

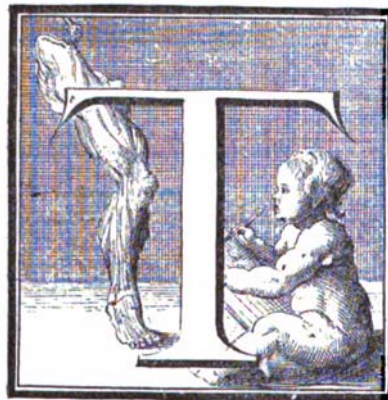
Historical and Bibliographical Notes :

A SERIES OF SKETCHES OF THE LIVES, TIMES AND WORKS OF THE OLD
MASTERS OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY.

By GEORGE JACKSON FISHER, M.D.

II. AMBROSE PARÉ.

1509-1590.



HOUSANDS of human lives have been saved during the past three hundred and thirty years by the substitution of the ligature in place of the red-hot iron, which was previously employed to arrest hemorrhage from divided blood-vessels. The relief that came to the world by putting an end to the cruel torture occasioned by burning or scalding gun-shot wounds with boiling hot oil is incalculable. It was "the Father of French surgery" who wrought both of these great reforms, Ambrose Paré—the grand, the imperial surgeon of the sixteenth century; the earnest and devout old Huguenot, who ever ascribed all glory, power, and praise to our Heavenly Father, claiming that he dressed the wounds only, and that God cured them.

This "famous chirurgion" was born at Bourg-Hersent, near Laval, in the province of Mayenne, France, in 1509 or 1510. He died at the age of eighty-one years at Paris, December 20, 1590. His parents were humble and poor, in consequence of which his early education was much neglected. He studied Latin, however, with a priest, and in return cultivated the garden of his reverend master, and groomed his mule.

Paré was early apprenticed to a barber-surgeon, by the name of Vialot, who taught him the rudiments of minor surgery. Colot, the celebrated lithotomist of that period, who came into the neighborhood of Laval to operate for stone, invited young Paré to hold his patient. The result of this opportunity to witness the surgeon's skill caused this youth to resolve to go to Paris to perfect himself in the science and art of chirurgery. The barber-surgeons then monopolized all the knowledge of this subject, and were the sole expounders of the art.

The works on the subject were few and faulty. Albucasis, Lanfranc, Brunus, Guido de Cauliac, and John de Vigo were the principal authorities. Paré pursued his studies three years in Paris, residing most of this time in the Hotel Dieu, that still famous hospital. When twenty-seven years of age (1636) he received the appointment of military surgeon, and from this date he served in this capacity for a third of a century. He became a member of the fraternity of Master-Surgeons, and subsequently was elected provost.

In 1552 he was appointed surgeon to Henry II, and thenceforth "the kings of France transmitted him to their successors as a legacy of the crown," holding the same position, in regular succession, to Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III. These monarchs were all warmly attached to him; he was at once their privy-counsellor and their professional adviser; he followed them in their campaigns and

attended them in their retirement. Their confidence in his skill was boundless. When Metz was invested (1552) by the great army of the Emperor Charles V, and sickness, and fearful mortality resulted from wounds, the beseiged became discouraged, a horror possessed their minds "that the medicaments wherewith they were dressed were poysoned; which caused Monsier de Guise and other Princes to send to the King for mee, and that hee would send mee with Drogues to them, for they beleaved theirs were poysoned, seeing that of their hurt people few escaped. I doe not beleeve there was any poyson, but the great stroakes of the Cutlasses, Musket shot, and the extremity of cold were the cause." (Johnson's translation, p. 1150; Lond., 1634.) He then proceeds to describe by what means he was clandestinely brought into the city, and how M. de Guise commanded that he "should be well used, and bid mee I should not faile to be the next day upon the Breach, where I should meete with all the Princes, and divers Captaines, which I did; who received me with great joy, who did mee the honour to imbrace me, and tell me I was very welcome, adding withall they did not feare to dye if they should chance to be hurt." (*Ibid.*) It is believed to be due to the inspiring effect of his presence at this critical juncture, that the beseiged held out until the Spaniards were obliged to raise the siege.

It is said that it was through his influence over Charles IX, that a stop was put to the progress of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's (August 24, 1572), when 70,000 Protestants or Huguenots were butchered in Paris and other parts of France by order of that weak and deluded prince. The old story that Paré was hidden in a closet to protect him from the fate of the other Huguenots is without foundation. He depended for safety on the promise of the king never to interfere with his religion.

