

SEVENTH BOOK.

P R E F A C E.

THAT surgery makes the third part of medicine, is both universally known, and has been already observed. This does not, indeed discard medicines and a proper regimen ; but yet the principal part is accomplished by the hand. And the effect of this is the most evident of all the parts of medicine. For as fortune contributes a good deal to the cure of distempers, and the same things are often salutary, often fruitless ; it may be doubted whether the recovery be owing to physic, or the constitution. In those diseases also, in which we chiefly make use of medicines, although their success be pretty evident, nevertheless it is plain, that health is both sought for by their means in vain, and often restored without them. As may be observed with regard to the eyes, which after having long suffered from the applications of physicians, sometimes recover of themselves. But in surgery, it is manifest that the success, though it may be somewhat promoted by other means, is chiefly to be ascribed to this. Now, this branch, though it be the most ancient, yet has been more cultivated by Hippocrates, the father of all medicine, than by his predecessors. Afterwards, being separated from the other parts, it began to have its peculiar professors, and received considerable improvements in Egypt, as well as elsewhere, principally from Philoxenus, who has treated of this part fully, and with great accuracy, in several volumes. Gorgias also, and Sotratus, the two Herons, and the two Apollonii, and Ammonius Alexandrinus, and many other celebrated men, have each of them made some discoveries. And at Rome too, professors of no small note, and particularly of late, Tryphon, the father, and Euelpistus, the son of Phleges, and Meges, the most learned of them all, as

appears from his writings, by altering some things for the better, have made considerable additions to this art.

A surgeon ought to be young, or at most but middle aged, to have a strong and steady hand, never subject to tremble, and to be no less dexterous with his left than his right hand; to have a quick and clear sight; to be bold, and so far void of pity, that he may have only in view the cure of him whom he has taken in hand, and not in compassion to his cries, either make more haste than the case requires, or cut less than is necessary; but do all, as if he was not moved by the shrieks of his patient.

Now, it may be asked, what peculiarly belongs to this branch; because surgeons assume to themselves the curing of many wounds and ulcers, which I have treated of elsewhere. I can very well suppose the same person capable of performing all these; and since they are divided, I esteem him most, whose skill is most extensive. For my part, I have left to this branch those cases in which the physician* makes a wound, where he does not find one; and those wounds and ulcers, in which I believe manual operation to be more useful than medicines; lastly, whatever relates to the bones. Which things I shall consider in order, and deferring the bones to another book, I shall in this explain the two former; so treating first of these, which are found indifferently in every part of the body, I shall proceed to those that fall upon particular parts.

CHAPTER I.

OF CONTUSIONS.

CONTUSIONS, in whatever part of the body they are, ought as soon as possible to be treated in this manner; the skin of the part, where the pain is, must be cut in several places, and the grumous blood issuing from them must be wiped away with the back of the

* An English reader may naturally suppose that the term should be *surgeon*; but as our author here uses the word *medicus*, I did not think myself at liberty to depart from it; especially as his not using *chirurgus* was from choice, since this word occurred in the preceding paragraph. Celsus supposes an accomplished physician acquainted with all the branches.

knife. If it is not taken in time, and there is a redness, so much of the skin as is red must be cut; if there is a tumor too, wherever that extends, the same remedy is still the best. Then repellents are to be applied over it; and particularly sordid wool squeezed out of vinegar and oil. But, if the hurt be more slight, the same applications, without an incision, may perform the cure. And if nothing else is at hand, ashes, especially of burnt twigs; if they are not to be got, any other ashes mixed up with vinegar, or even with water.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE OPERATIONS NECESSARY IN SUPPURATED TUMORS.

THE foregoing case is easily managed. But there is more trouble with those tumors, that come from an internal cause, and tend to suppuration. That all these are kinds of abscesses, I have elsewhere shown, and treated of the medicines proper for them; it now remains, that I mention the manual operations necessary for their cure. Wherefore, it is requisite, before they grow hard, to cut the skin, and apply a cupping vessel to evacuate any bad and corrupted matter which may have been collected there; and this may be repeated a second and third time, till all the symptoms of an inflammation be gone. Nevertheless, it is not right to trust* entirely to the cupping vessel.

