

SIXTH BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

HAVING done with the disorders which break out in any part of the body indifferently, and require the assistance of medicines, I shall now proceed to those that are confined to particular parts, beginning with the head.

Of hairs falling off the head.—When the hairs of the head fall off, the principal remedy is frequent shaving; though labdanum mixed with oil conduces also towards keeping them on. I here speak of the hair which falls off after an illness. For no remedy whatever can prevent the heads of some people from becoming bald with age.

CHAPTER II.

OF A PORRIGO.

WE call that disorder a porrigo, scurf, when certain small scales arise amongst the hair, and are loosened from the skin; they are sometimes moist, much more frequently dry. It happens sometimes without any ulcer, sometimes in a part that is ulcerated, and is sometimes attended with a bad smell, sometimes with none. It usually occurs in the hair of the head, more rarely in the beard, sometimes also in the eye-brows. And as it never comes without some antecedent disorder in the body, so it is not altogether useless. For when the head is free from disorders, then it does not appear; when there is any disorder there, it is more expedient, in such a case, that *the surface of the skin should be* here and there corrupted, than that the noxious matter should be turned in upon a more noble part.

It is more proper then to cleanse it by frequent combing, than

to repel it entirely. But if that method makes it more offensive (which may happen by the excessive discharge of humour, and more so, if the humour be fetid) the head is to be shaved often, and treated with some gentle repellents, such as nitre with vinegar, or labdanum with myrtle-oil and wine, or mirobalans with wine. If these have little effect, we may use some of the more powerful ones; but, at the same time, we should be aware that this practice is hurtful, when the disorder is recent.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SYCOSIS.

THERE is an ulcer which, from its resemblance to a fig, by the Greeks is called sycosis (*σύκωσις*), because flesh sprouts up from it. And this is the general name. Under it are included two species. The one is a hard and round ulcer; the other is moist and unequal in its surface. From the hard one, the discharge is very small and glutinous; from the moist, it is in greater quantity and fetid. Both kinds occur in the parts covered with hair; but that which is callous and round, most frequently in the beard; the other, which is moist, chiefly in the hair of the head.

To both of them it is proper to apply elaterium, or linseed powdered, and made into a paste with water, or a fig boiled in water, or the tetrpharmacum plaster softened with vinegar. Eretrian earth also liquified with vinegar is proper to lay upon them.

CHAPTER IV.

OF AREÆ.

THERE are two kinds of areæ. Both of them agree in this, that the surface of the skin mortifying, the hairs first decay, and then fall off; and if the part is wounded, thin and fetid blood is discharged; and both kinds increase in some people quickly, in others slowly. It is then worst, when it has rendered the skin thick and fat and entirely smooth. That which is called alopecia (*ἀλωπεκία*), spreads in no certain form. It is found both in the

hair of the head, and in the beard. But that which, from its likeness to a serpent, is called ophiasis (*ὀφίαισις*), begins at the hinder part of the head; its breadth not exceeding two fingers; it creeps with two heads to the ears; in some even to the forehead, till the two heads are joined in the fore-part. The former species happens at any age; the latter commonly to infants. The first hardly ever terminates without medicine; the other often goes away of itself.

Some scarify these kinds of areæ gently with a knife. Others anoint them with escharotic medicines mixed with oil; and especially burnt paper. Others apply turpentine resin with thapsia. But nothing is better than daily shaving with a razor; because, when the cuticula is gradually cut off, the small roots of the hairs are laid bare. Nor should this be given over, till it appears that the hair grows thick. It is sufficient to rub the part that is frequently shaved, with copperas.

CHAPTER V.

OF VARI, LENTICULÆ, AND EPHELIDES.

It is almost a folly to cure vari, lenticulæ, and ephelides; but it is impossible to prevent women from being nice in what regards their beauty. Of these disorders which I have just mentioned, vari and lenticulæ are universally known; however, that species is more rare, which the Greeks call phacia (*φακία*), though that is only of a more ruddy colour, and more unequal surface than the common lenticula. The ephelis (*ἐφελίς*) is unknown to most people; and is nothing else than a certain ill-coloured asperity and hardness. The others are peculiar to the face; the lenticulæ sometimes appear in other parts, of which I did not think it worth while to treat separately elsewhere.

