

Sestre milosrdnice



University Hospital

HISTORICAL REVIEW

In the world and in Croatia alike, the year 1918 was an outstanding point in all aspects. World War I had just been over, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had fallen apart, and the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded, where -Dr. Radovan Marković, our first pediatrician, took the position of health care commissioner¹.

In his capacity as a commissioner, in 1918 he presented his proposal of the act on health service structure in *Liječnički vijesnik*, intended for the physicians to read and comment it. In this draft act, Dr. Marković paid special attention to hospitals, hospital physicians and school physicians.

However, the introduction is of special significance, describing the state of health and spirit in the Croatian

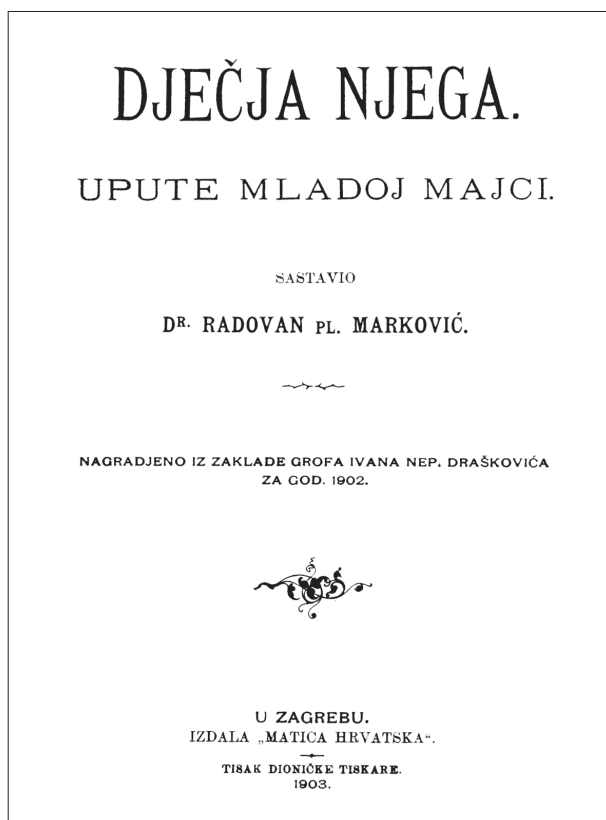
people. His words sound familiar even today, ninety years later: "Concerning health, our people are prone to unhealthy lifestyle, being superstitious and distrustful, uneducated and negligible. In such a situation, little can be done by good public letters; considering the high rate of illiteracy, spoken word and actions addressing the families should certainly prove by far more efficient"².

1. Povjerenik "Narodnog Vijeća" za zdravstvo. *Razne vijesti. Lijec Vjesn* 1918;40(11):362.
2. Marković, Radovan. Osnova zakona o uređenju zdravstvene službe. *Lijec Vjesn* 1918;40(3):112.

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ON NOTABLE BOOKS IN OUR MEDICAL HISTORY

When Dr. Radovan Marković, the first Croatian pediatrician, published his book entitled *Child Care – Instructions for Young Mothers* in 1903, a number of works on child care had already been available. In his foreword, Marković points to these publications written by Antun Lobmayer and Viktor Gjurovečki at the end of the 19th century, i.e. between 1889 and 1897.



Pediatrics had already been rapidly progressing and, as Dr. Marković says, "... the professionals have acquired many new experiences"; that is why he decided to write a new book on child care. In the Introduction, Dr. Marković mentions the literature he used, mostly German and French professional books.

Dr. Marković had served his residency in pediatrics in Vienna, at one of the first European and world's children's hospitals. As a writer, he had extraordinary style, using almost lyrical, picturesque language, discussing the problems encountered by mothers from conception to pregnancy, diet, children's diseases and mental development of the child in a simple and understandable manner.

Dr. Marković paid special attention to maternal soul and psyche, yet emphasizing the importance of both parents' relations toward the child to ensure favorable upbringing of the child. As Dr. Marković says, "weeping out one's childhood leaves bitterness in the child's soul for life".

In addition to being written in a modern and professional style for the time, the book has a prominent place in the history of Croatian medicine for the language used by Dr. Marković. He tried to introduce words from the language used by the Croatian people into the Croatian medical terminology to make it comprehensible to his readers while at the same time enriching professional language. Many of these terms were not accepted, primarily due to the lack of educated people, while professional terminology relied exclusively on the Latin. In spite of this, the book remained an important reading for generations of young mothers, while demonstrating to forthcoming physicians how to write for the population at large about health problems.

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