Sometimes also it happens, though rarely, that a collection of pus is enclosed in a covering of its own; the ancients called this a coat. Meges, because every coat is nervous, affirmed a nerve was not generated in a disorder, which destroyed the flesh, but that the pus being lodged below for a long time, was surrounded with

* In this translation I have followed Linden and Almeloveen. But the reading in most of the old editions, as Nicolaus, Pinzi, Junta, Aldus, Gryphius, &c. is, *Neque tamen fas non est nihil cucurbitula agere*; that is, "yet it is not an inviolable rule always to employ the cupping vessel." Which, I must own, appears most agreeable to the sense of this place; because our author immediately proceeds to consider a case, in which cupping can be of no service. See *Morg. ep. vi. p. 151.*

a callosity. This, however, has not the least relation to the method of cure; because the same course that ought to be pursued if it be a coat, is also necessary if it be a callosity. And though it should be a callosity, yet as it envelops something, there is no reason against calling it a coat. And then, again, it is not uncommon for this to be found even before the suppuration is formed,* and, therefore, what is below it cannot be extracted by a cupping vessel. But this is easily discovered, when the application of that instrument has made no change. Therefore, wherever that happens, or when there is already a hardness, nothing is to be expected from this remedy; but as I have directed elsewhere, either the afflux of matter to the part must be diverted, or it must be discussed, or brought to a perfect suppuration. If either of the former has taken place, nothing further is necessary. If the pus has been matured in the armpits and groin, an incision is rarely to be made; likewise, wherever the abscess is but small; also wherever the malady is in the surface of the skin, or even in the flesh; unless the weakness of the patient obliges us to lose no time. And it is sufficient by cataplasms to assist the pus to make its own way. For the part, that has not been touched by an instrument, is generally free from a scar. If the malady lies deeper, it ought to be considered whether the part be nervous or not. For if it be nervous, it should be opened by the actual cautery; the reason of which is, that a small wound may keep open longer for evacuating the pus, and the cicatrix afterwards may be

* I have here followed the old reading, *tum pure quoque maturior hæc interdum esse consuevit*, which seems to agree better with our author's reasoning; for as he had just blamed Meges for introducing the new term *callus* instead of *tunica*, without necessity; so he adds that he was mistaken also in believing that it was never found but enclosing an old collection of matter. He, on the contrary, says, that it sometimes appears before the generation of pus. Linden and Almeloveen read *tum, pure quoque maturiore, hæc interdum esse consuevit*; that is, "and this is found, even when the suppuration is more ripened." Whether the connection of this with what went before be natural, the reader may judge for himself. I do not know but these learned editors may have put another sense upon *maturiore*, when the suppuration is sooner ripened; which would be pretty much the same with the old reading. However, the first is preferred by Morgagni. (Ep. vi p. 152.)

small. But if there be nerves near it, the actual cautery is improper, lest convulsions follow, which may debilitate* the limb; yet the assistance of the knife is necessary. The others may be opened even before they be quite mature; but amongst tendons the utmost ripeness is to be waited for, that the skin may be thin, and the pus be brought close to it, that it may be the sooner found. And some again require a wound † in a straight direction, as those in the flesh; but others render the skin extremely thin; and in such the whole surface of it above the pus must be cut away. Now, in all cases where the knife is used, care must be taken that the wounds be as small and as few in number as possible; with this caution, however, that we do all the case requires, both with regard to size and number; for larger cavities require broader incisions; sometimes even in two or three different directions. And we must endeavour that the deepest part of the sinus shall have a free discharge, lest any of the humour settle within, which, by corroding the contiguous parts yet sound, may make sinuses there. Cases also sometimes occur, in which the skin must be taken off to a more considerable breadth. For when, after long distempers, the habit of the whole body has been vitiated, and the sinus is enlarged to a great compass, and the skin is pale; we may take

* This translation is agreeable to the reading in Linden and Almeloveen; but all the older editions read thus, *ne vel distendantur hi, vel membrum debilitent*; i. e. "lest either convulsions follow, or the limb be disabled." And this appears the more probable, as one of them might happen without the other following. And so it is quoted by Fabricius ab Aquapendente.