But vari are very well cured by the application of resin mixed with an equal quantity of scissile alum, and a little honey. Equal quantities of galbanum and nitre, beat up with vinegar to the consistence of honey, remove a lenticula. *The part is to be rubbed with these, and after an interval of several hours, washed clean in the morning, and gently anointed with oil.*

An ephelis is cured by resin, with the addition of a third part of fossile salt and a little honey. And for all these disorders, and likewise for giving a proper colour to cicatrices, that composition is good, which is said to be invented by Tryphon, the father. In it there are equal parts of myrobalans, crocomagma, the bluish Cimolian chalk,* bitter almonds, flour of barley, and vetches, white struthium, seed of mellilot; all these are powdered and brought to a consistence with the bitterest honey, and being rubbed on in the evening, are always washed off in the morning.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE DISORDERS OF THE EYES.

THE foregoing are indispositions of small account. But our eyes are exposed to grievous and various maladies. And because they contribute so large a share, both to the conveniency and pleasure of life, they deserve our utmost care to preserve them.

Presently after the appearance of a lippitude, there are certain indications from which we may form a presage of the event. For if a discharge of tears, and a tumor, and a thick gum † have commenced at once; if that gum is mixed with tears, and the tears are not hot, also if the gum is white and soft, and the tumor not hard, there is no danger of the disorder continuing long. But if the tears are copious and hot, the gum little in quantity, the tumor small, and these are confined to one eye; the case will prove tedious, but without danger. And this species of lippitude is not at all painful; but is hardly ever removed before the twentieth day; sometimes it continues for two months, and sometimes not so long.

If the gum begins to be white and soft, and is mixed with tears, or both these have attacked two eyes at once; the lippitude may

* I have here kept close to the author's term *subcœrulea*. Pliny and Dioscorides describe this kind as inclining to purple. See note book ii. chap. 33.

† Our author here manifestly distinguishes between *lachryma* and *pituita*. The ancients imagined the *pituita* to be concreted tears, whereas it is the sebaceous matter secreted from the glands of Meibomius. To translate it in one word, I have, therefore, given it the vulgar English name.

be of shorter continuance, but there is a danger of ulcers. Now, a dry and parched gum occasions pain, but terminates sooner; unless it have produced some ulcer.

A large tumor, if it be without pain, and dry, is void of all danger; if it be dry, but attended with pain, it commonly ulcerates; and sometimes from this case it happens, that the eyelid is agglutinated to the eye. There is room also to fear an ulceration in the eyelids or the pupil, when besides great pain, there is a discharge of salt and hot tears; or even, when after the tumor is removed, the tears flow for a long time mixed with the gum.

It is worse still, where the gum is pale or livid, the tears are scalding, or in great quantity, the head hot, and the pain reaches from the temples to the eyes, also if the person is distressed with wakefulness in the night; for in such circumstances generally the eye bursts, when it were to be wished, it would only ulcerate. A slight fever is of service to an eye that bursts inwardly. If it breaks and is protruded externally, the case admits of no remedy. If, from a black colour, some part of it has become whitish, it continues long. But if it be rough and thick, even after the cure, it leaves some mark.

Hippocrates, the most ancient author we have, has observed in his writings, that the eyes are cured by bleeding, by medicines, the bath, fomentations, and drinking of wine. But he has not explained the proper times for these, and the reasons for their use; in which the principal part of medicine consists. There is also much benefit received from abstinence and clysters.

They are sometimes seized with an inflammation, in which they are at once pained and swelled; and there follows a discharge of gum; sometimes more, sometimes less plentiful, or acrid. In such a case, the principal remedies are rest and abstinence. Wherefore, for the first day, the patient ought to lie in a dark place and even refrain from speaking; to take no food at all; if he can command himself, not so much as water; if he cannot do that, at least as little of it as possible.

