiled by M. Athias, *Catálogo das obras da Coleção Portuguesa anteriores à fundação das Régias Escolas de Cirurgia em 1825* (Lisbon, 1942), p. 138. I am very grateful to the illustrious medical historian for this information.

In the 1755 edition, both author and publisher claimed that it was greatly enlarged from the first. The title pages of the two 1755 volumes stated: "Now reprinted and enlarged with a great number of exquisite and wonderful prescriptions." The author's *Proemio* to this edition explained that it was now published in a two-volume format owing to its greatly increased contents. In 1969, I ventured the tentative suggestion that the additional matter was mainly, if not entirely, confined to tratado III, *Da Miscellania*, a miscellany of cures, remedies, and prescriptions for a great variety of diseases, most of the remedies resembling old wives' and quack-doctors' nostrums.

This suggestion turns out to be correct. Apart from some minor rearrangements of wording in the preliminary matter and lists of contents, the additional textual matter is all placed in the *Tratado III, Da Miscellania*. In the 1735 edition, this section ends (on p. 220) with a piece entitled: "Remedios, para que os bebedos aborreção o vinho" ("Remedies to make drunkards dislike wine"). In the 1755 edition, this piece (on pp. 320-321 of vol. I), is followed by a "Colirio para queixas dos olhos" ("eye-salve for complaints of the eyes"), and by another seventy-five recipes, cures, and prescriptions of the most varied (and often fantastic) description, extending to p. 344. A sub-heading on p. 344 is entitled: "Varios Remedios Avulsos, que obrão maravilhosamente com a sua virtude" ("Various different remedies, which work wonders with their virtue"). This is followed by another eighteen assorted recipes, cures, and prescriptions, extending to p. 352 of the text. The total additional matter, therefore, comprises some ninety-three remedies on thirty-one pages (pp. 321-352).

These additions vary in length from a couple of pages to a couple of lines, but most of them are very short. The

longest is on the preparation and application of quinine ("preparação da quina quina," on p. 334-336), and there are many others concerned with cures for toothache (pp. 336-344). Their therapeutic value (or the lack of it) can be judged by the two following extracts, which are by no means the most fantastic (p. 339):

The bone of a frog (of that kind which has a black spot) when touched against the aching tooth, causes the pain to go at once.

The root of the mallow, placed against the aching tooth when the pain is acute, will cause it to go at once.

Other cures, remedies, and prescriptions in this additional section deal with wounds, venereal diseases, worms, retention of urine, intermittent fevers, epilepsy, etc., etc. Much is made of the marvellous therapeutic properties of a complicated nostrum, *Espirito Angelico*. This is recommended as a virtual cure-all for such varied complaints as headache, sore eyes, ear-pains, toothache, old and new wounds, cuts, and contusions, to name only a few of the ills listed on pp. 351-352. "In all these cases it has been tried with success many times."

It would not be fair to judge Luís Gomes Ferreira's *Erario Mineral* entirely by his advocacy of such primitive folk-medicine; but, as I noted on p. 60 of my previous article, it is rather surprising that he continued to advocate such cures after his return from the backlands of Minas Gerais to the flourishing city of Oporto.

Many, though not all, of these additional remedies are indexed at the end of volume 2 of the 1755 edition. Otherwise, this index is basically the same as that in the 1735 edition, save, of course, for the changes in page-references. In conclusion, I may add that the thirteen (un-

numbered) preliminary pages of laudatory poems and sonnets addressed to Luís Gomes Ferreira by some of his friends in the 1735 edition are omitted in that of 1755. At any rate, they are not present in the Lilly Library copy, which appears to be complete, although it also lacks the mandatory civil and ecclesiastical licenses. Clarification must await the location of another copy of the first volume, which has so far eluded bibliographers.