† *Jamque alia rectam plagam desiderant, ut in carne: alia vero vehementer cutem extenuant, in quibus tota ea super pus excidenda est.* There are several variations in the reading of the copies of this paragraph, but they do not remove the difficulty. Morgagni (ep. vii. p. 181.) very ingeniously conjectures, that after Celsus had considered such as were quite mature, he next mentioned such as were not quite ripe; and did not talk here of cutting off the whole skin, because he afterwards says, *est etiam in rerum natura, ut cutis latius excidenda sit*; and that what is here said of the skin being extenuated, was repeated from above by carelessness. All the old editions and MSS. have *itemque* for *jamque*; none of them *ut*; the MS. *tuto* for *tota*. Upon the whole, he seems inclined to read it thus: *itemque alia rectam plagam desiderant in carne; in quibus tuto ea super pus incidenda sit*; i. e. "others again require a wound in a straight direction in the flesh, in which it may be proper and safe to make an incision above the pus."

it for granted, that it is already mortified, and will be useless; therefore, it is more proper to cut it off; and especially if this happen about the larger joints, and the patient has been troubled with a purging while he was confined to his bed, and he gains no flesh by the nourishment he takes. But the excision should be made in the form of a myrtle leaf, that it may heal the more easily. And this rule must constantly be observed, whenever a physician upon any account cuts away the skin. After the pus is discharged in the armpits and groin, there is no need of lint, but a sponge squeezed out of wine must be laid on. In the other parts, if lint is equally needless, a little honey must be infused to cleanse it; then agglutinants are to be applied; if lint be necessary, over it also in like manner ought to be laid a sponge squeezed out of wine in the same way. When lint is necessary, and when not, has been determined elsewhere. The other directions are to be observed when the suppurated tumor is cut, which I gave for one that has been broken by medicines.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GOOD OR BAD SYMPTOMS OF SUPPURATIONS.

It is soon known from the nature of the symptoms, how a cure advances, and what event is to be hoped or feared; and these are commonly the same with what have been laid down in wounds. For they are good signs to sleep, to breathe easily, not to be troubled with thirst, not to loathe food, if there has been a slight fever, to be free of it; also that the pus be white, smooth, and not fetid. The bad signs are wakefulness, difficulty in breathing, thirst, loathing of food, a fever, and the pus black, or feculent, and fetid; also a hemorrhage in the process of the cure; or if before the cavity is filled up with flesh, the lips become callous, and the flesh there be dull of sensation, and spongy. But for a person to faint either in the dressing or afterwards, is worst of all. Moreover, if the fever cease suddenly, before the suppuration is begun, or if it continue after the discharge of the pus, these are just grounds for fear. There is room to fear also, if the wound is not sensible of corrosive medicines. But what-

ever symptoms shall happen to arise, it is the part of a physician to endeavour the recovery of his patient. Therefore, as often as he shall open a wound, he ought to wash it, if it seems necessary to repel the humour, with a mixture of wine and rain water, or with a decoction of lentils in water; if it needs cleansing, with mulse; and to apply the same dressings again. When the humour shall appear to be stopped, and the ulcer clean, it will be convenient to promote the growth of the flesh, and dress the ulcer with equal parts of wine and honey, and apply a sponge dipped in wine and oil of roses, which things are incarning. A proper regimen however, as I have observed elsewhere, is more effectual for this purpose; that is, when the fever is removed, and the appetite restored, bathing now and then, daily but mild gestation, and such kinds of food and drink as are of the most nourishing nature. All which rules also hold with regard to an abscess, that has been broken by medicines. But because it is hardly possible to cure a large tumor without the knife, the mention of these has been reserved to this place.

CHAPTER IV.

OF FISTULAS.

WITH regard to fistulas, if they penetrate pretty deep, so that a collyrium cannot reach the bottom of them, if they are tortuous, or consist of several sinuses, operations are more useful than medicines; and those, that run in a transverse direction below the skin, give less trouble than such as go directly inward. Therefore, if the fistula be transverse under the skin, a probe ought to be introduced, and an incision made upon that. If it be tortuous, its windings are to be followed by the probe and knife. And the same course must be taken, if several of them appear like rivulets uniting their streams. When we have reached to the end of the fistula, all the callosity must be cut out, and fibulæ applied to it with medicines to agglutinate. But if it points directly inward, when its direction is found by a probe, that sinus must be cut out; then a fibula put upon the lips of the skin, and agglutinating medicines laid over it; or if the ulcer be very foul

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