Among the improvements to operative surgery, for which we are indebted to this illustrious surgeon, the application of the ligature to cut or wounded blood-vessels is the greatest. For ages previous the actual cautery had been the principal means of staunching traumatic hemorrhage. The idea of tying arteries and veins was not absolutely new to the world, yet the practice of it was entirely so. Galen, Celsus, Avicenna and Albucasis had all alluded to it, but evidence is wanting to prove that any of them had practiced it. Certain it is it was not in use at that day, and its employment by Paré brought upon him violent and unmerited abuse. Thus Gourmelen called him a blood-thirsty, cruel rascal. In book 12, chapter 24, Paré explains the circumstances which led him "to devise this new form of remedy," wherein he "confesses" that he formerly used the actual cautery, "which thing cannot be spoken, or but thought upon without great horror, much less acted;" and for having followed "this old and too, too cruel way of healing," he thus laments, "Whereof I am ashamed and aggrieved." He believed that his new method came to him by inspiration. "I think it was taught me by the special favor of the sacred Deitie; for I learnt it not of my masters, nor of any other, neither have I at any time found it used by any. Only I have read it in Galen, that there was no speedier remedy for staunching of blood than to bind the vessels through which it flowed towards their roots, to wit, the liver and the heart."

Paré introduced podalic version in difficult labors; was first to employ the twisted suture in operations for the cure of hare-lip; first to extract loose cartilages from the knee joint; and first to reduce dislocations of the shoulder by the heel in the axilla. [The tail piece of this article is a photo-engraved reproduction of this procedure, from the first Latin edition of his works, Paris, 1582.] His

works abound in ingenious devices, some of which have been claimed to be of recent invention. For example, a saw in every respect like Hey's; a club-foot boot, such as that devised by Syme; fine models of artificial legs, hands, noses and ears; also figures of drainage tubes, etc. Paré was a voluminous writer. His collected works make a ponderous folio of over a thousand pages. The first edition was published at Paris in 1575, having been amply illustrated with three hundred engravings, which cost him three thousand livres. It was dedicated "to Henry the third, the most Christian king of France and Poland." The following is an extract from the preface, as translated by Johnson, London, 1634 :

"For God is my witness, and all good men know, that I have laboured fifty yeares with all care and paines in the illustration and amplification of chirurgery; and that I have so certainly touched the marke whereat I aimed, that Antiquity may seeme to have nothing wherein it may exceed us, beside the glory of invention; nor posterity any thing left but a certaine small hope to adde some things, as it is easie to adde to former inventions. In performance whereof, I have been so prodigal of myself, my watchings, faculties and meanes, that I spared neither labor nor cost, whereby I might satisfie and accomplish my own desires, this my great work, and the desires of the studious. Neither may we doubt but their studies would at the length waxe cold, if they only furnished with the Theorick and Precepts in Schools and that with much labour, should see no manuell operation, nor manifest way of performing the Arte, For which cause I seeking the praise and profit of the French Nation, even with the hinderance of my particular estate, have endeavored to illustrate and increase Chirurgerie hitherto obscure either by the infelicity of the former ages, or the envy of the Professors; and not only with precepts and rules, but being a lover of carved workes, I beautified it with 300 formes, or graven figures and apt delineations, in which whosoever shall attentively looke shall find five hundred anatomicall or organicall figures belonging to the Arte, (if they be reckoned particularly). To every of these I have given their names and shewed their use, least they should seeme to have beene put in vainly for ostentation or delight."

This work has passed through numerous editions, and has been printed in French, German, Dutch and English. The following is as complete a list of the several editions as I have been able to compile, French, *Paris*, fol. 1575, 1579, 1585, 1598, 1607, 1614, 1628, octavo, 1840-1. Latin, *Paris*, fol. 1582, *Frankfort*, fol. 1594, 1610, 1612. German, *Frankfort*, fol. 1601, 1635. Dutch, *Leyden*, fol. 1604. *Amsterdam*, fol. 1615, 1636, 1649. *Harlem*, fol. 1627. English, *London*, fol. 1634, 1678.

It is difficult to write a short sketch of Paré, so much can be found in his writings worthy to be mentioned. His stature was tall, his figure slender, his countenance grave and dignified. All his portraits represent him in his court dress, with the frilled collar characteristic of the age. The portrait which adorns this number of the ANNALS is a reduced *fac-simile* of the one in the first and most magnificent Latin edition of his works, published at Paris, in grand folio, during the lifetime of Paré.



Secundi modi restituendi humeri delineatio.

OPERA AMBROSII PARII, PARISIIS, MDLXXXII, P. 445.