But if the pains are severe, blood must be taken away, and preferably on the second day; but if the case be urgent, on the first; especially if the veins in the forehead swell, the patient be strong, and there is a redundancy of matter; but if the illness be

less severe, it calls for a milder cure. It is not necessary to give a clyster till the second or third day. But a small inflammation requires neither of these remedies; and it is sufficient to rest and fast.

Nevertheless, long fasting is not proper in lippitudes, lest it render the gum more fetid and acrid; but, on the second day, some of the gentlest of those things that generate a thicker phlegm* ought to be given, such as sorbile eggs; if the disorder be but slight, pulticula, or bread sopped in milk. On the following days, as much as the inflammation decreases, so much may the quantity of food be increased; but of the same kind; so that above all nothing salt, or acrid, or extenuating, be taken; and nothing be used for drink but water. And, with respect to diet, such a regimen is highly necessary.

Now, on the first day of the distemper, it is proper to mix p. ℥. i. of saffron, and p. ℥. ii. of the finest, whitest flour, with the white of an egg, to the consistence of honey; and to spread this upon a piece of linen, and apply it to the forehead, that by compressing the veins it may restrain the violent flux of gum. If saffron cannot be had, frankincense has the same effect. It makes no difference whether it be spread upon a bit of linen or wool. The eyes ought to be anointed with the following composition; as much saffron as can be held with three fingers, myrrh the size of a bean, of poppy tears the size of a lentil, are rubbed down together with passum, and daubed over the eyes with a probe. Another for the same purpose consists of myrrh p. ℥. i. mandrake juice p. ℥. ii. poppy tears p. ℥. ii. rose-leaves, hemlock seed, each p. ℥. iii. acacia p. ℥. iv. gum p. ℥. viii. And these are applied in the day-time; but in the night, for promoting rest, it is not improper to lay on the crumb of white bread mixed up with wine. For that both restrains the flux of gum, and if any tears are discharged, it absorbs them, and does not suffer the eyes to be glued up.

If the pain of the eyes be so great as to make this application uneasy and too hard, both the white and the yolk of an egg must be dropped into a cup, and a little mulse added to them, and these

* Vid. lib. ii. cap. 23.

mixed with the finger; when they are incorporated, soft wool combed ought to be dipped in it, and saturated with it, and applied over the eyes. This is light, and, by cooling, restrains the gum; besides, does not grow dry, nor suffer the eye to be glued. Barley meal also boiled and mixed with a boiled quince is a proper application. And it is no absurd practice to use rather a penecillum squeezed out of water, if the disorder be less severe, if more so, out of vinegar and water. The former applications are to be bound on with a roller, lest they fall off in the time of sleep; but it is sufficient to lay the penecillum on the eyes; both because it can be conveniently replaced by the patient himself, and because, when it has grown dry, it must be moistened again. If the disorder is so great as to prevent sleep for a long time, some of the medicines are to be given, which the Greeks call anodyne; and for a boy the size of a vetch is a sufficient dose; for a man the size of a bean. On the first day it is not fit to inject any thing into the eye, unless the inflammation be very great; for the gum is often rather invited than diminished by that means. But, on the second day, even in a severe lippitude, it is proper to relieve by the injection of medicines, when either the patient has been bled, or a clyster has been given; or it appears that neither of these was necessary.

There are many collyriums proper for this purpose invented by different authors; and new ones may still be made; since lenient and gently repelling medicines may be easily mixed in various proportions. I shall mention the most celebrated of them.

Philon's collyrium.—The collyrium of Philon contains of washed ceruss, spodium, gum, each p. ℥. i. poppy tears toasted p. ℥. i. It is fit to know, that all the ingredients must first be powdered separately, after that mixed and beaten up again, dropping in from time to time either water or some other liquid. Gum, as it possesses some other qualities, so has this peculiar effect upon collyriums, that when they have been long made, and are grown dry, they continue firmly united, and are not friable.

Dionysius'.—Dionysius' collyrium; of poppy tears toasted till tender p. ℥. i. toasted frankincense, gum, each p. ℥. ii. spodium p. ℥. iv.

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